

NOTES, NEWS, AND QUERIES

New Format of News. We have been fortunate to be able to have copy for offsetting set up in justified type on an IBM Selectric Composer. The extra cost is largely made up by reduced printing costs since more material appears on a sheet. Mailing without envelopes further reduces costs.

Renewals. We are happy to report that many renewals have been coming in. This issue is being sent to all members of last year with this notice as our invitation to stay with us; if you have not yet paid 1970 contributions, a 70 will be missing from your address label. All new and old members will receive a summary of the Cornell conference and a title page and index for volumes 1 to 3 soon.

Editors' Acknowledgments. In addition to our contributors we want to thank Fran Hamerstrom who kindly read through Part 2 of Berry's paper and provided many useful suggestions and to Lee Eberly who prepared the final copy of the line drawings in the Berry and in the Lejeune papers and helped in many other ways.

Raptor Research Abstracts. The Board of Directors of the Raptor Research Foundation has approved the initiation of an abstracting service covering publications on hawks and owls. Some of the reasons for investing the money and effort in this project are: the literature is very scattered and world wide; much material appears in local or regional journals often not abstracted; many abstracts of faunal papers and books do not indicate the nature of the material presented on our species; the material can be indexed better for the raptor worker than it is in more general services; literature searches can be speeded up enormously; many of our members do not have ready access to good research libraries.

These and other values can be realized if we can provide prompt intensive reviews based on an extensive survey of potential sources more inclusive and more directly pertinent to raptors than existing bibliographic services. We also intend to include some additional papers not specifically on raptors such as those on predation theory, or on ecologically similar birds such as skuas and shrikes. We believe there are enough volunteers to keep the work realistic in relation to the number of potentially includable papers.

The organizing of the abstracting will be based on assignments to the cooperators of specific journals and other sources for searching and abstracting papers found. The abstracts and index information will be entered on forms which will aid the preparation of copy for printing and of punch cards for indexing. If the abstracting load is kept low enough, the completed forms can be sent promptly to the R.R.F. office where they can be edited and prepared for offsetting, and the monthly issues assembled and mailed. The index items can be put on punch cards which at the end of the year can be used by the computer to print out the index ready for offsetting.

Material published in 1970 will be used to initiate the series. The first issue should be ready in April or May. Those who indicated an interest in this type of work on their questionnaires will receive invitations to be cooperators in the near future. Anyone else who may wish to help is encouraged to write to the R.R.F. office.

White-tailed Sea Eagle Breeding in Captivity. Sergej Postupalsky writes,

"White-tailed sea eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) have bred successfully in the Schönbrunn Zoo in Vienna, Austria, since 1961, according to an article by Walter Fiedler in the December 1969 issue of *Vogelkosmos* (publ. by Kosmos Verlag, Stuttgart, West Germany). One young each was raised in 1961-1967, young one died in 1968, two young raised in 1969. The adults were obtained in 1955 when still in immature plumage. Patuxent Research Center, which now has over a dozen bald eagles ought to get on the ball and try breeding them. It can be done!"

Giant Steps Away From DDT. On November 20 Agriculture Secretary Clifford Hardin announced that within 30 days the use of DDT would be eliminated in control of shade tree pests, pests in aquatic areas, house and garden pests and tobacco pests. This action will curtail about 35% of the DDT currently used annually in the United States.

Hardin also called for cancellation of all other DDT uses by December 31, 1970, excepting essential cases where there is no alternative to DDT. Similar action on other persistent pesticides is scheduled to begin March 1970.

The Secretary's announcements came in wake of the latest in a long line of objective indictments of DDT prepared by the Health, Education and Welfare Department's Commission on Pesticides and Their Relationship to Environmental Health headed by Dr. Emil M.

Mrak, Chancellor Emeritus of the University of California at Davis.

HEW Secretary Finch appointed the Mrak Commission last April after the Food and Drug Administration seized several thousand pounds of Lake Michigan coho salmon containing extremely high DDT levels enroute to family dinner tables.

The Commission's report offered few revelations on the environmental threat of DDT. It essentially echoed the theme of many previous recommendations in that "The uses of DDT. . . should be limited to the prevention or control of human disease and other essential uses for which no alternative is available. Such uses should be clearly identified and individually evaluated in relation to human hazard from exposure, movement in the natural environment, concentration in the food chains of the world and other environmental considerations."

The Report did suggest, "Unanimous approval by the Secretaries of HEW, Agriculture and Interior would provide for identification of essential uses and assure that such approval will be based upon sound judgment." This recommendation has apparently been implemented, much to the delight of conservationists who've historically been less than ecstatic with the Agriculture Department's activities aimed at protecting the environment from the side effects of persistent pesticides.

Certainly these are the first giant steps toward purging neanderthal pest control from the space age. But it isn't yet time to compose a dirge for DDT.

In recent years most of the DDT manufactured in the United States has been exported, and these latest actions have little or no effect on that major American contribution to world-wide DDT contamination. Provincial regulations are of little consequence to a poison that knows no boundaries. Continued use of DDT, even in the world's remotest corners, is and will continue to be a threat to Everyman despite these first giant steps. (Reprinted from *Conservation News* 34(23):2, Dec. 1, 1969).

Endangered Species Bill. The "Endangered Species" bill (H.R. 11363) was signed into Public Law 91-135 by the President on December 5, 1969.

The law prevents the importation into the U. S. of endangered species of wildlife or their parts. Strengthening the program to protect domestic species of endangered wildlife by authorizing added monies, the law gives added protection to such domestic wildlife as alligators. Conservationists generally regard the law as the most important wildlife conservation legislation to be passed by Congress this year. (Reprinted from *Conservation News* 35(1):3, Jan. 1, 1970).

Eagles in Lakeland. Golden Eagles have nested in the Lake District [British Isles] for the first time for 200 years, but unfortunately they deserted the nest with two eggs. (From *Kingfisher* 4(6):7, July-Aug. 1969).

In Danger in Europe. The Council for Europe has recently published a list of 25 birds regarded as in danger in Europe; the white and Dalmatian pelicans, pigmy cormorant, spoonbill, glossy ibis, flamingo, white-headed duck, black vulture, lammergeyer, black-winged kite, peregrine and lanner falcons, purple gallinule, demoiselle crane, great bustard, Audouin's gull, little auk, eagle-owl and four species of eagle—imperial, tawny, Bonelli's and white-tailed (sea). Those considered to be in the gravest danger are the Dalmatian pelican, flamingo, white-headed duck and lammergeyer. (*Courrier de la Nature*, 1/1969) (From *Kingfisher* 4(6):10, July-Aug. 1969).

Germans Pillage Italy. A group of German nest-robbers were caught in the act at a peregrine's nest at Gaeta, Italy on April 13. They declared they were going on to Sardinia to rob the nests of ravens and of the last surviving pair of lammergeiers in the island. A fortnight later another group of Germans were similarly caught near Sapri (salerno). They were forced by the police to replace the peregrine nestlings they had just taken, but at dawn the next day they were caught trying to remove them again. These and other groups of nest-robbers travel round the country taking the young of birds of prey, and even eggs, which they put in incubators, with the aim of rearing them for falconry. (Italian National Appeal, WWF). (From *Kingfisher* 4(6):10, July-Aug. 1969).

Sea Eagles in Iceland. The number of white-tailed or sea eagles in Iceland, which was at a very low ebb in Iceland five years ago, due to poison spread for foxes, is now steadily rising, and has reached an estimated 40. (From *Kingfisher* 4(6):10, July-Aug. 1969).

Raptor Laws of United States and Canada. The January issue of *California Condor*, the newsletter of the Society for the Preservation of Birds of Prey has a report of a survey by states and provinces. The laws are varied and all but a few (Montana, New Mexico, and South Carolina) protect some raptors. Of more significance might be a survey of game wardens and their attitudes which in some cases is unrelated to the coverages of the laws.

Another feature of this survey is an attempt to list the number of

falconry licenses. Unfortunately the data are inadequate to evaluate the level of activity of this sport. For example it is not clear whether the numbers apply to residents or brief visitors. It is also not clear how many of these represent a bird or not or whether more than one or whether it involves birds held from previous years or for acquisitions of that year. Since many different species are kept it is impossible to have any idea of how many of each species are held, or captured in a given year, or for that matter whether exotics are included. I suspect that even if one asked the authorities the right questions all of the desirable information would not usually be available from such sources. Discussions of the impact of falconers on raptor populations usually provide more heat than light. Realistic data would be desirable, but data collection would, unfortunately, have to be more sophisticated than a questionnaire to wildlife agencies.

Basic References in Comparative Endocrinology. Prof. A. van Tienhoven has annotated a list of 26 titles in *Bio-Science* 20(2):126-127 (Jan. 15, 1970). Since this includes 43 volumes averaging 565 pages each, the guiding comments will be appreciated. This area is one of enormous ignorance in raptor research but of vital importance. Similar lists on various zoological topics are a regular feature of this now twice monthly periodical of the American Institute of Biological Sciences.

Predation Theory. Michael H. Robinson of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (Balboa, Canal Zone) has written a critical review, "Defences against visually hunting predators," published in Volume 3 of *Evolutionary Biology* (N.Y.: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969, 309pp., see pp. 225-259). Although the examples used are almost all on predators other than raptors (and on prey not often important in raptor diets, such as stick insects), most of the paper is of general enough significance to be of interest to many of our readers. Much attention is given to antipredator adaptations; perhaps of most interest is his discussion of "prey recognition by visually hunting predators."

Pesticide Series. If our members would like to read a series of five detailed but popular articles on the pesticide situation, they are encouraged to see the magazine *Environment* (11(6):14-40, July-Aug. 1969 and 11(7):2-17, 28-31, 36-40, Sept. 1969). This magazine regularly carries analyses and news on the effects of technology on the environment.

Corrections. R. Wayne Nelson writes that some items in the summary of the NAFA Peregrine Falcon Symposium (*Raptor Research News* 3(4):73-79) might be misleading. He suggests that part 5 be rewritten as follows: "*Queen Charlotte Islands.* W. Nelson reported on this area. He felt the estimate in Hickey's book of 80 pairs was optimistic. Government and falconers' censuses for pairs of birds in 1965, 1966 and 1967 revealed only 43, or, if single birds were assumed to be paired also, then there were 60 pairs."

"Nelson reported that Langara Island, with a 25 mile circumference and about 16 nest sites, contained annually about 12 pairs of Peregrines in the late 1950's. In 1966 it held five pairs and four singles—a possible nine pairs; in 1967, seven pairs; in 1968, five pairs and one single; and in 1969, four breeding pairs, plus two additional pairs which both had immature females and adult males. These immature females showed little territorial impulse. They apparently had no eggs or young. Ancient Murrelet pesticide results suggest that eggs flush DDE, DDT, etc., out of the females, whereas males retain their concentrations. Dry weather at hatching time may kill some chicks in the eggs."

Nelson also noted that Tom Ray acknowledged Dan Anderson as the source of the large number of egg shell thickness measurements, a fact omitted from the summary, and that Ray indicated that the reduction from nestling ratio to fledgling ratio was due to "harvesting" by people.

We look forward to the completion of the proceedings by NAFA in which these and other points should be clarified. We hope these informal summaries serve a useful purpose until the full reports are available. Nelson also commented that the term "mid-latitude Peregrines" changed to "latitude Peregrines" during the course of the meeting. We will await the proceedings to clarify the terminology and its definition.