

The meeting will be held at the Golden Gate National Park in the Orange Free State. Further information and application forms are obtainable from Dr. John Mendelsohn, Durban Museum, P.O. Box 4085, Durban, South Africa 4000.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The Marsh Hawk (*Circus cyaneus*) is a commonly-observed bird of prey of grasslands and marshes throughout California. It feeds largely on rodents, but is opportunistic in hunts on other avian, mammalian, and occasionally reptilian and amphibian species. Sexes are identifiable in adult plumage due to color dimorphism. Nests are on the ground; large broods are common.

Although Marsh Hawk wintering habitat in California is extensive, breeding habitat (largely marshes or some other natural grasslands situation) is *severely* reduced. Some estimate marshland habitat has been reduced in terms of acreage in excess of 90% since the early 1900s. Coastal bay and estuary and Central Valley habitats are continuing to decline.

The Marsh Hawk is a Species of Special Concern for the state of California (Remsen, 1982). Unfortunately funds are not available for studies by California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) at this time. As a result, the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group (SCPBRG) is attempting to establish baseline information on this species to provide to CDFG, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and other government agencies who have management responsibility for birds of prey or habitat protection.

We are requesting information from all sources regarding Marsh Hawk natural history observation. Of special importance are observations of breeding attempts, both successful and failing; and also both current and historic. Information on Marsh Hawk breeding in areas no longer suitable is equally important to observations in areas remaining habitable.

Should you be able to provide observations or have opinions or comments on any aspect of Marsh Hawk ecology in California, please respond.

Send responses to:

Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group
Room 231 Clark Kerr Hall, University of California
Santa Cruz, CA 95064 (408) 429-2466

Information obtained in this project will be provided in the form of a report to Ron Schlorff, Non-Game Wildlife Management Section, California Department of Fish and Game, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.