

**2003 Annual Meeting of the Raptor Research Foundation
Hosted by the Alaska Bird Observatory
Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska
September 2-7, 2003**

Organizing Committee:

Nancy DeWitt, Chair	Alaska Bird Observatory
Angela Matz	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Carol McIntyre	National Park Service
Ted Swem	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Michael Goldstein	Chugach National Forest
Lorrie Hawkins	Sheep Creek Wild Bird Center

Scientific Program Chair: Angela Matz

Northern Goshawk Symposium Chair: Clint Boal, Texas Tech University

Sponsors (\$500+):

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Alaska Region
Alaska Bird Observatory
Denali National Park & Preserve
USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region
Alaska Department of Fish & Game – Division of Wildlife Conservation
National Park Service, Alaska Support Office
Chugach National Forest
USGS – Alaska Science Center
Tongass National Forest
Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve
ABR, Inc. Environmental Research & Services
Yukon-Charley National Preserve

Contributors (In-kind donations, and contributions under \$500):

Anchorage Audubon Society
Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau
John DeLapp
Dianne's Restaurant
Hilton Anchorage
HDR Alaska, Inc.
Odom Company
Rite-in-the-Rain
Silver Gulch Brewing & Bottling, Inc.

Publicity: Early publicity for the conference included flyers at the New Orleans meeting and announcements in the *Ornithological Newsletter*, *The Wildlifer*, *Wingspan* and ABO's newsletter. Announcements were also posted on the RRF and Alaska Bird Observatory (ABO) web sites, and sent to the "Bird Words" E-mail group for editors of bird-related publications.

Registration circulars for the conference were sent to all RRF members in late March, five months prior to the conference. Circulars were also sent to a number of avian biologists and managers in Alaska. An e-mail announcement was sent to ABO members two weeks prior to the conference.

An extensive web site for the conference was developed in December 2002, with new information added on a fairly regular basis. The site include information on planning a trip to Alaska, links to numerous resources, abstract submission instructions, field trip information, and a printable registration form. The schedule of presentations was added one month before the conference, as well as the list of people preregistered.

Registration: Registration fees were largely based on those charged at prior meetings, as well as a budget that estimated 200 attendees and healthy sponsorships. We established a one-day fee to encourage Anchorage-area residents to attend, and then offered a half-day fee for people wishing to attend the Alaska raptor session on the last afternoon. We had 178 people register for the conference, including ten volunteers whose registration fee was waived. Of the paying registrants, 80 (48%) were RRF members, 56 (33%) were nonmembers, and 32 (19%) were full-time students. Registrations were quite a bit lower than anticipated. Federal agencies had their travel budgets slashed earlier in the year, so this may have resulted in fewer attendees.

The fees and number of people paying (in parentheses) each fee are listed below.

	<u>Early (by June 1)</u>	<u>Mid (by Aug 1)</u>	<u>Late</u>
RRF members	\$110 (27)	\$125 (29)	\$145 (18)
Non-members	\$120 (12)	\$135 (13)	\$155 (26)
Students	\$60 (18)	\$75 (9)	\$95 (5)
Lifetime Members	\$0 (3)	\$0 (1)	\$0 (1)
One-day fees	\$50 (5)		
Half-day fee (Sat.)	\$25 (2)		
Volunteers	\$0 (10)		

The pattern for registration (not including volunteers) follows:

People registered by 1 st deadline	60 (36%)
People registered by 2 nd deadline	51 (30%)
Late registration by mail/phone	33 (20%)
Registration at conference	24 (14%)

All registration was handled through the Alaska Bird Observatory, with 112 people paying by credit card, four by purchase order, 52 by check, and one by cash. It was important to have a phone line and credit card machine at our registration desk at the Hilton, as most transactions were by credit card. Future conference organizers need to factor in their budgets the finance charge by banks for credit card transactions, which was 3.25% for ABO.

Our printed refund policy for registration fees was that refunds would only be issued prior to August 1, less a 10% processing fee. Only two registrants were unable to attend the conference—one due to a family medical issue and the other was weathered in on Wrangel Island in Russia. The local committee chose to issue full refunds to both.

Additionally, we requested a \$25 guest fee for attendees with a spouse or partner that wished to attend the evening receptions and picnic. Fourteen people paid the guest fee. Lifetime members were also asked to pay the guest fee to help cover the cost of food.

Social Events

Ice-breaker Reception: This event was held in the Denali Room at the Hilton on Wednesday, September 3 from 6:30-9:30 p.m. Due to budget concerns and requests for plenty of “networking time,” we elected not to have entertainment at the reception. Volunteers from a local bird rehabilitation facility brought three raptors to the event, which seemed to be popular with attendees. Registration was held concurrently.

Poster Session and Reception: The poster session was held in the Denali Room at the Hilton on Thursday, September 4.

Barbecue: A barbecue was held at Kincaid Park on Friday, September 5 for approximately 130 people. School buses were rented to transport people from the hotel. One of our intents was to get people away from the hotel to view some Alaska scenery. A covered facility and kitchen were rented at Kincaid, but the weather cooperated so well we only used the kitchen. Jeff Hughes and Mike McDonald from the Alaska Department of Fish & Game marinated and barbecued tasty chicken, and the rest of the food was catered. After dinner, folks were treated to great views of Mt. McKinley, the Alaska Range, Cook Inlet, and a lovely sunset.

The entire barbecue cost us \$2,265, which included insurance, facility and bus rental, supplies, and food. Most of the beer was donated for the event. In hindsight, I feel we should have charged a separate fee for the barbecue, or raised registration fees to accommodate this social. The former would have given us a better idea how many people planned to attend the event. People were asked on their registration form if they intended to attend the barbecue, but quite a few who had not checked the box ended up attending. Also, some people were not aware that their registration fee included the barbecue, although we thought this was clear on the registration form. Additionally, at least one of Friday’s moderators announced several times that the barbecue was “free” for registrants, but clearly not everyone heard the announcements.

Banquet: The annual awards banquet was held in the Hilton’s Aleutian Room on Saturday, September 6. No formal entertainment was provided; instead, Bob Ritchie was invited to be the evening’s master of ceremonies and do a little stand-up comedy. An auction following the presentation of awards proved to be rather entertaining and raised \$910. Gordon Court donated two mounted photos and indicated he would like to donate more for future meetings (Gord.Court@gov.ab.ca). One person reported that she missed formal entertainment or dancing at the event.

At least 82 people attended the banquet, including 20 students. The Hilton’s food was pricey, costing us just over \$39/person with the service charge. In keeping with tradition, students were offered a greatly discounted banquet fee (\$20). Others were charged \$40, which did not generate enough profit to subsidize the student meals. Rather, we intended registration fees to offset this. I believe it is important to continue subsidizing student attendance at the banquet, and future conference budgets should reflect this.

A number of registrants from government agencies waited until arriving at the conference to pay for the banquet, since they use their per diem to cover this. On future registration forms, I

would recommend including a box people can check if they plan to attend the banquet but not pay until their arrival. This will help the local committee and catering staff with their planning.

Field Trips: Due to the variety of activities that generally appeal to Alaska visitors (fishing, sea kayaking, flightseeing, etc.), we chose to offer just three organized field trips. The conference web site provided a number of recommendations and contacts for day trips and extended adventures. We also provided a handout on hawk-watching opportunities near Anchorage.

Field trips were organized by ABO with assistance from Denali National Park and the Denali Foundation. A pre-conference day trip to the Kenai Fjords was attended by 25 people. All reported clear skies, smooth water, excellent glacier-calving activity, and sightings of whales, otters, sea lions, seabirds, and seals. Nineteen people signed up for a morning birding trip around Anchorage on September 7. George Matz from the Anchorage Audubon Society volunteered to lead the trip, while three vans and drivers were provided by Chugach National Forest. Although most migratory birds had departed, the group sighted a number of interesting birds and at least one moose.

The Denali Foundation offered us an excellent trip package in Denali National Park, which included three nights lodging at their elderhostel campus, meals, two receptions, a slide presentation, an all-day bus trip into the park, and transportation to the park entrance the next day. Twenty-six people participated in the trip. The group reported clear weather with great views of Mt. McKinley and sightings of grizzly bear, caribou, Dall Sheep, Golden Eagles, moose, and wolves. A van was chartered to provide 14 people with transportation between Anchorage and Denali. The others rented cars or took the train.

Scientific Program: Clint Boal from Texas Tech University requested that we include a Northern Goshawk Symposium at the conference, which ended up being almost half the papers presented. Symposium abstracts were submitted to Clint, who subsequently organized the papers into sessions and then submitted the information to Angela Matz, the Scientific Program Chair. Chairs for future symposia should emulate Clint and work closely with the Scientific Program Chair on details such as scheduling, abstract formatting, and providing session chairs.

The deadline for abstract submission was June 1, approximately three months before the conference. Fifty-two abstracts were received for the general sessions, with several submitted after the deadline and two pre-conference cancellations. All late abstracts were accepted, but the Scientific Program Chair retained the right to not accept late abstracts, especially after Aug. 15. Papers were divided into seven general sessions. Thirty-seven abstracts were received for the goshawk symposium (five after the deadline), four of which were placed in the general sessions, and there was one cancellation.

Presentation format was either in PowerPoint or 35 mm slides. Session personnel included the session chair and a technical person who was in charge of running both the PowerPoint presentations and the slide projectors. PowerPoint presentations were loaded onto dedicated laptops and run before the sessions by the Scientific Program Chair or the technical assistants. In the future, deadlines for loading presentations will be earlier so that all technical issues can be successfully resolved. In particular, future presenters will be asked to limit the size of their PowerPoint presentations by inserting low-resolution photographs and graphics and minimizing the use of memory-intensive transitions. In-session technical difficulties were resolved with the help of the technical assistants, the Scientific Program Chair, or the A/V contractors. All 35mm slide presentations went off without a problem. There was one no-show

at the conference, but this was anticipated and the cancellation did not affect other presenters. Speakers were allowed 20 minutes for their presentation, questions, and answers. One speaker ignored the time limit, but he had been placed in the last time slot of the last session of the day due to his previously observed propensity to exceed presentation time limits.

Seventeen poster abstracts were submitted, with one presenter having to cancel but then making it to the conference. One poster presenter had a video, which was displayed on a TV/VCR rented by the conference committee. During this conference, additional uses of this equipment made the rental marginally cost-effective, but future organizers should gauge this before renting this equipment for a single poster or presentation.

The local committee used a good mix of our own or borrowed equipment (laptops, projectors, and 35mm slide projectors for the two concurrent sessions and a 35mm projector for the slide preview room, extra slide carousels, and laser pointers) and rental equipment (timers for the oral presentations, poster boards with setup and takedown labor). The A/V contractors also assisted with setup for the oral presentations, including synchronizing the laptops with their projectors (which is not guaranteed to happen even if it did only five minutes before), setting up the timer units, and room setup.

Sales: Coffee mugs were provided to everyone paying full registration fees and to volunteers helping one half-day. We ordered 180 mugs but would have benefited from more, as several people wanted to purchase additional ones. Rite-in-the-Rain sent us 160 hawkwatcher's journals to include in the "Anchorage" goodie bags we had purchased from the Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB). ACVB also provided us with free notepads, buttons, local event calendars, and postcards to include in everyone's goodie bag.

We printed 110 t-shirts featuring a Rough-legged Hawk drawn by Fairbanks artist and falconer Bill Tilton. We found it very helpful to ask people on their registration form what size t-shirt they wore, if they planned to purchase one. This resulted in us buying a lot more XXL shirts than I would have otherwise ordered. Several t-shirts were given to volunteers, and all but four of the remaining shirts (size small) were sold. Most sold for \$15 the first two days, and we marked down the price to \$12 the last day.

Vendors & Exhibitors: Despite invitations to 30 artists and businesses in Alaska and North America, the only entities requesting a table were the Alaska Bird Observatory and the Raptor Research Foundation. No exhibitor fees were charged to these organizations. We also waived the exhibitor fee for the Bird Treatment & Learning Center so they could bring some raptors to the evening socials. Rite-in-the-Rain was interested in a table but had a scheduling conflict, so they sent free products instead. The Hilton charged us \$50 per exhibitor table, which was paid for by the National Park Service. Lack of attendance by exhibitors may have been due to the high cost of shipping materials to Alaska.

Printed Materials: The registration booklet was designed in-house at ABO. Gates of the Arctic National Park and Yukon-Charley Preserve covered the cost of printing the booklets, but we had to spend \$915 in postage to mail them. All booklets mailed outside of the U.S. had to be inserted in envelopes for international mailing. The mailing labels we purchased from OSNA were barely readable, so we requested a second batch that wasn't much better.

Denali National Park & Preserve (DNP&P) provided staff support for doing the layout and design for the conference program and abstract book. DNP&P also paid for the printing of

160 programs, which turned out to be fewer than we needed due to late registrations and requests for extras (which we could have sold). We provided programs to everyone who paid full registration fees, and copies of the general information and schedule to volunteers and one-day registrants. A number of attendees misplaced their programs and wanted replacements. I encourage future conference organizers to label programs with registrant's names to help reunite lost programs with their owners.

Financial Summary: The total cost to organize and host 2003 RRF conference was \$50,939, not including volunteer time. Expenses include ABO's staff and travel costs (\$9,213, of which \$2,606 was donated), field trip costs of \$12,755 (a small profit was realized from field trips), \$898 for credit card finance charges, and over \$2,400 that we had to pay the Hilton to meet our contractual hotel room minimum.

Several members of the organizing committee did an excellent job recruiting sponsors and contributors to offset almost \$18,000 of our expenses. Without their efforts, the low registration fees we charged would have not come close to covering our costs. Instead, our cash and in-kind revenue totaled \$57,463, leaving a net income of \$6,523 to support the Raptor Research Foundation.

Financial statements are attached.

Raptor Research Foundation 2003 Annual Meeting - Financial Report

Income	<u>cash</u>	<u>in-kind</u>	<u>total</u>
Registration Fees	\$19,274		\$19,274
Banquet Fees	\$2,980		\$2,980
Field Trips	\$13,471		\$13,471
Vendor/Exhibitor Fees	\$0		\$0
t-shirts	\$1,311		\$1,311
Auction	\$910		\$910
Other	\$520		\$520
Sponsorships/Donations	\$8,950	\$10,047	\$18,997
Total Income	\$47,416	\$10,047	\$57,463

Expenses

Meeting Room/A-V Costs	\$2,989	\$500	\$3,489
Breaks & Receptions	\$10,267		
Banquet	\$3,226		\$3,226
Barbecue	\$824	\$1,597	\$2,421
Field Trips	\$12,755		\$12,755
Vendor/Exhibitor Fees		\$300	\$300
t-shirts	\$794		\$794
Mugs	\$774		\$774
Program Layout & Design		\$1,200	\$1,200
Printing	\$153	\$2,100	\$2,253
Postage	\$1,011		\$1,011
Supplies	\$225	\$199	\$424
Poster Board Rental		\$450	\$450
Credit Card Finance Chgs	\$898	\$10	\$908
Phone Calls/Line Rental	\$60	\$35	\$95
VIP Lodging		\$1,050	\$1,050
Insurance	\$400		\$400
ABO costs	\$6,517	\$2,606	\$9,123
Total Expenses	\$40,893	\$10,047	\$50,940

Amount returned to RRF

\$6,523.18

2003 RRF Conference - In-Kind Support

Nat. Park Service - Alaska Support Office	
Hilton meeting room rental	\$500
Booth spaces	\$300
poster board rental	\$450
phone line	\$35
Kincaid Park rental	\$530
	<hr/>
	\$1,815
National Parks	
Denali - program printing	\$1,335
Denali - program layout	\$1,200
Gates of the Arctic - circular printing	\$400
Yukon-Charlie - circular printing	\$365
	<hr/>
	\$3,300
Forest Service	
bus rental	\$720
bags	\$40
supplies	\$159
3 vans for local field trip	?
	<hr/>
	\$919
Jeff Hughes - food & supplies for barbecue	\$32
Dianne's - extra food	?
Silver Gulch - beer	\$240
John DeLapp - beer	\$75
Hilton	free, 2-room suite and VIP upgrade
	\$1,050
	pens
	?
DSB	credit card machine rental
	\$10
A-V equipment provided by:	
	ABO
	USFWS
	USDA Forest Service
Plus volunteer time!	\$2,724