

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At a time when membership of ornithological societies in general has been decreasing, RRF is attempting to buck the trend by strengthening our appeal and relevance to a wider audience, particularly to our international colleagues as well as the next generation of raptor researchers. In addition to our lower subscription rates for students (all geographic areas) and members in less-developed countries, RRF has been busy with the following new initiatives (more details about these activities can be found inside this edition) -

- Our Southern Hemisphere Director, Miguel Saggese, has worked tirelessly to make RRF more accessible to members & potential new members in Latin America. His accomplishments (with a team of helpers) include the translation of *Wingspan* into Spanish and, in collaboration with Miguel Ferrer (Spain), a Spanish version of the Raptor Research and Management Techniques book is due shortly for publication.
- Our Treasurer, Angela Matz (USA) has recently led a team who have inventoried and organised six pallets full of *JRR* back-issues, which had been gathering dust and mouse-droppings inside a US warehouse. Sets of (now clean!) journals are being distributed free of charge to public-access organisations and institutions in Africa, Asia and South America, using money from our Endowment Fund to cover the shipping costs.
- At the Scotland Board meeting, our Directors voted to expand the focus of the Conservation Committee and establish regional Conservation sub-committees in South America, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australasia. We are currently seeking a Conservation Committee Chair to lead this effort.
- Also at the Scotland meeting, our Directors appointed Travis Booms (USA) as the Chair of the newly-formed Early Career Raptor Researchers Committee. In addition to organising special events and activities, Travis will represent this group at future RRF Board meetings.
- Miguel Saggese (Southern Hemisphere Director) and Libby Mojica (Conference Committee Chair) convened an ad-hoc committee in January 2010 to upgrade the RRF website. At the time of writing, this committee was preparing to submit its ideas for the Board's approval. It is anticipated that the revamped website will be live later this spring.
- RRF joined Facebook in December 2009, to increase our exposure and find new ways of interacting with current and potential members. Our Facebook page has attracted an increasing number of 'fans', some of whom we hope will convert to becoming RRF members over the coming months.



None of these initiatives (along with countless other behind-the-scenes activities) would be possible without a core group of individuals who contribute their time and talents to ensure that RRF remains not only solvent and functional, but also the world's leading society of professional and amateur raptor researchers. This year we thank out-going President Lenny Young (USA) and Director John Smallwood (USA), and welcome in-coming new Directors Torgeir Nygard (Norway) and Mark Anderson (South Africa), as well as returning Directors Gary Santolo (USA) and Clint Boal (USA). As you'll read later in this edition, there are several opportunities for members to get involved with RRF leadership activities, either as Directors, Officers or Committee Chairs. I hope that some of you will consider standing for these positions in the forthcoming elections – rumour has it that Gary Santolo will buy drinks for all the successful candidates at the 2010 annual conference in Colorado!

Best, Ruth



RRF Board and officers meeting 2009. From lower left: Saggese, Wood, Sergio, Goodrich, Swem, Morrison, Matz, Kochert (hidden), Bednarz, Santolo, Dykstra (hidden), Collopy, Saggese, McIntyre. Booms and Tingay not pictured. Photos by Ruth Tingay.

RRF JOINS FACEBOOK

In late December 2009, we joined the Facebook community by creating an RRF page. In a little over a month, we have attracted over 300 'fans' (the equivalent to a third of the RRF membership!) and hope this trend will continue. Our Facebook page is used to highlight RRF activities to a wider audience, with the hope that some will consider becoming RRF members.

Facebook also offers an opportunity for 'fans' to interact with like-minded individuals from all over the world – our current Facebook fan-base includes people from 40 countries: US, England, Canada, South Africa, Mexico, India, Spain, Italy, Northern Ireland, Argentina, Kenya, Lebanon, Croatia, Scotland, Columbia, Czech Republic, Sweden, Macedonia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Norway, El Salvador, Germany, Turkey, Australia, Netherlands, Indonesia, Palestine, Ecuador, Nepal, Irish Republic, Cambodia, Portugal, Wales, Austria, Belgium, Panama, Mongolia, New Guinea, Venezuela.

Come and join us and show your support!

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Raptor-Research-Foundation/223612879731?v=info>

RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INCOFFICERS

President: Ruth Tingay
 Vice-president: Ted Swem
 Secretary: Joan Morrison
 Treasurer: Angela Matz

DIRECTORS

Eurasian: Fabrizio Sergio	At Large #1: Jim Bednarz
Southern Hemisphere: Miguel Saggese	At Large #2: Clint Boal
At Large Outside North America: Mark Anderson	At Large #3: Michael W. Collopy
North America #1: Petra Wood	At Large #4: Carol McIntyre
North America #2: Gary Santolo	At Large #5: Torgeir Nygard
North America #3: Laurie Goodrich	At Large #6: Mike Kochert

For more information about the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. (founded in 1966), please visit the RRF website at: <http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/>.

Persons interested in birds of prey are invited to join the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF). *Wingspan* is emailed twice each year to all members of RRF and is available on the RRF website in English and Spanish. 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).

RRF MEMBERSHIP: SPECIAL COUNTRIES RATE

RRF members from all nations EXCEPT the following are eligible for the Special Countries Rate of \$30 –

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States.

Just select the ‘Special Countries Rate’ option when subscribing on-line (www.osnabirds.org)

Editor’s Note – Thanks to the following contributors for this issue of the *Wingspan*: Clint Boal, Travis Booms, Jean-Luc Cartron, Kate Davis, Rob Domenech, Laurie Goodrich, Gene Jacobs, Shiv Kapila, Kristen Keyes, Karla Kinstler, Angela Matz, Joan Morrison, Roberto Muriel, Torgier Nygard, Julie O’Conner, Steve Redpath, Judy Scherpelz, Ruth Tingay, Rick Watson, Susan Whaley. Thanks to Miguel Saggese and his assistants for the Spanish translation of *Wingspan*.

Wingspan welcomes contributions from RRF members and others interested in raptor biology and management on topics specific to raptors. Contributions may be submitted by mail (Petra Bohall Wood, *Wingspan*, PO Box 6125, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506 USA) 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 **15 August 2010**.

Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. 2010 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are open for the 2010 Raptor Research Foundation (RRF) elections!

1. Officers:

President-elect: After one year as President-Elect, the incumbent shall assume the Presidency and serve a two-year term beginning at the end of the Annual Meeting in 2011.

Vice president: The Vice President serves a two-year term, beginning at the end of the Annual Meeting in 2010.

2. Directors:

North American Director #1 (must reside in North America)

Southern Hemisphere Director (should reside in Southern Hemisphere)

Director At Large #1 (no geographic restrictions)

Director At Large #4 (no geographic restrictions)

Directors serve a three-year term beginning on January 1, 2011.

Qualifications/duties for each Director position include:

- ✓ Current regular, honorary or life member
- ✓ Resident of the representative geographical district (if applicable)
- ✓ Communicate and vote on official business by email
- ✓ Attend the annual board meeting during the annual conferences as often as possible during the term (Directors)

Details on the terms and duties of Directors are described in the RRF bylaws at the RRF website:

<http://raptorresearchfoundation.org/rrfbylaw.htm>

Nomination deadline and contact information:

Please send all nominations to Joan Morrison (RRF secretary), by Friday, April 17, 2010 to Joan.Morrison@trincoll.edu OR snail mail, Joan Morrison, c/o Dept. of Biology, Trinity College, 300 Summit St., Hartford, CT 06106

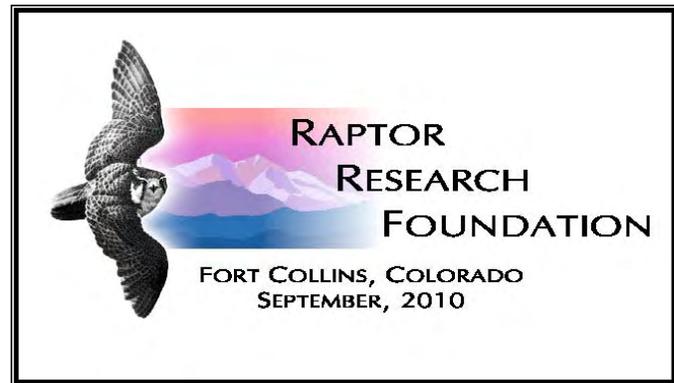
Please note: If you are nominating someone other than yourself, please receive the candidate's approval before you submit their name.

All candidates need to submit a short (250 words or less) biographical summary describing their background, RRF affiliation and primary reasons that they want to serve. The summaries must be submitted to the RRF Secretary, Joan Morrison, by **Friday May 14, 2010**. The biographical summaries will be included on the RRF election ballot.

**RAPTOR RESEARCH
FOUNDATION
2010 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**Fort Collins, CO
22-26 September**

Raptors in a Changing World



Plan to attend the 2010 Annual Conference for the Raptor Research Foundation, set for September 22-26 in Fort Collins, Colorado. The conference theme, “Raptors in a Changing World”, seeks to explore the role of raptor research in a world of energy development, human conflicts, and emerging diseases. Judy Scherpelz, Executive Director of the non-profit organization, Rocky Mountain Raptor Program (RMRP) is host of the event, and EDM, International, a leader in addressing avian interactions with utility infrastructure, co-hosts.



In addition to the general paper sessions, issues of impacts on raptors will be explored through one symposium and four workshops. Keith Bildstein, Director of Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania, will chair the symposium “Using Bird Banding Data to Study Movement Ecology or Demography”. Kate Davis, Executive director of Raptors of the Rockies in Florence, Montana, will chair “Raptors in Education”, Nick Komar, a researcher with the Center for Disease Control in Fort Collins, Colorado, will chair “Raptors and Zoonotic Infections”. Brian Washburn, researcher for the USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services National Wildlife Research Center’ Ohio Field Station in Sandusky, Ohio will chair “Raptor/Human Conflicts” and Rick Harness, with EDM, Int’l in Fort Collins, CO will chair “Raptors and Energy Development”.

The special speaker for the conference is Pat Shipman, Ph.D. Dr. Shipman is currently at Pennsylvania State University. Her forte is the history of anthropology and the study and interpretation of fossils. She is the author of *Taking Wing*, an exploration of archaeopteryx and the evolution of bird flight. Her presentation will further this exploration by looking at the newest discoveries in this field.

There will be many opportunities to explore the unique environments located in the area. Fieldtrips include visits to Rocky Mountain National Park, to view nesting sites and migration; the Soapstone Prairie Natural Area, which not only contains highly unique ecosystems, but is home to the internationally known Lindenmeier archaeological site; hiking at Pawnee Buttes, the setting for James



Michener's *Centennial*; and Dinosaur Ridge near Red Rocks Amphitheater for birdwatching. Additional fieldtrips will be added in the coming months.



Fort Collins is beautiful any time of the year, however September in this small, historic city, is stunning. Not only is the town awash in the peak of fall color, but golden aspen trees abound in the high country. Set against the backdrop of 14,000 foot peaks, Fort Collins is the gateway to the Rocky Mountains. A variety of ecosystems, from short-grass prairie to high mountain ranges, are within an hour's drive from the town. Late September will offer a peak of fall color for those who choose to experience the aspen in the high country.

Home to Colorado State University, Fort Collins has a national reputation for offering a high quality of life.

It offers many amenities for the outdoor enthusiasts, including miles of bike/running trails, a bike library for those who wish to explore the area by bicycle, several fitness and climbing centers that offer day passes, fishing on the scenic Poudre River, to name a few. Fort Collins also has a reputation for the number of world-renowned microbreweries including New Belgium Brewing Company. Family members that accompany attendees will be delighted with the variety of activities available to them.

A registration circular for the conference will be emailed to RRF members in March. For information on the conference and to register online visit the websites: <http://www.rmrp.org/> or <http://raptorresearchfoundation.org/>. Questions? Contact Judy Scherpelz (Local Committee Chair); judy@rmrp.org or 970-484-7756 or Libby Mojica (RRF Conference Committee chair; ejmojica@wm.edu). For both of these please put RRF Conference as the subject.

Saturday Symposium - RAPTORS IN EDUCATION

We will enjoy a full day of papers from raptor educators and handlers discussing a wide variety of topics. Experts will share methods, strategies, and goals in using raptors to provide educational programs. We will also cover federal regulations and tips for bird care and training. We would like to provide a special one-day registration fee for educators interested in attending the session. To participate or for more information, contact symposium organizer KATE DAVIS, Executive Director of Raptors of the Rockies, raptors@montana.com, or phone 406-273-6061 days.



UPCOMING MEETINGS

Raptor Research Foundation 2011 Annual Conference – October 26-30, Duluth, Minnesota

The Natural Resources Research Institute and Department of Biology at the University of Minnesota-Duluth will host the 2011 RRF conference at the Radisson Hotel Duluth-Harborview in downtown Duluth. Co-hosts include Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory and Duluth Audubon. Organizers: Dr. Gerald J. Niemi, (University of Minnesota-Duluth) and Dr. Matthew Ettore (US EPA Mid-Continent Ecology Division). Contact: Libby Mojica ekmojica@wm.edu

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR 2010 HMANA CONFERENCE

The 2010 Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) conference will be hosted by Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory held in Duluth, Minnesota **April 15-18, 2010**. Positioned at the southwestern tip of magnificent Lake Superior, Duluth offers a mix of great birding, picturesque scenery and a terrific spring raptor migration. April birding in Northern Minnesota offers a wide variety of boreal species, winter specialties, northern owls and spring migrants as the convergence of three different biomes maximizes the number of different species to be seen.



The 2010 conference will feature scientific presentations, informative posters, entertaining keynote speakers, a silent auction, fantastic northern-specialty field trips as well as free shuttle service from the conference site to Hawk Ridge's Spring Hawk Count site!

Our conference will open on Thursday afternoon with our annual board meeting and **membership meeting** followed by a Welcome Social and introductions. Friday and Saturday will be filled with speakers, presentations and field trips. We'll have programming available from sunrise to sunset each day, and we'll offer the same **field trips** on Friday AND Saturday so you don't have to choose between the speakers you want to hear and the birds you want to see!

There is an open **call for papers** and posters on our conference website. If you're interested in presenting your work at this conference, please visit www.hmana.org or www.hawkridge.org for submission details.

You may **register** online, by mail or by phone. Field trips and banquets are optional, so you can customize your conference weekend to suit your greatest interests.

Evening banquets will feature delicious food (vegetarian options are available) and fascinating speakers. We are excited to announce that **L. David Mech**, Senior Research Scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey will recap his career of 50 years of wolf research at our Saturday evening banquet!

Detailed conference schedule, open call for papers, registration forms, lodging/travel information and other conference information are available at our website, accessible through either www.hmana.org or www.hawkridge.org (click on the conference logo). For more information, contact Conference Coordinator Julie O'Connor at HMANA2010@aol.com or 218-348-2291.

First announcement: An international conference “**Gyrfalcons and Ptarmigan in a Changing World**” convened by The Peregrine Fund, Boise State University, and the U.S. Geological Survey from **1-3 February 2011**, in Boise, Idaho, U.S.A. We invite scientists, land managers, policy analysts, and other conservationists from around the world to explore evidence for a range of environmental changes (climate, contaminants, disease, development) in arctic ecosystems with a focus on the Gyrfalcon and its principal prey, ptarmigan, as models of predator-prey relationships. The conference aims to predict effects and outcomes of global climate change on arctic predators and prey, identify areas of uncertainty, and develop global strategies for measuring and mitigating them. The proceedings will be published in what we expect will be a landmark publication of information, ideas, and strategies. For details please visit: www.peregrinefund.org/gyr_conference/ or contact us at tpf@peregrinefund.org -- Rick Watson

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2009 RRF ANNUAL CONFERENCE: PITLOCHRY, SCOTLAND

Submitted by Ruth Tingay (Chair, Local Organising Committee)

The 2009 RRF annual conference was held in Pitlochry, Scotland, from 29th September – 4th October. Hosted by the Scottish Raptor Study Groups, 283 delegates (including 37 students) from 34 countries gathered at The Atholl Palace Hotel for this international six-day meeting. The conference was opened by Professor Ian Newton, followed by Professor Steve Redpath (Aberdeen University) who delivered the plenary lecture. A total of 72 oral and 41 poster presentations were scheduled in the scientific programme. In addition to the general raptor sessions, special symposia included Scottish Raptors, Persecution, Migration & Wintering, *Haliaeetus*, Reintroduction and Conservation Management.

A total of 11 half-and full-day fieldtrips were offered throughout the week, including trips to several whisky distilleries, a working grouse moor, and some of Scotland's finest wildlife locations such as the Isle of Mull and Speyside/The Cairngorm Mountains. Social events included a mid-week private party at Blair Castle, where 250 delegates enjoyed an evening of whisky-tasting and ceilidh-dancing in the Great Ballroom. The traditional Awards Banquet was held at the Atholl Palace Hotel on the last night, with entertainment provided by the Highland's premier drumming band, *Clanadonia*, whose thunderous percussion and tribal beats closed the conference with a bang!

Many thanks to the conference sponsors, whose generosity allowed us to convene at such a splendid venue: Scottish Natural Heritage, Natural Research, RSPB, Natural England, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Countryside Council for Wales, Adelphi Distillery, British Trust for Ornithology, Haworth Conservation and Scottish Power.

Thanks also to the hard-working local organising committee, especially Gordon Riddle, Wendy Mattingley and Malcolm Henderson, as well as others who helped out either on the registration desk, as session chairs, or as field trip leaders. Finally, a special thank you to all the delegates who made the effort to participate and whose presence made this event such an enjoyable occasion.



Local committee members Justin Grant, Malcolm Henderson & Gordon Riddle at the registration desk. Photo by Ruth Tingay



The conference logo was designed and donated by local artist Keith Brockie.



Adelphi Distillery designed a special label and provided a free whisky miniature in each delegate's bag. Larger bottles sold out during the conference! Photo by Ruth Tingay.



250 delegates were taught ceilidh dancing inside Blair Castle. Photo by Marc Ruddock.



Travis Booms (USA) chats with RRF Director Torgeir Nygard (Norway) during the poster session. Photo by Ulla Falkdalen.



Bjorn Helander (Sweden), Alv Ottar Folkestad (Norway) and Guenter Oehme (Germany) enjoying their pints at the Awards Banquet. Photo by Ulla Falkdalen.



Delegates arriving at Blair Castle for the evening party were met by a traditional Scottish piper. From left, Ruth Tinguay, Gary Santolo, Petra Wood, Miguel Saggese. Photo by John Wood..



Tea & coffee was served daily in the spacious vendor area. Photo by Ruth Tingay.



Field trip led by Wendy Mattingley. Photo by Petra Wood.



Delegates enjoy a whisky-tasting tutorial by Scotland's leading whisky expert, Charles Maclean. Photo by Ulla Falkdalen.



Local committee members Ruth Tingay & George Smith welcome delegates in Blair Castle's Great Ballroom. Photo by Marc Ruddock.



Conference and banquet scenes. Photos by Wayne Nelson

News from the RRF Awards and Grants Committee

Submitted by Clint Boal, Chair

Awards and Grants: You Can't Win if You Don't Play

Each year the Raptor Research Foundation makes available several awards for professionals and students. These awards range from non-monetary recognition for outstanding achievement in raptor research and conservation, such as the Fran and Frederick Hamerstrom Award and the Tom Cade Award, to the James R. Koplín \$500 travel grant for students, and the William C. Anderson Awards for best student presentation and posters. The Leslie Brown Memorial Grant, the Dean Amadon Grant, and the Steven R. Tulley Grant support research.

It is unfortunate that the committees for these different awards and grants receive so few applications. For example, only two nominations were made for the Hamerstrom award and none were made for the Cade award in 2009. Even more alarming is that there were no applications for the 2009 Koplín travel grant of \$500. I would think the award money would be very welcome to offset the cost of attending the RRF meeting.

I find it difficult to believe that there are few worthy recipients for any of these awards. Rather, I suspect that 2 potential causes of low application or nomination rates are 1) lack of knowledge of the awards, 2) bad timing for award deadlines. As chair of the Awards Committees, I will try to resolve these issues. The first is the need to spread the word about these awards, which I am trying to do in this commentary. Our awards are also announced on the RRF website, by OSNA, and in the back cover of the Journal of Raptor Research. I will seek other outlets in which to announce the awards. The second issue is the timing of deadlines. I will work with subcommittee chairs to revise the award deadlines so that they are consistent with the call for papers for the annual meeting. I think this will facilitate nominations and applications by imposing some consistency and standardization for the deadlines.

In return, I ask each of you to also spread the word of these award and grants among your colleagues and students, and to consider making a nomination for someone you think deserving. If nominations and applications don't come in, we cannot recognize deserving individuals, both established and upcoming, with Raptor Research Foundation awards and grants.

2009 RRF Awards and Grants Recipients

The Fran and Frederick Hamerstrom Award

The Hamerstrom award is a non-monetary award that recognizes an individual who has contributed significantly to the understanding of raptor ecology and natural history. Two nominations were received for the 2009 Hamerstrom award. The award committee chaired by Brent Bibles with members Jennifer Coulson and Marco Restani, have identified Dr. Carl Marti as the recipient of the 2009 Hamerstrom award. Carl Marti's research has contributed significantly to our knowledge of food-niche patterns in raptor communities. In particular, he has provided important life history information on the Barn Owl during his long-term study conducted in Utah and Idaho. He was also one of the early

authors to describe lifetime reproductive success in a raptor species. He has authored more than 35 major articles in peer-reviewed publications, and authored the food habits chapters in both the 1987 and 2007 Raptor Techniques Manuals. In addition, he has been very active within the Raptor Research Foundation, having served as editor of the Journal of Raptor Research and playing an active role in conference planning. It is with pleasure The Raptor Research Foundation is able to recognize the contributions of Dr. Carl Marti through presentation of the 2009 Fran and Frederick Hamerstrom Award.

The Tom Cade Award

The Cade award is a non-monetary award that recognizes an individual who has made significant advances in the area of captive propagation and reintroduction of raptors. No applications were received for the 2009 award.

The Leslie Brown Memorial Grant

The Brown award provides financial assistance to promote the research and/or the dissemination of information on African birds of prey. Up to \$1,400 is given in memory of one of the most inspired and productive raptor conservation biologists of recent decades. Five applications were received for the Brown award. The selected recipient was Darcy Ogada for the project titled "Ecological Implications of Vulture Extinction on Facultative Scavengers and Disease Transmission." The award committee consists of Dick Clark, Alan Kemp, David Johnson, Guy Rondeau, and is chaired by Jeff Lincer

The Dean Amadon Grant

The Amadon grant of up to \$1,000 is designed to assist persons working in the area of distribution and systematics (taxonomy) of raptors. Four applications were received for the 2009 Amadon grant and the selected recipient was Bishnu Prasad Shrestha for the project titled "Status and Distribution of Critically Endangered Vultures; *Gyps bengalensis*, *Gyps tenuirostris* and *Sarcogyps calvus* in Dang Deukhuri Foothill Forests and West Rapti Wetlands, an Important Bird Area of Nepal." The award committee was chaired by Carole Griffiths and included Bob Rosenfield and Joelle Gehring..

The Stephen R. Tully Memorial Grant

The Tully grant for \$500 is given to support research, and conservation of raptors especially to students and amateurs with limited access to alternative funding. Four applications were received for the *Stephen R. Tully Memorial Grant in 2009*. The recipient was Jessi Brown for her project titled "Ecology of the Southeastern American Kestrel." The award committee was chaired by Carole Griffiths and included Bob Rosenfield and Joelle Gehring..

The William C. Anderson Memorial Award

The Anderson award recognizes students for outstanding presentations and posters at the annual RRF conference. At the 2009 conference, 14 student oral presentations, and 8 student posters were submitted for competition for the William C. Anderson Memorial Award for best oral paper and poster awards. The recipient for best presentation was Chris Briggs for his talk titled "Testing the heterozygote advantage: population parameters and morph in Swainson's hawks". Stefan Schindler was the recipient for the best poster "Population trends and management scenarios for the diverse raptor community of Dardia National Park, Greece". The 2009 Anderson Award committee was chaired by Jim Bednarz with judges Sergio Fabrizio, Anita Gamauf, Will Hoppitt, Jeff Johnson, Allan Mee, Marc Ruddock, Lucia Severinghaus, Mark Wilson, and Francisco Vilella.

The James R. Koplín Student Travel Award

The Koplín is a \$500 award given to a student who is the senior author and presenter of a paper or poster to be presented at the RRF meeting for which travel funds are requested. No applications were received for the 2009 travel award.

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

News from the RRF EURASIAN COMMITTEE

Submitted by Ruth Tingay, Chair

Eurasian Raptor Monitoring Network

Since 2006, the RRF Eurasian Committee has been involved in a collaborative effort with key raptor groups in 21 countries to instigate an ambitious pan-Eurasian raptor monitoring network (please see reports in earlier editions of *Wingspan*). The European Science Foundation (ESF) approved the proposal in June 2009. Since then, the consortium has been seeking financial support from the ESF Member Organisations (MOs), which are the government agencies responsible for science funding in each of the ESF Member Countries. The target budget is €775,000 for a five-year project, although the ESF has advised that the project can launch in 2010 if 65% of funding is secured (€505,000).

At the time of writing (January 2010), MOs in nine countries have offered funding totaling €290,000 (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, The Netherlands, Estonia, Romania, Hungary and Slovenia). A decision from Spain is still pending. Disappointingly, the government agencies in the UK, Germany, France and Italy have chosen not to fund the project. However, to try and secure the minimum required funding, MOs in Norway and The Netherlands have agreed to increase their support, and MOs in Sweden and Denmark are considering doing the same. Non-MOs in Italy and the UK are also being approached. Hopefully we will be able to report some good news in the next edition.

Abolishment of the RRF Eurasian Committee

A motion to abolish the RRF Eurasian Committee was raised at the 2009 Board meeting by Eurasian Committee Chair, Ruth Tingay, and was unanimously agreed. The Eurasian Committee was established originally to provide a voice for Eurasian members in what was then a predominantly North American-focused organisation. However, in recent years RRF has broadened its view considerably and it is now far easier for international members to participate (e.g. paying membership subscriptions on-line with a credit card instead of having to exchange currency for US dollars and mail them to the US; options for receiving the *JRR* either on-line or at surface or air-mail rates instead of paying a flat fee and having to wait for 3 months after publication for it to arrive; lower subscription

fees for members in certain countries; and a greater representation of International Directors on the Board). All these developments, along with a re-structuring of some of the RRF Committees, means that the role of the Eurasian Committee is now redundant and our energies should be re-focused elsewhere. This decision will not affect RRF's participation in the European Raptor Monitoring Network (see above), as the newly-formed RRF Conservation Committee will cover this remit.

News from the RRF EARLY CAREER RAPTOR RESEARCHERS COMMITTEE

Submitted by Travis Booms, Chair

First Event of the RRF Early Career Raptor Researchers Committee.

Almost 30 early career raptor biologists from across the globe gathered in a Scottish pub sampling the local brews and talking hawks during the 2009 RRF meeting in Scotland. Although such gatherings are normal fare for conference nightlife, none before had the sole purpose of connecting students and early career biologists from across the world and learning how RRF can better serve students and young professionals. This informal gathering was the first action of the newly formed RRF Early Career Raptor Researchers (ECRR) Committee. Chris Briggs and Jessi Brown, both inaugural committee members, organized the event. Feedback was extremely positive and everyone walked away with the beginnings of new friendships and networks.

The RRF ECCR was formed in September 2009 at the request of the RRF Board of Directors to ensure RRF continues to attract, provide services for, and be comprised of motivated, leading raptor biologists of the future. The specifics of the committee are still in the works as we mull over suggestions and comments made by meeting attendees. I have accepted the Board's request to chair the committee for the near future, and I ask all of you early career biologists to join me in shaping the committee into a successful and positive force to better serve YOU and the RRF. (Just to clarify, early career biologists include undergraduate students, graduate students, and those who have recently begun work in the raptor research field.)

We look forward to organizing a bigger and better Early Career Raptor Researcher event at the 2010 Colorado meetings, so PLEASE get in touch if you are interested in expanding your network of collaborators, friends, and professional raptor biologists! You can email me at travisbooms@hotmail.com. with any suggestions or if you would like to dedicate a bit of time towards bettering RRF and your own experience as an early career raptor biologist!



From left to right, Jessi Brown, Kristen Keyes, and Lina Bardo... all enjoying meeting other young professionals.

**WANT TO SHAPE THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF RRF?
HERE'S YOUR OPPORTUNITY!**

~RRF COMMITTEE CHAIR VACANCIES NOW AVAILABLE~

RRF is governed by an elected Board of Directors and Officers who all serve in a voluntary capacity. The Board's activities are supported by a suite of committees whose members undertake a variety of tasks to help RRF achieve its mission. Current RRF Committees include: Conservation, Education, Membership, Website, Awards, Nominations, Conference, Scientific Programme (annual conference), Financial, and Early Career Raptor Biologists.

Each committee is led by a Committee Chair who reports to the Board of Directors and serves for a three-year period in a voluntary capacity. Committee Chair positions are open to all RRF members, regardless of geographic location, and no prior experience is necessary for most Chair positions. However, all Chairs must be willing and able to communicate with the Board & Officers via the quarterly e-agendas (e-mail) and intermittently throughout their term, as required. Attendance at the annual Board meeting is encouraged although it is not mandatory.

The benefits of becoming an RRF Committee Chair include opportunities to shape the future direction of RRF, to network with and meet new people, and to enhance your personal and professional development.

The appointment of Committee Chairs is made by the Board of Directors. Vacancies are now available for the following RRF Committee Chair positions:

Chair, Nominations Committee

Term: January 2011 – December 2013

Job description: The Nominations Chair works under the guidance of the RRF secretary to seek nominations for Officer and Director seats, to help candidates complete their biographical sketch for the election ballots, and to develop the election ballots. Recruiting activities include actively seeking nominees through contact at annual meetings or via e-mail, and preparing a call for nominees for Wingspan (March edition). Preparing the call for nominations requires 2 to 4 hours in early January. Recruiting activities require varying amounts of time depending on the number of potential nominees, but generally requires 8 to 12 hours per month in February and March. Helping nominees with their biographical sketch and organizing the ballot requires 6 to 8 hours of time from April to mid-May. No prior experience is required for this position.

Chair, Conservation Committee

Term: Start ASAP for 3 years

Job description: The Chair works closely with the Board of Directors to coordinate the activities of the Conservation Committee. Following a recent review of this committee, the new Chair will initially be responsible for establishing a series of international sub-committees that collectively will form the new Conservation Committee. The Chair (with help from the Board) will identify and recruit suitable sub-committee chairs from Latin America, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australasia. These sub-committee chairs will recruit members and coordinate activities in their own region and the

Conservation Committee Chair will provide the link between these sub-committees and the Board of Directors. The initial recruitment of international sub-committee chairs is expected to take between 5 – 10 hours. Once established, regular communication with the sub-committee chairs and the RRF Board is not expected to exceed an average of 5hrs per month, depending upon the activities of each sub-committee. This important position is best suited to someone with prior raptor conservation experience and excellent communication and organisational skills. The ability to collaborate via e-mail with international colleagues is essential. There may be an opportunity to Co-Chair this committee, depending on the applications received; please indicate this preference on your application.

Chair, Education Committee

Term: Start ASAP for 3 years

Job description: Duties include collaborating with RRF annual conference local committees to include an education component at RRF conferences, such as arranging and conducting half or full-day education symposia. Other duties include developing an education section on the RRF website and other associated media such as Facebook and Wingspan, and encouraging other education-oriented groups to become involved with RRF (e.g. Bird Education Network). The amount of time involved will depend on the enthusiasm and dynamism of the individual Chair, and it is anticipated that the Chair, when appropriate, will make recommendations to the Board to recruit others to join this committee. Some prior experience of raptor education work would be helpful for this role, but enthusiastic newcomers also welcome.

Chair, Awards Committee

Term: January 2011 – December 2013

Job description: The Awards Committee Chair is responsible for coordinating the annual activities of each RRF award and grant sub-committee (these include the Cade, Hamerstrom, Koplín, and Anderson awards, and the Tully, Amadon, and Brown grants). The Awards Chair ensures that each sub-committee provides a timely annual report, which the Awards Chair collates for the annual Board meeting and also for the spring edition of Wingspan. The Awards Chair is responsible for the presentation of awards at the annual conference awards banquet, or ensuring someone is available to deputise in their absence. Other duties include liaising with the RRF treasurer and secretary to ensure the timely distribution of cheques and plaques, and helping to recruit new members for sub-committees when needed. No prior experience is necessary for this position.

Chair, Scientific Programme (annual conference)

Term: January 2011 – December 2013

Job description: The Chair of the Scientific Programme Committee is responsible for organising the scientific programme at the RRF annual conference, with the help of several committee members. This includes considerable communication with the conference's local organising committee to discuss location, timings, AV equipment, poster boards etc. Other duties include announcing the Call for Papers, collating the submitted abstracts, formulating the scientific programme schedule (including oral & poster presentations), liaising with presenters, ensuring sufficient technical support is available during the conference to upload presentations and in case of AV equipment failure, and recruiting session chairs. This position is best suited to someone with a scientific background and who has some experience of attending RRF annual conferences.

How to apply: Please send a short biographical sketch and a statement of interest (e.g. why you would like the position and any ideas you may have to develop the role) to RRF Secretary Joan

Morrison (email: Joan.Morrison@trincoll.edu), deadline 16 April 2010. Please ensure you indicate the position you are interested in. Applications should preferably not be longer than two sides of A4. Receipt of all applications will be acknowledged and all applicants will be advised of the Board's selection decision by 3 May 2010.

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.

http://raptorresearchfoundation.org/board_minutes.htm

Raptor News

The Osprey breeds successfully in mainland Spain thanks to a reintroduction project

Submitted by Roberto Muriel, Miguel Ferrer and Eva Casado

On 11 May 2009 hatched the first egg of the first breeding pair of Osprey settled in the Odiel marshes, Andalusia (SW Spain), thanks to a reintroduction program started in 2003. This was the first successful breeding attempt of the species in mainland Spain since 1981, when the last pair bred in the province of Alicante.

At present, the Osprey is listed as critically endangered (CR) in Spain. It breeds only in two small populations in the Balearic Islands and the Canary Island, and a single pair in the Chafarinas Islands, which comprise 31 pairs in all. Its status in the Mediterranean basin also is unfavorable with few, small, and isolated populations in the north of Africa and southern Europe. After a viability study, a reintroduction program began in 2003 in Andalusia by the regional government of Andalusia with the scientific support of the Doñana Biological Station. The main objectives were to recover the former breeding population of mainland Spain and to encourage the connection of the Mediterranean populations. In 2003-2009, 129 young Ospreys translocated from Germany, Scotland, and Finland

were released using hacking techniques in the Barbate reservoir in the province of Cádiz and the Odiel marshes in the province of Huelva; both areas are important for migratory and wintering Ospreys.



In 2008, the first reintroduced Osprey nesting pair occupied an artificial platform on an out of use power pole in the Odiel marshes, less than 1 km from the hacking facilities. In 2009, this pair, formed by a male from Germany and a female from Scotland released in 2005, successfully fledged

three nestlings, all males. Non-reintroduced Ospreys also have been attracted to the vicinity of the release areas, and in 2009, a pair in the province of Cádiz successfully reared two chicks, a male and a female. Thus, in 2009, a total of five young Ospreys were produced by two breeding pairs in Andalusia.

Although it is still too soon to state that this reintroduction project has been a success, there is no doubt that these successful breeding pairs represent an important milestone towards the final objective: the creation of a self-sustaining population. Thus, releases will continue to reinforce the incipient breeding population, at least until attaining a natural reproduction which matches the average number of released birds per year.

More detailed information will be available soon in a short article published in *Ardeola*, the journal of the Spanish Society of Ornithology (SEO/Birdlife) (Muriel et al. *In press*. First successful breeding of reintroduced Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* in mainland Spain. *Ardeola*). Also see: Muriel et al. 2006, *J. Raptor Research* 40:303-304. Photo pictures the three chicks on the nest in the Odiel marshes (photo credit: Osprey reintroduction group).

World Owl Hall of Fame Inductees

submitted by Karla Kinstler

On a moonlit night in 1967, an Eastern Screech-Owl landed on the pup tent of a young boy camping along the Blue Earth River in southern Minnesota. The boy sat motionless and spellbound, watching the vibrating throat of the owl's silhouette through his tent as it trilled and whinnied. The owl conservationist in David H. Johnson was born. Since that fateful night Johnson has found himself in the courtroom sitting in the expert witness seat in defense of the endangered Northern Spotted Owl, working with owl researchers and conservationists around the globe in his role as the Director of the Global Owl Project, and working to initiate a "Spirit Wings" traveling display with the Smithsonian Museum to highlight the roles of owls in lore and culture throughout time. Because of his far-reaching efforts on behalf of owls, Johnson received the World Owl Hall of Fame's Champion of Owls Award at the International Festival of Owls on March 6 in Houston, MN, USA. Two others joined him in the Hall of Fame, one with feathers, one without.

Alice the Great Horned Owl, though only 13 years old, has already left her wing prints in the world of owls. Through a very close bond with her handler, Karla Kinstler, Alice has opened a window between humans and her kind. She is the main subject in the first vocal study on her species, she testified before Minnesota legislative committees to gain protection for her species under state law, and is the bird behind the International Festival of Owls, which started simply as her "hatch-day" party.

Englishman Colin Shawyer was fired into action by 2007 Champion of Owls Award winner Tony Warburton. In the 1980s, Shawyer undertook a six-year study which revealed a 70% decline in the Barn Owl population in the United Kingdom. To change the tides, Shawyer founded the Barn Owl Conservation Network, which together with other organizations has proudly achieved their goal of a viable and healthy Barn Owl population.

The World Owl Hall of Fame was created to bring public recognition to the humans and owls making tremendous strides toward making this world a better place for owls. A panel of five judges from four countries selects the winners each year. The 2010 Hall of Fame is proudly sponsored by the World Owl Trust, Global Owl Project, Raptor Education Group, Inc., and the Gray Owl Fund. For more information visit www.festivalofowls.com and click on “World Owl Hall of Fame.”

News from the Peregrine Fund
submitted by Susan Whaley

A joint study by University of Michigan and The Peregrine Fund shows there is still time to protect Harpy Eagle from extinction. Harpy Eagle populations in Central America have declined dramatically in the last 50 years, but a new study led by researchers at the University of Michigan and The Peregrine Fund shows that the levels of genetic diversity over the bird’s entire distribution may be high enough to save the species from extinction. The peer-reviewed study was published by the Public Library of Science journal PLoS One and is available online at:
<http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0007336>

A pair of Philippine Eagles was released in Oct 2009 to the wild in a mountainous region of the Philippines, setting the stage for a recovery program for the critically endangered raptors by the Philippine Eagle Foundation. The Houston Zoo provided radio transmitters for each bird. One of the eagles was outfitted with a satellite transmitter donated by The Peregrine Fund, a partner in the foundation’s eagle recovery effort. Other partners in the recovery effort include Unifrutti Philippines, a private business that adopted the male eagle, which had hatched in 2006, for six years. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Region X through the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau and the Protected Area Management Board of Mt. Kitanglad helped plan the release.

Experts believe just two active breeding pairs live in the Mt. Kitanglad Mountain Range, where the birds were released. The 77,336-acre (31,297-hectare) protected area contains one of the Philippines’ last remaining rainforests, which provides habitat for the eagle and other rare and endemic species. “These experimental releases set the stage for a full-scale reintroduction of Philippine Eagles in the future, but there is yet much to learn with each eagle that we release to the wild,” said Jayson Ibañez, the foundation’s research director. Researchers will test methods of reintroducing captive-bred eagles to natural habitats, observe post-release behavior, and train research personnel on observation and release techniques.

Recent condor mortalities used to expand conservation efforts — After 3 years without a confirmed mortality from lead poisoning, three California condors have recently died from the biggest challenge to the species’ recovery. The condors, including a female and her chick from the previous year, were recovered by The Peregrine Fund. Necropsies to determine the cause of death were performed at the San Diego Zoo’s Institute for Conservation Research. Testing confirmed the presence of lead fragments in the digestive tracts of all three birds. Lead shuts down the condors’ digestive system, which leads to starvation, weakness and death. For more information on condor conservation and non-lead ammunition, visit www.peregrinefund.org or www.azgfd.gov/condor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and BRIEF NEWS ITEMS

Announcements

Some of the dedicated Raptor Research Foundation board members, officers, and associates that live in Fairbanks, Alaska, had a **BACK ISSUE EVENT** this past winter. We took the many boxes of back issues - from the 1970's to 1996 - sent to us by our former treasurer, Jim Fitzpatrick, and sorted, packed, and recycled them! After being stored many years in a Minnesota barn, we were able to excavate, among the acorns, 43 sets of back issues to send to libraries, NGOs, and conservation organizations in Asia, Africa, and South America that could use them. Special valor was shown in conducting this work on a very cold January day (-25 F, 3.5 hours of daylight), and the endurance award goes to Ray Hander, a super nice guy who took care of all our recycling, thus earning a membership to RRF! Please admire the muscles of Ted Swem, Angela Matz, Carol McIntyre, and the Brute Squad of Dave Payer and Ray Hander next time you see them. -- Angela Matz

Research on White-tailed eagles at Smøla Wind-farm, Norway -- Research on white-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) at Smøla wind-farm on the west coast of Norway, so far the largest of its kind in Norway, has taken place since 2003. Phase II of the 68-turbine 150 MW facility was completed in 2005. Since then, 28 white-tailed eagles have been killed by the turbines, more than 50 % of them adults. Many techniques have been employed to learn about the eagles' behavior, movements and mortality, including satellite telemetry, bird radar, DNA techniques and direct observations. A description of the work and the preliminary results can be obtained at <http://www.nina.no/archive/nina/PppBasePdf/rapport/2009/505.pdf>. -- Torgeir Nygård

Assistance Requested

WING-TAGGED GOLDEN EAGLES IN NORTH AMERICA – North American ornithologists, bird watchers and others may have the opportunity to see Golden Eagles with blue vinyl patagial wing-tags (both wings) with white alpha- numerics. Please report all sightings of wing-tagged Golden Eagles. Include the date, location, number on tag (if possible) and circumstances of the sighting (e.g. perched on utility pole, feeding on road-killed animal, found dead, etc.). This is a long-term mark recapture, migration ecology study and every sighting is important. Golden Eagles were captured and tagged at our fall raptor banding station in west-central Montana. This project was initiated in 2004, and as of March 2010 we have wing-tagged 107 individuals. Please contact: Rob Domenech (Raptor View Research Inst.) P.O. Box 4323, Missoula, MT 59806. Phone: (406) 258.6813. Email: rob.domenech@raptorview.org

Request for Short-eared Owl Feathers -- Kristen Keyes, under the supervision of Dr. Marcel Gahbauer (Migration Research Foundation) and Dr. David Bird (McGill University), is investigating Short-eared Owl movement patterns in North America. She is asking for feather samples for stable isotope analysis from anyone who finds road-kills or who may experience incidental encounters through banding or other research. From living owls, a small sample of vane tissue (i.e. 1-2 cm²) from the lagging, proximal edge of a primary or secondary feather (see image below) would be ideal, so as to limit impacts on flight. If only a single generation of feathers is apparent, a sample from P1 would

be ideal for standardization. If a molt limit is obvious, samples from all apparent generations of feathers are needed, as is photo documentation, as this will allow for the determination of up to three previous summer locations. Take one sample from each age of feathers, balancing the samples from the left and right wing. Samples from juveniles will be used to verify the Short-eared Owl isotopic signature against existing isotope maps, and while P1 is preferable, the age of the owl may dictate that a body contour feather be collected instead. However, in the case that an owl is found dead, a complete wing would be preferable to help with further investigation of the Short-eared Owl molt pattern. If you are interested in providing samples for this study, please contact Kristen (kristen@migrationresearch.org) who will arrange for permits and shipping.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.migrationresearch.org/research/shortear/project.html>

Figure 1: Short-eared Owl wing with three generations of feathers in the secondaries, and two generations in the primaries. Also shown is an example (for P1) of what part of the feather should be sampled on a live owl. (Photo by Geoff Holroyd)



Workshops

Raptor Workshop: Accredited through University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point -- Two 5-day workshops entitled "Introduction to Raptor Field Techniques" will be held in Stevens Point, WI by Eugene Jacobs of the Linwood Springs Research Station and Loren Ayers of the Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources. Session #1 June 7-11, 2010 and session #2 June 21-25, 2010. Receive first hand experience working with: live raptors, capturing, handling, banding techniques, broadcast call surveys, tree climbing and rappelling, blood sampling and more. Cost is \$425 and space is limited, so register early. For more information and a registration form visit <http://www.RaptorResearch.com>

For Sale

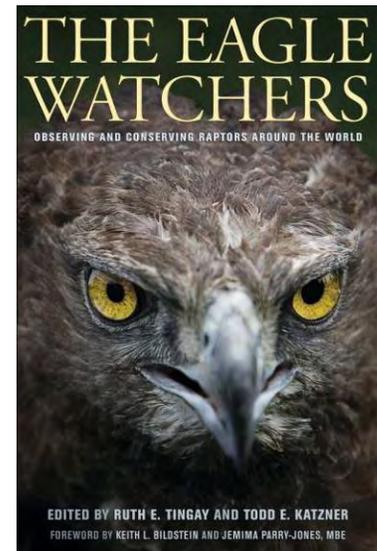
RRF Publications, Pins, and Decals –Hard copies of The Journal of Raptor Research (Vol. 1-30), most Raptor Research Reports, and RRF pins and decals may be purchased directly from RRF (Angela Matz, 101 12th Ave., Room 110, Fairbanks, AK 99701, USA; email: angela_matz@fws.gov). See http://raptorresearchfoundation.org/back_issues_jrr.htm for details and prices. Orders for 4 or more issues receive a 30% discount. Hard copies of The Journal of Raptor Research (Vol. 31+) 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>). Some older issues are not available in hardcopy; but all issues from Vol. 1-39 are available on SORA (<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/jrr/>) for free download.

Raptor Books and Publications

Forthcoming book "**Raptors of New Mexico**" is an edited volume consisting of 40 chapters, with more than 700 color photos and 50+ distribution maps. The volume was edited by Jean-Luc Cartron and more than 30 raptor researchers contributed, among them Pat Kennedy, Jeff Smith, Jim Bednarz, and Fred Gehlbach. The book is based primarily on science, but also incorporates numerous anecdotal stories, including the gathering of Swainson's Hawks at dusk near the Jornada Caves to prey on the bats that exit the caves in huge numbers during the summer. The layout created by University of New Mexico Press is beautiful. The book (700+ pages) should be out in June. The "Raptors of New Mexico" is described at the beginning of the UNM Press Spring 2010 Catalog and an order form is on p48. <http://www.unmpress.com/pdf/S10Catalog.pdf>

THE EAGLE WATCHERS: OBSERVING AND CONSERVING RAPTORS AROUND THE WORLD. 2010. Ruth Tingay & Todd Katzner (Eds.). Cornell University Press. ISBN: 978-0-8014-4873-7. Hardback. 256 pages. \$29.95; £18.70. Due April 2010 – available for pre-order on Amazon.

The Eagle Watchers is an anthology of field stories written by 29 eagle researchers from around the globe. Aimed at a general/popular science audience, the authors share their field experiences studying twenty-four eagle species on six continents, including the well known (bald eagle), the obscure (New Guinea harpy eagle), the common (African fish eagle), and the critically endangered (Philippine eagle). The book includes an overview of eagle biology, ecology and conservation, as well as stunning colour photographs, some previously unpublished.



RECENT THESES ON RAPTORS

Shiv Kapila. 2009. An assessment of the health of the Lake Naivasha RAMSAR site with special consideration of the population and breeding dynamics of the African Fish Eagle, *Haliaeetus vocifer*. University College London, London, UK. 70pp

Lake Naivasha is one of two freshwater lakes in the Kenyan Rift Valley, and was declared a RAMSAR site in 1995, recognising the area's high biodiversity and ecological value. The aim of this study was to determine the current status of the Lake and its riparian woodland by using the ecosystem's apex predator, the African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*, as an umbrella species of change. Fish eagle densities were measured in habitats ranging from undamaged stands of *Acacia xanthaphloea* and *Cyperus papyrus* swamps bordering the lake, to areas of severe degradation as a result of human activity. The lake shore was divided into sectors to locate where densities were lowest as a result of disruptive land use, and to show where water level fluctuations are most damaging. The data were collected over six weeks in May and June, coinciding with what is meant to be the wettest part of the

year and the eagle's peak breeding period. The area was experiencing a prolonged drought during the study period, which lowered water levels by up to 2 metres in six months. Five population counts and a habitat classification were conducted from boats and on foot where appropriate. A total of 106 individual eagles were seen in the survey period with an overall density of 1.88 fish eagles per kilometre of shoreline. The greatest fish eagle densities were observed in areas with steep shorelines and mature, complete *Acacia* canopies (3.07 eagles per km). A significantly lower density was observed for areas which had suffered as a result of low water levels during the long drought (1.81 eagles per km) or from habitat degradation (0.86 eagles per km). Breeding densities showed similar correlations, and were markedly low this year, owing to the falling lake levels, at 19.2% of pairs attempting to breed. It was determined that water level fluctuations were the most important limiting factor in determining fish eagle population and breeding densities. Constant water abstraction increases the strain on the lake during periods of drought. Habitat degradation has been slow in the last four decades, and has resulted in the degradation of a relatively small area. Recommendations derived from this study will lend support to water management plans for the Lake, its riparian woodland and catchment.

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.

Memorials to RRF Members

Simon Thirgood, 1962-2009

Simon Thirgood was an ecologist and committed conservationist who worked to improve the way biodiversity is conserved across the world. He strove to develop effective conservation strategies by both bringing academics together from across different disciplines to address particular issues, and by building capacity within local communities.

Simon was born in Liberia in 1962 and brought up in Vancouver, Canada. In 1980 he came to the UK to read Zoology at Aberdeen University, where he was a popular figure with a mischievous sense of humour. Whilst at Aberdeen he became an accomplished mountaineer – a passion which he maintained throughout his life. After graduating he worked for a while at the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology at Banchory where he studied mountain hares and red deer. He developed this interest in mammal ecology during his PhD at Southampton University, where he worked on the mating strategies of fallow deer. His thesis was grounded in behavioural ecology, and the intellectual stimulation he derived from this work, led him to investigate the mating system of black lechwe in Zambia, during a post-doctoral position at Cambridge. He then moved to work with Birdlife International, where he was involved in the “Putting Biodiversity on the Map” project, which was very influential in the debate leading up to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

In 1992, Simon returned to Scotland to work for the Game Conservancy Trust, studying a contentious problem in UK conservation – the conflict between those involved in moorland management for driven grouse shooting and those involved in the conservation of birds of prey. This 5-year project, involving hundreds of days in the field, culminated in a landmark publication - *Birds of Prey and Red Grouse* (1997). Until the publication of this report, both sides had disagreed about the true impact of raptors on grouse. The report and the many scientific papers arising from it highlighted the fact that these birds of prey could reach levels where red grouse numbers fell to a level where a moor was no longer viable for driven grouse shooting. This was an important step, because although it has not yet led to a resolution to the conflict, both sides at least agree about the scientific evidence. Arguments now focus on how best to manage the problem. Up until his death, Simon continued to urge all sides into finding a solution to the problem, through advising Scottish Natural heritage on their harrier work and through his many scientific articles.

As Head of Ecology at the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute in Aberdeen, Simon developed his passion for conservation. He co-edited the important book “People and Wildlife: Conflict or Co-existence?”; he became a valued editor of the *Journal of Applied Ecology*, and he won funding for two large, cross-disciplinary projects on hunting and sustainability. He became an integral part of the Aberdeen Centre for Environmental Sustainability, was a trusted colleague and collaborator and an inspiration to his students and those who worked with him. In 2009, he was awarded an Honorary Professorship at the University of Glasgow.

Simon was a principled, energetic and articulate biologist who cared deeply about wildlife and society. He died whilst in Ethiopia, setting up a project to build community capacity conserving and monitoring biodiversity, funded by the UK Darwin Initiative. He is survived by his wife, Karen, and their two girls, Pippa and Katie. -- Steve Redpath



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