

## NOTES, NEWS, AND QUERIES

**Publication Date of Summer Issue, 1972.** Volume 6, Number 2, Summer 1972, of *Raptor Research* was officially published December 29, 1972. Supplements A and B were published the same day.

**R.R.F.'s New Letterhead and Cover Picture for *Raptor Research*.** Now that considerable discussion of our cover picture has developed, we would like to give you the details of its origin. This Prairie Falcon must be one of the most aggressive birds in Colorado. She was banded several years ago and occupies an extremely overhung eyrie near a paved highway. It is suspected that the accessibility of the cliff, but the inaccessibility of her offspring, has resulted in her aggressiveness. She is always successful at fledging young and meets every intruder with the attitude caught on camera by Babette Cranson of LaJunta, Colorado. Robert Katona of Denver, Colorado, used Miss Cranson's photograph as the basis for the drawing.

The falcon is in a banked turn which led to a low-angle stoop at the photographer. This gave a foreshortened appearance and the rounded, irregular shapes of the wings. We wish to thank both Babette Cranson and Robert Katona for their fine work in the field and in the studio, respectively.

**Conference on Raptor Conservation Techniques, March 22-25, 1973.** Members will have received further information on this conference by the time this issue is received. The program promises to be a very interesting one. Please note that the dates in March are different from those in our earlier notice.

**Disease Transmission Problems in Raptors.** An example of this general problem is shown in the translation of a report from the Swedish National Veterinary Institute on virus hepatitis in Eagle Owls reprinted on pages 104-105 of this issue. In this connection one of the authors, Dr. Karl Borg writes, "Because of these findings, I have advised our authorities not to permit further importation of Eagle Owls to Sweden, and as well recommend restrictions in releasing owls from the breeding stations." This and the import restrictions because of Newcastle's Disease point up the importance of this general subject to work on raptors.

**Second Conference on Captivity Breeding of Raptors.** The Raptor Research Foundation sponsored a two-day conference on November 25-26, 1972 at Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Notification was sent to all we knew were interested in the subject. It was decided to have the meeting separate from the Conference on Raptor Conservation Techniques in order to complete it before the initiation of the breeding season. A report on this meeting will be forthcoming.

**Breeding Project Information Exchange—Change of Procedures.** Those present at the conference on captivity breeding decided that we should revert to our earlier pattern of circulating reports in an informal manner as quickly as possible to interested members, and not to put them in *Raptor Research* except in a brief summary form; those that may be of general interest may be rewritten for formal printing.

Thirty-two reports sent out or distributed in connection with the conference were renumbered as BPIE 42-73. Four additional BPIEs (74-77) were sent to all our mailing list that we know or we thought might have special interest in captivity breeding along with a form to be returned to receive future numbers. Because of the expense involved, the BPIE can only be sent to those who contribute at least \$2 above the minimum contribution when dues requests are sent out for 1973. Anyone who wishes to be on this list that we did not contact may send their request to the RRF office. Items for BPIE should be sent there also.

**Request for Information and Assistance.** I am trying to determine the whereabouts in captivity of egg laying Hawk Eagles *Hieraaetus spilogaster/fasciatus* (African or Bonelli's Hawk Eagle) as I would like to try artificial insemination from an imprinted male now in my possession. Anyone with information, a suitable bird, or interest in this project please contact: John C. Snelling, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

**Dr. Cade Appointed Chairman of Captivity Breeding Committee.** Donald V. Hunter, Jr., who has been Chairman of this Committee since its inception, has passed on the leadership to Dr. Tom Cade, RR 1, Dryden, NY 13053. BPIE circulation will continue from the office in South Dakota.

**A Grazing Protest for the Eagle Killers.** In hearings before Senator Gale McGee's (Wyoming) Appropriations Subcommittee last August, it was revealed

that a number of powerful Wyoming wool growers had hired airborne gunners to shoot American Bald and Golden Eagles.

James Vogan, a pilot for Buffalo Flying Service in Buffalo, Wyoming, admitted to the Subcommittee that he had participated in killing of an estimated 570 eagles. In doing so, he implicated Herman Werner, owner of a number of Wyoming properties, including the Bolton Ranch, Inc., in Casper, where much of the killing was done. When the news broke, citizens throughout the country condemned the killings and demanded swift and adequate punishment for them.

A recent check of the records reveals that those primarily implicated in the killings of the country's national symbol have gone unpunished, although some minor functionaries have been minimally fined. Pilot Vogan, who was granted federal immunity in exchange for his testimony, is the only major participant who has thus far been affected. He has been charged under Wyoming State law, though it is questionable whether that charge will stand in light of the congressional immunity which he was granted. The main perpetrators of the killings (i.e. Werner and the other woolgrowers who hired the pilots and gunners), however, remain unpunished.

Another startling fact in the case is that Werner and the other involved wool-growers hold grazing permits and licenses which confer grazing privileges on federally-owned land under provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act. Despite the fact that some, if not all, of the killings apparently took place on these federal lands, Werner and the rest continue to use the land just as they always have, without regard to the rules of the license.

In response to an application by Werner to renew his federal grazing rights, the National Wildlife Federation recently filed a petition of Intervention and Protest with the District Manager, Rawlins Grazing District, Bureau of Land Management in Wyoming, objecting to the renewal of a grazing license to Herman Werner and the Bolton Ranch, Inc. The protest is based on a Taylor Grazing Act clause which requires that the licensee comply with the "rules and regulations . . . approved by the Secretary of the Interior." Included in the rules are the laws prohibiting the taking of American Bald or Golden Eagles without a permit. Werner and the rest blatantly violated these rules by wantonly slaughtering a vanishing species. The National Wildlife Federation sees no reason why they should now be rewarded by the Government with the use of federally-owned lands.

Several interesting sideline developments may result from the situation. The Governor of Wyoming and the Wyoming Wool Growers Association have announced plans to conduct their own predator control program. This lands squarely on top of a recent announcement on the Dick Cavett television show by Interior Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton that will end the Federal Government's controversial program of killing predator animals by widespread poisons. "I think hopefully this year we will get . . . out of the killing business," Morton said. He added that a bill has been drafted and probably will go to Congress in "the first quarter of this year." (From *Conservation News* 36(27):11, February 1, 1972.)

**Falconry Stirs Controversy in Hearings on Eagles.** In testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on the Environment, June 29, 1972, almost every representative of the Federal Government and concerned organizations agreed on the need to provide stronger penalties for those who kill eagles. H.R. 12186 and S. 2547 provide stiffer penalties for assaulting eagles while H.R. 14731 provides enforcement power to prevent shooting or hunting from aircraft. But it was a provision in H.R. 12186, giving the Secretary of the Interior the power to permit the taking of Golden Eagles, their eggs or nests, "for the purposes of falconry," which stirred up a controversy.

Robert C. Hughes, Chairman of the Sierra Club's National Wildlife Committee, charged ". . . this provision is needless and completely violates sound wildlife protection principles." Cynthia Wilson of the National Audubon Society expressed concern that "this is a loophole which will be difficult to enforce and will encourage the use of Golden Eagles for falconry, particularly by taking young illegally from the nests."

Speaking to the unstated justification for the provision which allows that some eagles may be doing enough damage to persons and/or property to warrant their removal from their habitat—not by killing but by turning them over to falconers, she countered "If someone is going to take the trouble to capture a live Golden Eagle which is allegedly depredating livestock, why not 'transplant' it to some other area or give it to a zoo with suitable facilities for caring for it?"

Nathaniel P. Reed, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, seemed to be satisfied with the pending legislation when he testified "The legislation we have under discussion today would correct a number of loopholes and provide more effective protection for some of our majestic wildlife species." Calling the authority to allow the "use of Golden Eagles for the sport (of falconry) a significant step in progressive wildlife management," Reed urged passage of H.R. 12186.

Charles W. Harry, representing the American Falconers Association, observed that "The key to safe utilization of Golden Eagles in falconry appears to lie in the selection process determining who should possess them." In dismissing the threat of harm to persons coming in contact with the captive Golden Eagle, Harry claimed that unlike regular household pets, such as the dog, the "danger from an eagle is primarily pointed towards the owner or falconer." He concluded his testimony with statements from expert sources in the Federal Government and prominent conservation organizations, such as the National Wildlife Federation's Kenneth R. Hampton who said, "The National Wildlife Federation endorses in principle the sport of falconry provided it is properly regulated and does not involve the removal of endangered species from the wild except for specified purposes under permit." (Testimony before the Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation of the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries with reference to the protection of hawks, eagles, and owls.) (From *Conservation Report*, 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, No. 23, p. 253, July 21, 1972.

**Artificial Insemination of Raptors.** The first successful artificial insemination of a Golden Eagle was recorded on May 18 by James Grier of the Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University. Appropriately on Mother's Day, a second artificially-inseminated egg hatched, this time through the research work of Dr. Frances Hamerstrom, a Wisconsin wildlife biologist. According to wildlife authorities, these successful hatchings herald a big breakthrough for the eventual re-establishment of various wildlife populations threatened with extinction. (From *Conservation News* 37(15):13-14, August 15, 1972.)

**Bald Eagle Survives Shooting, Information Rewarded.** An immature Bald Eagle has regained its freedom and a \$500 reward for information leading to the conviction of a person for shooting the eagle has been given to a Wisconsin man by the National Wildlife Federation.

Gary Buss, of Colfax, Wisconsin, was awarded the money by the NWF after witnessing the October, 1971 shooting of a young Bald Eagle near his home. After observing the shotgun shooting of the bird, which was perched on a tree, Buss reportedly intercepted the defendant and informed him that he had shot an eagle. The defendant reportedly denied it, saying that "It was just a hawk." "After he had shot, however, he did not even look at the downed bird," Buss noted. Buss then notified U. S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife authorities. The defendant was later fined \$100 in a Madison, Wisconsin federal court.

Unlike several other eagles that have been shot in the area in recent months, the fortunate eagle survived. The bird was immediately taken to nearby Chippewa Falls and its injured right wing was treated by Dr. Charles Kemper, an amateur ornithologist. Two months later, the healthy bird was released near the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin.

The reward was the second to be given under a nationwide reward program started by the NWF in 1971. Although it has been against federal law to shoot Bald Eagles since 1940, the National Wildlife Federation reward program was started in 1971 as the result of the revealed mass slaughter of eagles in Wyoming.

According to wildlife management experts, the future for the nation's symbol is looking increasingly bleak. The total in the lower 48 states is estimated to be as few as three to four thousand birds and the use of hard pesticides and diminishing habitat continue to take their toll. The southern subspecies of Bald Eagle found in the eastern half of the United States is already classified as an endangered species by the U. S. Interior Department.

The National Wildlife Federation continues to offer a \$500 reward upon verification that the claimant's information was substantial assistance in obtaining a conviction for shooting a Bald Eagle. The claimant must request the reward in writing to the National Wildlife Federation, 1412 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington, DC 20036, within six months after conviction. If more than one Bald Eagle was shot by the convicted person, \$500 will be awarded for the one bird representing the total number shot. (From *Conservation News* 37(10):10-11, June 1, 1972.)