

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

About a month from now, I'll get on a jet and fly to Veracruz for RRF's annual conference, which this year is being held in conjunction with the 4th North American Ornithological Conference. I'm looking forward to seeing old friends, learning what issues are on colleagues' minds, seeking counsel from my fellow officers and our directors on how I can improve my job performance as your President, and getting my battery recharged with the fresh energy that always characterizes our meetings.

A major topic that RRF leadership will be discussing at our directors' meeting on Tuesday, October 3 is the status of our membership. At a time when raptor populations are facing increasing anthropogenic pressures all over the world with many species in decline, our membership is decreasing. We need to share information on the membership trends we're observing, exchange views on what's behind the decline, and rededicate ourselves to a plan for growing our membership. Three strategies we're preparing to deploy are making personal contact with former members to see why they've left RRF and to try to persuade them to rejoin, contacting authors of papers in *The Journal of Raptor Research* who are not members (about 70% of those who author or co-author papers in our journal are not RRF members), and working to retain student members as they complete their academic education and enter their careers. Beyond these efforts, RRF leadership needs to hear from you: what do you think is going on and what should we do about it? Please write!

Another item on leadership's agenda will be a review of the policies and procedures that guide the efforts of RRF's Conservation Committee. Two years ago, following our annual conference in Bakersfield, California, the officers and directors adopted guidance for the committee. This spring and summer, we had our first opportunity to see that guidance perform in a contentious, high-pressure situation: when it was applied to the committee's and board's work on a peer review of documents prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in support of the service's proposal to delist the Bald Eagle. That review was brought to conclusion according to the current policies and procedures; however, during the process of reviewing the documents and preparing comments, there was considerable debate among committee members, officers, and directors about the policies and procedures themselves. Three policies and a procedure that were challenged, and which leadership will be discussing on October 3rd, are: 1) "RRF's purpose in operating a Conservation Committee and in preparing written communications (communications) on contemporary issues involving birds of prey is to provide objective, high-quality scientific information to decision makers."; 2) "RRF will base its communications upon expert, scientific evaluation of relevant scientific information, never upon values or any philosophy of risk management."; 3) "In its communications, RRF may choose to compare or state the likely outcome(s) of different courses of action, based on an evaluation of relevant scientific information. However, RRF will not recommend or condemn any specific course of action that may be under consideration by decision makers or proposed by others. RRF will never take or communicate a position on any proposed law, rule or regulation."; and 4) "The RRF Board will approve all communications prepared by the Conservation Committee. All letters will be signed by the RRF President or her/his designee, following approval by the RRF Board." Again, your officers and directors need to hear from you. What do you think? Are these wise policies, or should they be adjusted? Let us know your thoughts.



Best regards and safe travels to Veracruz. -- Lenny

RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC

OFFICERS

President: Leonard Young Secretary: Angela Matz
Vice-president: David M. Bird Treasurer: James Fitzpatrick

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Eurasian: Fabrizio Sergio	At Large #1: Jemima Parry-Jones
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North American #3: Laurie Goodrich	At Large #6: Daniel E. Varland

For more information about the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. (founded in 1966), please visit the RRF website at: <http://biology.boisestate.edu/raptor>.

Persons interested in birds of prey are invited to join the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF). *Wingspan* is mailed twice each year to all members of RRF. It is available to non-members at a subscription rate of US\$10 per year. Members also receive *The Journal of Raptor Research* (ISSN 0892-1016), which is published quarterly. For membership and subscription information, please contact: Ornithological Societies of North America, 5400 Bosque Boulevard, Suite 680, Waco, TX 76710, USA; 1-254-399-9636 (phone); 1-254-776-3767 (fax); business@osnabirds.org (email); <http://www.osnabirds.org> (web).

Get Involved with RRF!!

If you are interested in becoming more involved with the Raptor Research Foundation, please contact an Officer, Board of Directors member, or Committee chair. There are many opportunities with varying levels of time commitments. Elections for Directors and Officers occur every year; throw your name in the hat. Participate on a committee; the many RRF committees are always looking for additional members! The resolutions committee needs a new chair (see page 10).

Editor's Note

Hello RRF Members -- This is the first edition of *Wingspan* in its electronic form. I've tried some new things, particularly adding more photographs, and would welcome comments on the new format.

Thanks to the following individuals who contributed material for this issue of the *Wingspan*: Nyambayar Batbayar, Sophia Chiang, Kate Davis, Greg George, Jim Grier, Carole Griffiths, Donald Heintzelman Geoff Holroyd, Gene Jacobs, Jeff Lincer, Mike McGrady, Jemima Parry-Jones, Glenn Proudfoot, Keisuke Saito, Daniel Schmidt, Ruth Tingay, Lenny Young, Dan Varland, and Debbie Waters.

Wingspan welcomes contributions from RRF members and others interested in raptor biology and management. Contributions may be submitted by mail (Petra Bohall Wood, *Wingspan*, PO Box 6125, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506 USA), fax (1-304-293-4826), or email (rrfwingspan@mail.wvu.edu). Email is preferred and for long contributions, please send as an MS Word attachment. Deadline for the next issue is **7 February 2007**.

**Reminder: the 2006 annual meeting is almost here;
there is still time to register and attend!**

**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING
at the
4th NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE
Veracruz, Mexico; 3-7 October 2006**

The 4th NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE (NAOC) will be held in Veracruz, Mexico, 3-7 October 2006, and is being jointly organized by the RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION (RRF), American Ornithologists Union, Association of Field Ornithologists, CIPAMEX, Cooper Ornithological Society, Society of Canadian Ornithologists, Waterbird Society, and Wilson Ornithological Society. The NAOC meeting will serve as the annual meeting for RRF in 2006.

The conference theme is "Wings Without Borders," and will feature a rich scientific program, symposia, plenary lectures, business meetings of societies, and social activities. Pre- and post-conference activities will include training workshops, birding, culture, and nature tours. The conference coincides with peak raptor migration season in the world's largest raptor migration bottleneck. Visit the conference web site for more information (URL: <http://www.naoc2006.org>). Key RRF dates for the conference are:

3 October	RRF Board Meeting
4-7 October	Scientific Program
6 October	RRF Business Meeting 5:15 – 6:30

Raptor tours sponsored by the Raptor Research Foundation and led by Bill Clark (RAPTOURS, P. O. Box 531467, Harlingen, TX 78553; 956-364-0415) will be offered before and after the conference. Tours are limited to 12 participants. See the RRF website for detailed itineraries or contact Bill (raptors@earthlink.net).

pre-conference tour -- Sept 29 - Oct 3
post-conference tour -- Oct 8 - 13

**3rd INTERNATIONAL BURROWING OWL SYMPOSIUM
Conservation and Ecology of Burrowing Owls
3 October 2006, Veracruz, Mexico**

The emphasis of the symposium, to be held in conjunction with the NAOC conference, will be to present results of studies on the causes of the decline of the burrowing owl in North America and to review the burrowing owl status and ecology and conservation needs in Mexico.

Contact: Geoff Holroyd, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, Room 200, 4999-98 Ave., Edmonton, AB, T6B 2X3, CANADA; phone 403-951-8689; FAX 403-495-2615; geoffrey.holroyd@ec.gc.ca or Helen Trefry, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, Room 200, 4999-98 Ave., Edmonton, AB, T6B 2X3, CANADA; phone 403-951-8693; FAX 403-495-2615; helen.trefry@ec.gc.ca

UPCOMING MEETINGS

2006

December 2

Wildlife and Wind Energy Conference on December 2, 2006 in the auditorium of the Boehm Science Center (North Campus) at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania in Kutztown, PA, regarding potential siting of utility-scale wind energy facilities in the Central Appalachian states of MD, PA, VA, and WV. Use of utility-scale wind power as a supplemental source of generating electricity is gaining popularity in these four states. An increasing number of wildlife biologists, however, are concerned that utility-scale wind energy development in this region is not an environmentally benign energy source of additional electricity, and that its purported benefits may not adequately offset the potential harm it may cause, despite such opposite claims by many politicians, wind energy companies, and some environmental organizations. This conference was organized to present accurate, objective, state-of-the-art information on this topic in a public forum aimed at an audience consisting of the general public, print and electronic media, governmental officials, non-profit organizations, wildlife and scientific experts, and wind energy companies. For further information contact Donald S. Heintzelman at dons@enter.net or see <http://www.kutztown.edu/acad/geography/wildlifeconf.htm>

2007

September 12-16

Raptor Research Foundation 2007 Annual Conference – Fogelsville, Pennsylvania

Hosted by Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and Hawk Migration Association of North America at the Holiday Inn Conference Center, Fogelsville, near Allentown, Pennsylvania. The RRF board will meet on Wednesday, September 12. The joint RRF-HMANA meeting will begin with a mixer Wednesday evening. New Jersey Audubon's Pete Dunne will serve as Keynote Speaker Thursday morning. Pete has written numerous books on bird watching, including with David Sibley and Clay Sutton, "Hawks in Flight". Paper sessions will be held Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, with an optional afternoon field trip to Hawk Mountain on Friday. Saturday, September 15 will feature a special HMS-hosted symposium on the status of North America migratory birds of prey. All-day field trips will occur Sunday, September 16.

contact: daniel.varland@rayonier.com

October 9-14

Raptor Research Foundation's 2007 Eurasian Conference – Batumi, Republic of Georgia

Hosted by the Georgian Center for the Conservation of Wildlife (GCCW), the meeting will coincide with the peak of raptor migration at the Eastern Black Sea coast. Preliminary meetings and workshops will take place 9-10 Oct, and the main meeting will be 11-13 October. Post-conference fieldtrips will begin 14 October. Further news and developments will be announced shortly via the RRF webpage. For initial inquiries please contact local organizing committee chair Lexo Gavashelishvili: kajiri2000@yahoo.com

2008

September 22-28

Raptor Research Foundation 2008 Annual Conference – Missoula, Montana

The educational organization *Raptors of the Rockies* will host the Raptor Research Foundation Conference in downtown Missoula at the Holiday Inn Parkside. The University of Montana will co-host, and we will have related events all week plus numerous field trips in the area.

2009

September 29 – October 4

Raptor Research Foundation 2009 Annual Conference – Scotland

The RRF 2009 annual conference will be held overseas for the first time, to reflect the global interests of its membership. Hosted by the Scottish Raptor Study Group (www.scottishraptorgroups.org), this event will be held in an exclusive hotel (Atholl Palace Hotel www.athollpalace.co.uk) in the small town of Pitlochry, central Scotland, with a full programme of scientific presentations, workshops and seminars. Social events include the hire of a nearby castle (www.blair-castle.co.uk) for a wild Scottish party and fieldtrips will include the spectacular west coast island of Mull for eagles, otters and lochs. The conference website is currently under construction and will be linked to the RRF website in the near future. Delegate numbers are limited to 300 so early booking is advisable. For further details or to add your name to the mailing list for further announcements, please contact local organizing committee chair Ruth Tingay dimlylit100@hotmail.com with Scotland Conference 2009 as subject header.



If you are interested in hosting a future RRF annual meeting, please contact the RRF Conference Chair, Dan Varland (daniel.varland@rayonier.com), and see the RRF website for guidelines on hosting a conference.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECENT RRF MEETINGS

by Dan Varland

2004 Annual Meeting was held in Bakersfield, California, 10-13 November at the Double Tree Hotel. The event was hosted by the California Hawking Club and was held to coincide with the club's annual field meet. There were 432 in attendance, 175 for the RRF meeting and 257 for the CHC field meet.



Meeting Co-Chair Rick Holderman with his Harris's Hawk Ripley. Photo by Dan Varland.



Helping with the meeting were (from left) Kim Stroud, Nikolle Brown and Angela Matz. Photo by Dave Murnen.



Heading out to attend the BBQ at the California Living Museum are David Bird (with rabbit ears), Ed and Judy Henckel, and Marcel Gahbauer seated behind David. Photo by Dave Murnen.



RRF member Dave Murnen photographed California Hawking Club members during a field trip hunting with Harris's Hawks outside Bakersfield.



One of a number of California Condors viewed during the field trip. Photo by Dan Varland



Weathering yard for California Hawking Club members at the DoubleTree. Photo by Dave Murnen.



Photo by Allison Sheehey



During a field trip to see California Condors at the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, leader Jesse Grantham points out a condor feeding station across a valley. Photo by Dan Varland

2005 Annual Meeting was held in Green Bay, Wisconsin, 12-16 October at the Regency Suites Hotel and KI Convention Center and was hosted by the Cofrin Center for Biodiversity with co-hosts the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Neville Public Museum of Brown County and the Bay Area Bird Club. There were 132 in attendance.



Helping with the meeting were (from left) Bob Howe (Director, Cofrin Center for Biodiversity), John Jacobs, James Johnson, Vicki Medland, and Cindy Bayless (front). Photo by Dan Varland.



Local committee member Noel Cutright. Noel was a key member of the local committee, facilitating critical sponsorships from organizations around Wisconsin. Photo by Dan Varland



The Jacobs brothers, John (left) and Eugene, longtime members of RRF and active participants in the meeting. Photo by Dan Varland



Enjoying themselves after the banquet were (from left) David Bird, Helen Trefry, Kate Davis and Jim Fitzpatrick. Photo by R. Wayne Nelson.



RRF President Brian Millsap (left) and Conference Committee Chair Dan Varland wear "Cheese Hats" at the Board meeting. These were awarded at the banquet to the youngest attendee, Conrad McDonald, & to the person who traveled the farthest, Toru Takeuchi. Judy Henckel & Lenny Young also in photo. Photographer unknown.



Toru Takeuchi, who traveled from Abiko, Japan, wears his cheese hat. Photo by R. Wayne Nelson.



Eugene Jacobs shows a Saw-whet owl to field trip attendees at his Linwood Springs Research Station. Photo by Dan Varland.



Conrad (age 13), the youngest attendee, with Saw-whet Owl. Photo by R. Wayne Nelson.



Outgoing RRF President Brian Millsap (left) accepts a gift at the banquet from VP David Bird for his years of service. Photo by R. Wayne Nelson.



Marge Gibson, Raptor Education Group, Inc., shows the Great Horned Owl Portirio to banquet attendees. Portirio was the late Fran Hamerstrom's owl, who employed her as a lure for raptor trapping and in public education programs. While the exact age of Portirio is unknown, she is known to be in the range of 40 to 45 years. Photo by R. Wayne Nelson.

Meeting attendees on the hawk watching trip at Lake Michigan's Harrington Beach State Park. Photo by Wayne Nelson.



News from the RRF Awards and Grants Committee
by Carole Griffiths and Jeff Lincer

Michael A. Palladini received the 2006 **Steven R. Tully Memorial Grant** for his project "Cooper's Hawk foraging ecology in an interior ponderosa pine forest: response to experimental restoration treatments at an Adaptive Management Area." Michael is a masters student in the Department of Wildlife at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California. His project, although logistically difficult, should produce useful information about the response of a top predator to forest restoration treatments at Gooseneck Adaptive Management Area (GAMA). The thinning and burning treatments implemented at GAMA are being considered by the U.S. Forest Service for wide application in pine forests of the Pacific Northwest. However, there are questions about the impacts of these treatments on top predators and therefore the results of his research will be examined closely by Forest Service scientists and many others. This study will make a significant contribution towards understanding the impacts of proposed silvicultural treatments on the nesting and foraging ecology of Cooper's Hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*), important predators throughout North America. Maintaining healthy populations of this species is important to the health of our forests.

Ricardo Anselmo Pérez León received the 2006 **Dean Amadon Grant**. He is a masters student in tropical forest and biodiversity management and conservation at Centro Agronómico de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE), Turrialba, Costa Rica. His project is the "Evaluation of the role of raptors in the mosaic of habitats, both natural and disturbed, in the national park Montecristo and its zone of influence, during the reproductive season 2007". The National Park Montecristo, the second largest protected natural area in the country, has 26 species of raptors, 46% of the total reported in El Salvador. Montecristo is located on the border with Guatemala and Honduras, where raptors usually move around for hunting and roosting. This project will help understand the distribution of birds of prey in Montecristo National Park, by providing information about the number of species and individuals that inhabit eight different habitats, including natural forest and human made landscape. He will also use information about raptor food habits and their direct relationship with human rural towns, to help to understand the ecological patterns of these birds.

2005 Leslie Brown Grant Recipients



AHON Dibié Bernard, is a 35 year old West African PhD student in Ornithology at the University of Abidjan – Cocody, Côte d'Ivoire [Ivory Coast], which is linked to the AfRap Centre (Afrique Nature International). The title of his project is "The Rufous Fishing-Owl (*Scotopelia ussheri*): distribution and conservation status in Côte d'Ivoire." This study on the endangered (and little-known) Rufous Fishing-Owl not only opens a vast field of research, but can lead to necessary measures for the protection and the conservation of a key component of biodiversity. The general objective is to determine the distribution and the conservation status of this owl in the main coastal protected areas of Côte d'Ivoire (Banco and Azagny NP, Monogaga and Fresco Classified Forests). The expected results include a

database on the distribution and conservation status of the Rufous Fishing-Owl and a map of the present and past distribution of this bird in Côte d'Ivoire. Project activities are to survey the suitable areas where this species is expected in Côte d'Ivoire, to describe the habitat or the habitats frequented by this species, and to lead an investigation on the past and present distribution of the species. The grant will be used to pay a part of the operational field expenses of the project.

The second recipient is **Darcy Ogada**, who says she is “extremely proud” to receive this grant. Leslie Brown pioneered the study of African raptors and she is honored to receive this award and follow in his footsteps in Kenya. She is also happy to be sharing the award with another project studying African owls. Originally from upstate New York, Darcy has lived and studied birds in Kenya for the past 5 years. Her project on Mackinder’s eagle owls will partially fulfill the requirements for a Ph.D. at Rhodes University in South Africa. She is studying the ecology of these uncommon highland owls in human-dominated landscapes in Kenya and her findings will help to conserve this species in the few places it remains outside of protected areas. She plans to use the funds to purchase field reference books, a couple of radio transmitters, and to pay rent for the house she occupies at her field site.



Application instructions and deadlines for RRF grants and awards are available on the RRF website.

News from the RRF Resolutions Committee
by Mike McGrady

The Resolutions Committee of the Raptor Research Foundation has received the following proposed resolution for consideration. The RRF board has approved its consideration by the full membership at the RRF business meeting being held at the 2006 annual meeting in Vera Cruz, Mexico. The resolution reads:

**BALD EAGLE CONSERVATION
IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST**

July 2006

WHEREAS the Bald Eagle is presently listed as a threatened species in the lower 48 States (of the United States of America) and protected under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service published a proposed rule in February 2006 to remove the Bald Eagle in the lower 48 States from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife; and

WHEREAS Bald Eagle management in the State of Arizona has been guided and funded by the multi-agency Southwestern Bald Eagle Management Committee (SWBEMC) since 1984; and

WHEREAS the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program, has prepared a [*Conservation Assessment and Strategy for the Bald Eagle in Arizona*](#), and [*Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of the Bald Eagle in Arizona*](#), that will guide future Bald Eagle management activities in the State of Arizona; and

WHEREAS the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. (RRF) is the world's largest organization for research and conservation of birds of prey;

NOW, THEREFORE, the **RRF RESOLVES** to **SUPPORT** the continued conservation and management of Bald Eagles in the State of Arizona, and implementation of the [*Conservation Assessment and Strategy for the Bald Eagle in Arizona*](#); and

RRF URGES all member agencies of the SWBEMC to sign and fully implement the [*Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of the Bald Eagle in Arizona*](#), establishing an objective process by which to identify and carry out necessary actions to monitor and conserve the Bald Eagle in the State of Arizona once removed from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife.

At the business meeting, RRF members will be able to discuss the resolution, consider proposed modifications and vote on a final version. Supporting documents will be made available on the RRF web site, and in Vera Cruz. A proposer plans to be at the Vera Cruz meeting and aims to participate in any discussion during this proposal's consideration. For members that are unable to make it to the meeting, but would like to comment on it, please send your comments via e-mail to mikejmcgrady@aol.com Your e-mail comments will be included in the discussion in Vera Cruz.

Mike McGrady, current chair of the resolutions committee, will be stepping down after the Vera Cruz meeting. Thanks Mike for your many years as chair! RRF seeks a replacement who, through the resolution process, will help express the will of the RRF and its membership. Interested individuals should contact RRF President Lenny Young or Secretary Angela Matz.

Burrowing Owl Note -- by Jemima Parry-Jones MBE

I have always been an admirer of Burrowing Owls, but I have to say my only experience of them has been in captivity, I kept them for many years, have bred them, watched them grow with their

parents, and hand reared three so that we could use them for demonstration. When you hand rear a bird or animal you learn a great deal more about them than at almost any time. They are enchanting to rear and tremendous fun to have running about the house, although not the cleanest of occupants.

However I had to share this latest piece of learning that they have given me. Last year I bred just one bird, a female, who was hatched and reared by her parents in a man made burrow consisting of a long plastic tube with a nest box at the end. Once she was full grown, I moved her to another enclosure with a spare male. When I had these birds in the UK, I had an enclosure with a concrete base and about 2 feet of soil, with sand over the top and similar style man made nest boxes, so apart from a few desultory attempts at digging their own burrows, they all used the artificial boxes with no problems.

Where I am now, we do not have that facility, and although we put an artificial box in the enclosures, she distained hers with disgust. Five times I had to fill in burrows that she had dug, feeling I have to admit, very mean about doing it because she and I guess her mate worked so hard to dig them.

On her last attempt I did not have the heart to fill it in again as she so obviously wanted to breed, and also so obviously did not want to use the artificial box. So I left her to it. She dug out below the enclosure and to the outside. There is predator wire flat on the ground, and she dug below that. Part of the ground caved in, so she and the male could have got out as the predator wire is not Burrowing Owl proof. I covered it with a mesh that was, but they had not made any attempt to leave; they just wanted to dig their own burrow.

I have recently been away in the UK for three weeks, and on my return, having warned the staff here to keep an eye on her, when I cleaned the enclosure two days later, she shot down the tunnel and disappeared. I tried putting my arm down the hole – probably not a good idea in South Carolina, but I am English so forgot about other nasty things such as snakes – it carried on out of my reach. I checked the outside and as I walked about six feet away from the outside of the enclosure, my heel dropped into the tunnel. I quickly cleared it and again put my arm down, and still could not reach the end. So I covered the hole and made it safe and water proof and considered what I should do next.

I was for leaving her, however I was overruled, and so yesterday having tried to catch her before she disappeared, which I had warned against, we started to dig, very carefully. Had I known just how far and how deep she had gone, I would have been stronger in my desire to leave her. She was only after all trying desperately to do what is the strongest drive in most living things – to breed. We dug and caught the soil and constantly cleared the burrow, it was about five inches in diameter, it turned a right angle twice and she had quite brilliantly followed the substrate of sand in the soil. Where the level of the strata of sand had dropped, she followed it up and down as it changed levels in the soil. The soil above the sand was rock hard, so she had chosen the softest route. The final tunnel, and she had not finished as there were no eggs at this point, was over 12 feet long, turned twice and was at a depth of three feet where we finally caught her.

We were by the end of it filthy dirty, very very sweaty, but mostly staggered and immensely impressed with this huge effort by two tiny owls, only using their feet. It was a tremendous

endeavour, and there is no doubt that Burrowing Owls live up to both their common and scientific names.

NATURAL RESEARCH Ltd -- by Ruth Tingay

Natural Research Ltd (NR) is a research charity registered in Scotland, whose mission is to conduct objective research to underpin the wise management of wildlife resources. NR is closely linked to Natural Research Projects (NRP), a commercial wildlife research organization that specializes in environmental impact assessment for the industrial sector. Profits from NRP are annually distributed to NR to help fund independent non-commercial research on various topics at an international scale.

NR collaborates widely with research and conservation agencies, academics and governmental departments to achieve its goal of high quality research. The charity receives further funding from external grants and awards to support its own research and also that of other, associate researchers, whose objectives match those of NR. While not exclusively working on birds, raptor research features strongly in the charity's research portfolio. Below are some current raptor research projects:



Steller's sea eagle (Russia, Far East):

In collaboration with Russian (Magadan State Reserve), Japanese (Kushiro Wildlife Center) and American scientists (Institute of Wildlife Studies; San Diego Zoo), NR has studied Steller's sea eagles since 1991. Research has included large-scale surveys and monitoring on breeding and wintering grounds, a pilot study of early breeding-time ecology, radio tracking via satellite and individual marking. These studies have helped conservation efforts in areas where poisoning from ingestion of lead from firearms is a problem. [photo 1 of Steller's sea eagle by Mike McGrady]

Vultures (Eurasia):

Since 1997, NR has been collaborating with biologists from the US (Hawk Mountain Sanctuary), Georgia (Georgian Center for Conservation of Wildlife), Armenia (Armenian Society for the Protection of Birds), Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan Ornithological Society) and Iran to examine the ecology and stability of vulture populations in the Caucasus region. In light of the recent poisoning of Gyps vultures in southern Asia, a

recent focus is on regional-scale surveying and monitoring, involving wing-tagging and satellite radio tracking. [photo 2 of vulture chick by Mike McGrady]

Golden eagle (Scotland):

In collaboration with the Scottish Raptor Study Groups, NR is fitting long-lived satellite radio transmitters to juvenile golden eagles to follow their dispersal movements during their early years. The project began in 2004 and early results are providing important information about the habitats of importance to young eagles. Additionally, in 2006 NR launched a long-term DNA monitoring study of Scottish golden eagles, utilizing molted feathers from adults and buccal mouth swabs from nestlings. This study will enable the identification of individual eagles over their lifetimes, which is important for understanding population turnover and survival, especially in areas where persecution remains rife. Also in 2006, NR, together with Haworth Conservation, Alan Fielding and David McLeod, completed a major report for Scottish Natural Heritage (the government's advisor on nature conservation in Scotland) documenting the research undertaken in recent years, building a conservation framework for golden eagles in Scotland, together with management implications and recommendations for further work. [photo 3 of golden eagle chick by Mike McGrady]

Grey-headed fishing eagle (Cambodia):

Teaming with Cambodian biologists (Wildlife Conservation Society), in 2005 NR began the first study of grey-headed fishing eagles in SE Asia. The research surveys have identified a regionally important high-density population in northern Cambodia and studies are currently underway to understand the ecology and biology of this little studied eagle.

Peregrine falcon (UK):

NR has been studying peregrine demography and recruitment in the UK since 2002, in collaboration with the Scottish Raptor Study Groups. Passive Integrated Transponders (PIT tags) have been fitted to over 320 peregrines in southern Scotland and northern England to help study dispersal, longevity, individual lifetime productivity, site fidelity and the effects of persecution on population stability. [photo 4 of Mike McGrady and Justin Grant with peregrine falcon by Ruth Tingay]

Peregrine falcon (Greenland):

In 2006, NR began collaborating with biologists from The Peregrine Fund and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary to fit recently developed tiny satellite transmitters to male peregrine falcons in Greenland, to study their migration across the Davis Strait. Due to the weight constraints of transmitter size, previous research was only possible on female peregrines. The new, lighter transmitters will facilitate a study of male peregrine mortality during migration.

Goshawk (Scotland):

Persecution is the main limiting factor on goshawk population expansion in the UK. To study the effects of persecution on population turnover and recruitment, in 2006 NR began to monitor several goshawk populations in collaboration with the Scottish Raptor Study Groups. This research uses genetic monitoring (molted feathers) to compare turnover rates between persecuted and non-persecuted nest sites in the Scottish Borders. [photo 5 of Malcolm Henderson with goshawk brood by Ruth Tingay]

Madagascar fish eagle (Madagascar):

In 2006, NR began collaboration with The Peregrine Fund, University of Arizona and University of Michigan to study the population and conservation genetics of the critically endangered Madagascar fish eagle. Current research involves studies at the population and individual scale to assess the effects of the species' demography, breeding strategies and extraordinarily low genetic variability on long-term survival. [photo 6 of Madagascar fish eagle by Ruth Tingay]

Hen harrier (UK):

With Haworth Conservation, Alan Fielding and David McLeod, in 2006 NR undertook a scoping study and preliminary analyses towards a conservation framework for the hen harrier in Britain. Related ongoing studies are examining several aspects of hen harrier metapopulation dynamics in Wales.

Further details on these and other NR projects can be accessed at www.natural-research.org. For information or discussions on potential collaborative projects, please contact either NR Director Mike McGrady (mike.mcgrady@natural-research.org) or NR Senior Research Coordinator Ruth Tingay (ruth.tingay@natural-research.org)

Hawk Weekend 2006

September 22 – 24, Duluth, Minnesota

The Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in Duluth, Minnesota is one of North America's best places to experience the spectacle of the fall raptor migration. Migrating birds, including raptors and passerines, concentrate in impressive numbers at the western tip of Lake Superior. Some travel from as far away as the Arctic and pass through Duluth on their way to their wintering areas to the south. Reluctant to cross a large body of water, migrants funnel down the North Shore along the ridges that overlook the city. On a good day, visitors may see hundreds—even thousands—of birds flying by!

Come and celebrate the migration at our annual Hawk Weekend!

Friday evening is "An Evening for Everyone", including a social and refreshments, live birds, a twist on the "Guess-the-Number-of-Hawks Contest", and a presentation about Hawk Ridge and the raptors found there by Debbie Waters, Hawk Ridge education director.

Saturday will offer an expanded variety of field trips and seminars away from the Ridge, and hawkwatching, interpretive programs, banded hawk and passerine demonstrations, optics displays, merchandise, and refreshments at the Hawk Ridge Main Overlook. Saturday evening offers a social and refreshments, our annual member meeting, a "sustainable" dinner, awards, an auction, and a keynote address by Northern Goshawk researcher Dr. Richard Reynolds. Dr. Reynolds is a Research Wildlife Biologist at the Rocky Mountain Research Station (USFS) in Fort Collins, Colorado, and has been studying Northern Goshawks for many years in the western United States.

Sunday will again offer a variety of field trips and many activities at the Hawk Ridge Main Overlook. All activities at the Hawk Ridge Main Overlook are open to the public; everything else requires registration. For more details about Hawk Weekend, check out our website at www.hawkridge.org or contact us at 218.428.6209 or mail@hawkridge.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and BRIEF NEWS ITEMS

News Items

Information on **Steller's sea eagles** and development in northeastern Sakhalin is available at the following URLs or contact Keisuke Saito (k_saito@r8.dion.ne.jp).

http://www.foejapan.org/aid/jbic02/sakhalin/e_documents.html (FoEJ)

<http://www.sakhalin.environment.ru/en/index.php>(Sakhalin EnvironmentWatch)

<http://www.pacificenvironment.org/russia/sakhalin.htm> (Pacific environment)

Publication (in Spanish) available about the **Montejo Raptor Refuge** as a pdf file at:

http://www.naturalicante.com/mochila/Montejo/Montejo%202006/Hoja_INF_29/Hoj-inf-n-9.htm

Ya está publicada la nueva Hoja Informativa sobre el Refugio de Rapaces de Montejo, N° 29, de 230 páginas, realizada por el Dr. Fidel José Fernández y Fernández-Arroyo, y dedicada sobre todo a las aves no paseriformes. Incluye los resultados de los censos de pollos de buitres y alimoches realizados por el autor desde el comienzo del Refugio (hace 31 años); así como gran cantidad de información sobre los censos de cada peña, la alternancia de nidos (también con halcones, búhos, etc.) y la variación de algunos parámetros reproductores (alimoches) durante muchos años; los censos de todos los nidos con éxito de aves de presa realizados por el autor en 2005; y bastantes otras cuestiones (no sólo del Refugio). También contiene un amplio resumen de observaciones, informes y trabajos enviados amablemente por casi un millar de colaboradores desinteresados, durante el último año y medio.

Workshops

Introduction to Raptor Field Techniques – 9-13 October 2006

This 5-day workshop will be held in Stevens Point, WI will be taught by Eugene Jacobs of the Linwood Springs Research Station and Loren Ayers of the Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources. Receive first hand experience working on live raptors: capturing and handling techniques, broadcast call surveys, tree climbing and rappelling, habitat sampling techniques, telemetry equipment and more. Cost is \$425 and space is limited, so register early. For more information visit <http://www.RaptorResearch.com>

Care and Management of Captive Raptors Workshop – 24-27 October 2006

Hosted by the Raptor Center located in St. Paul, MN. This four-day intensive workshop will orient both the novice and expert bird manager to the finer points of caring for and maintaining captive raptors for educational purposes. Highlights include:

- a. Hands-on learning with our expert staff in our internationally renowned clinic
- b. Work with live education raptors and the staff of our education department
- c. Meet clinic veterinarians, including Dr. Pat Redig
- d. Enjoy optional evening workshops and field trips guided by The Raptor Center staff

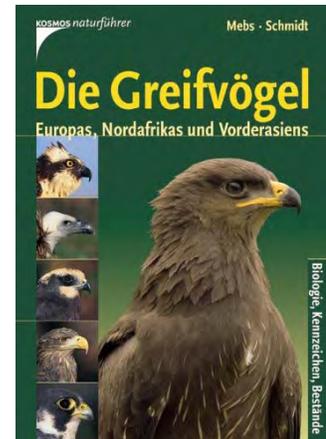
This workshop is four full days, with each day starting at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 5 p.m. Continental breakfast and lunch are included. Please note special dietary restrictions when registering. Cost: Register before September 24, 2006, and the cost is \$550. After September 24,

the price increases to \$600. For more information about the workshop, contact Jennie Bell at bell0288@umn.edu or see our website at <http://www.raptor.cvm.umn.edu/raptor/education/careandmanagementworkshop/home.html>

For Sale

RRF Publications, Pins, and Decals – Back issues of *The Journal of Raptor Research* (TJRR) Vol. 1-30, all Raptor Research Reports, and RRF pins and decals may be purchased directly from RRF (Jim Fitzpatrick, Carpenter St., Croix Valley Nature Center, 12805 St. Croix Trail S, Hastings, MN 55033, USA; email: jim@carpenternaturecenter.org). Some older issues are not available. See <http://biology.boisestate.edu/raptor/JRR.htm> for details and prices. Orders for 4 or more issues receive a 30% discount. Vol. 31+ of TJRR may be purchased from Ornithological Societies of North America (5400 Bosque Blvd, Suite 680, Waco, TX 76710, USA; phone: 1-254-399-9636; email: business@osnabirds.org; web: <http://www.osnabirds.org>).

New book available in German on the **Raptors of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East**. Theodor Mebs & Daniel Schmidt 2006: *Die Greifvoegel Europas, Nordafrikas und Vorderasiens*. Kosmos, Stuttgart, Germany (ISBN-13: 978-3-440-09585-0, ISBN-10: 3-440-09585-1). 49.90 €(Euros). The book has 495 pages, 389 colour photographs and 2 b/w photographs, 346 colour drawings and 46 b/w drawings, size is 27.5 x 20 cm. The first 105 pages are an introduction to the biology of raptors, the following pages deal with 45 breeding raptor species of the Western Palaearctic, every species in a separate chapter. It is a handbook and identification guide for beginners and advanced raptor enthusiasts, also giving up to date numbers of breeding pairs of each species country by country. Theodor Mebs is the retired director of the State Bird Conservation Department of the state of Northrhine-Westphalia and now lives in north-western Bavaria. Daniel Schmidt is a life member of the RRF and director of the NABU-Centre for Bird Protection in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, southern Germany.



To learn more about what RRF is doing for raptor conservation and for RRF members, check out the minutes from the RRF business meetings. Minutes from the annual business meeting held at the annual conference, as well as minutes from quarterly email agendas, are posted on the RRF website.

RECENT THESES ON RAPTORS

The U.S. Geological Survey's Richard R. Olendorff Memorial Library greatly appreciates receiving a copy of each thesis abstracted in *Wingspan*. This allows the Library to make theses available to scientists and managers worldwide through its Raptor Information System (RIS, see *Wingspan* 7(1):16). Please send theses to: Olendorff Memorial Library, U.S. Geological Survey, Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center, Snake River Field Station, 970 Lusk Street, Boise, ID 83706, USA.

Batbayar N. 2004. Nesting ecology and breeding success of cinereous vultures (*Aegypius monachus*) in central Mongolia. MS Thesis, Boise State University. 111 pages.

I studied nesting ecology and breeding success of this little studied vulture in central Mongolia. I compared an area with abundant livestock with two protected areas in which livestock herding was restricted. Nesting density and habitat variance between used and unused vulture nests was considerably different when comparison was made at site level due to terrain morphology and land use. But within the site, habitat variance at used and unused nest sites was smaller. Use of trees and a variety of forms of rocks and cliffs for nest substrate by cinereous vultures indicated that the species is a nest site generalist. Also, the number of nests I found at two study sites reveals that the nest site is not limiting the nesting abundance of this species in central Mongolia. Higher nesting density of breeding pairs in the intensive livestock herding area, compared to the protected area where there were less livestock and few wild ungulates, suggests that food abundance might be an important factor limiting nesting density by cinereous vultures. The nesting of cinereous vultures in central Mongolia started in early March and finished in the middle of August. The overall nesting success was 59% (n=166). The proportion of young fledged per breeding pair per year was 0.6 in Erdenesant and 0.4 in Khustai. Totally, 70% of brood loss occurred during incubation and 30% occurred during the nestling period (n=54). Comparisons of nest site use and breeding performance between the intensive livestock herding area and the protected area suggests that cinereous vultures choose their nesting site in association with food availability. The livestock herding associated with human activity is likely to benefit the vultures. In the Khustai National Park, it is likely that the removal of livestock from the area after establishing the park might have caused a long-term change in food abundance for cinereous vultures in this area.

Chiang, S. N. 2003. Home range and habitat use of Cooper's hawks in urban and natural areas of Southern California. MS Thesis, California State University, Fullerton. 109 pp.

Radio-telemetry data from eight male Cooper's hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*) in urban and natural areas of southern California were collected and analyzed in order to determine home range and habitat use during the breeding and nonbreeding seasons. Home range estimates were calculated using the adaptive kernel method at the 95% contour level. Breeding and nonbreeding season home range estimates (545 ha \pm 244 SD vs. 234 ha \pm 98 SD) differed significantly.

Average annual home range size for urban and natural Cooper's hawks were not statistically different ($359 \text{ ha} \pm 181 \text{ SD}$ vs. $531 \text{ ha} \pm 329 \text{ SD}$). Habitat used by hawks differed from what was available for all birds tested. Natural Cooper's hawks used willow, coast live oak riparian forest, and coast live oak woodland habitats more than expected, whereas three of the four urban Cooper's hawks used parks and ornamental plantings more than expected.

Proudfoot, G. A. 2005. Mitochondrial and nuclear assessment of ferruginous pygmy-owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) phylogeography. Ph.D. dissertation, Texas A&M University, College Station, p 85.

Sequences of the cytochrome b gene and genotypes from 11 polymorphic microsatellite loci were used to assess phylogeographic variation in ferruginous pygmy-owls (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) from Arizona, Mexico, and Texas. Analysis of mtDNA indicated that pygmy-owl populations in Arizona and Texas are unique, with no shared haplotypes. Populations from Sonora and Sinaloa, Mexico, were distinct from remaining populations in Mexico and grouped closest to haplotypes in Arizona. Nested clade analysis of mtDNA sequence data indicated past fragmentation separated pygmy-owls into two major groups: 1) Arizona, Sonora and Sinaloa, Mexico, and 2) southwestern (Nayarit and Michoacan), south-central (Oaxaca and Chiapas), and eastern Mexico, along the eastern slope of the Sierra Madre Oriental from Texas to Central America. In addition, analysis of mtDNA variation in several species of *Glaucidium* support the recommendation that populations of *G. brasilianum* from Mexico, Texas, and Arizona represent a phylogenetically distinct group from populations occurring in South America. The level of separation between the North and South American populations justifies granting species status (*G. ridgwayi*) to the North American population. Analysis of distance matrices derived from genotypes of 11 polymorphic microsatellite loci supports restricted gene flow between pygmy-owl populations in Arizona-Sonora and Sinaloa, and Texas-Tamaulipas and the remainder of states in Mexico. The Arizona-Sonora population showed signs of a recent genetic bottleneck, an observation supported by low population estimates for Arizona (13-117 individuals). Heterozygosity in Arizona, however, was equal to levels recorded throughout Mexico and Texas. Congruent patterns revealed by both mtDNA and nuclear DNA (microsatellites) indicate Arizona and Texas populations are distinct subspecies that require the design and implementation of separate management plans for recovery and conservation efforts.



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