

OVERVIEW

Nests are usually located in conifers, but also found on cliffs, bluffs or slopes. Environmentalists believe the main causes of their decline are shooting, especially of birds perched along roads, and loss of habitat due to human intrusion.

BOMB TESTING SITE PROPOSAL DEFEATED

The Conservation Federation of Maryland (CFM), a National Wildlife Federation affiliate, has succeeded in postponing indefinitely the Navy's plan for an underwater explosion test facility



Ferruginous Hawk

These hawks, if disturbed during nesting, will abandon their eggs and do not re-nest. Reproductive failures in Nevada can be traced to surface mining and mineral exploration during the nesting season; in California and Utah the decline is attributed to the growing recreational use of deserts.

along Chesapeake Bay.

The facility, slated for construction on the Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground near the Susquehanna National Wildlife Refuge on the Bay, would have been used for underwater test explosions on parts of Navy submarines.

At a public hearing, CFM

focused attention on the potential damage to Bald Eagles, waterfowl and other wildlife in the area, and successfully demanded a complete environmental impact statement on the intended project.

In a limited assessment, the Army Corps of Engineers had previously concluded that "no significant impact" would result from either the many underwater bombing explosions or from dredging 3,800 feet of the Bush River.

UPDATE

TWO CONDORS RELEASED

Two of the California Condors conceived and hatched in zoos last spring were released on January 14, 1992. At 10:31 a.m., the door to the mountain shelter in Los Padres National Forest, north of Los Angeles, was opened. Moments later Xewe and Chocuyens, two young California Condors, waddled unsteadily onto the ledge and peered out at their new world.

Apparently in no hurry, the 20-pound condors waited until the next day to actually fly off. When they did, they became the first of their endangered species to be returned to the wild since the captive breeding program began. Both birds are wearing radio transmitters so that biologists can track their movements.

To make their early days easier, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service workers left fresh meat at a feeding station nearby so the condors could have a pesticide-free diet. In addition, local hunters are being encouraged to remove the remains of their kills to prevent the condors from feeding on carcasses contaminated with lead shot. Noting these precautions, Mike Wallace, director of

the Los Angeles Zoo's California Condor Breeding Program, said these birds have a better than 90 percent chance of living a normal 50-year life.

California Condors soared in the skies over North America for nearly 2 million years, but by 1982 the population had shrunk to just 27 birds. In 1987 the last wild California Condor was taken into captivity. The



California Condor

population now stands at 52, as a result of the captive-breeding program.

The objective of the Condor Recovery Program is to establish communities of 150 condors each in the California wilderness, Grand Canyon, and both the Los Angeles and San Diego zoos, by the year 2020. Officials say they hope to release as many as six condors next fall, and more each following year.

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PEREGRINE PROJECT SUCCEEDS

Seventeen years after the project began, scientists at the Predatory Bird Research Group at the University of

BIRDER OF NOTE

James R. Schlesinger



Age: 63

Home: Arlington, Virginia

Profession:

Currently: Economist, Formerly: Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, Secretary of Defense, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency of the U.S.A., Chairman of AEC, Scholar at Johns Hopkins University.

How long birding? 36 years.

Favorite field guides are those in the Peterson series, but I also use the National Geographic guide and the Golden guide by Robbins.

Why do I bird? At one level it motivates me to get outdoors and into different habitats. At a deeper level, birding provides a veritable epitome of geography, ecology, climate, and habitat. Because I am an amateur geography buff, that appeals to me.

Binoculars: Leitz Trinovids 10x40.

Life list? Yes, presently with 629 North American species and about 872 additional world wide.

Latest life bird: Great Skua, approximately 55 miles east of Virginia Beach, Virginia.

My favorite North American bird species are warblers. If I had to pick just one, I'd have to say the Blackburnian Warbler.

My favorite birding habitat is marshland, but in spring I switch to woodlands, which I cover on foot.

My favorite place to bird is Huntley Meadows, Fairfax County, Virginia.

My most spectacular bird sighting in North America occurred in 1966 when I saw 15 of the then estimated 28 wild California Condors on top of Mt. Pinos. The condors were attracted by the carcass of a deer on which they were feeding.

My biggest birding thrill was getting the Ringed Kingfisher on the north side of the Rio Grande.

The most interesting area I have ever birded is along the Arctic coast and islands of Alaska during the summer Solstice.

My favorite birding companion is Kenneth Bass from Nokesville, Virginia; although I mostly bird alone.

Quote: I am terribly saddened to see bird populations falling so quickly. We may be the last generation to savor the waves of migrants. In that, we are spectacularly fortunate.



Peregrine Falcon

California, Santa Cruz, say this will be the last spring that they rear Peregrine Falcons.

In 1975, there were only two breeding pairs remaining in California. Today, after years of taking Peregrine eggs from nests, incubating them, and returning the chicks to the nest, the population has increased to at least 120 pair.

"For things to turn around in less than 20 years is incredible," says Patricia Zenone, a research and edu-

LEADED LOONS

Autopsies conducted on 77 Common Loons found dead near New England lakes in 1989 and 1990 show that over half died from lead poisoning. At least 16 had swallowed lead fishing sinkers, according to Mark A. Pokras, a Tufts University veterinarian, who performed the autopsies.

Protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, loon populations are increasing, though they are still not secure. Lead poisoning is the latest danger on a list that includes acid rain and human disturbances, rendering many lakes unfit for raising young.

Great Britain has prohibited the use of lead sinkers, blaming them for the widespread poisoning of swans. In the United States where lead shot has been implicated in waterfowl



Common Loons

cation specialist with the predatory bird center.

In January, biologists stopped incubating and releasing the birds. However, they will track them and attempt to monitor the population. The Santa Cruz center has released 726 Peregrine chicks into the wild, 651 of them in California.

deaths, all waterfowl hunters were required to use non-lead shot as of September 1, 1991. The Environmental Protection Agency is gathering data to determine whether the use of lead sinkers should be banned or regulated as well.

AUDUBON REPORT

TRAP AND LET LIVE

Trapping birds for biological study can be disruptive to birds—even deadly. Sue Jewell, of the Everglades National Park, and Audubon’s Tom Bancroft devised an effective and gentle technique with which to trap herons and egrets for their studies in South Florida (*J. Field Ornithol.*, Vol. 62, No. 1). Their trap was tailored for tree-nesting, wading birds from one originally devised for trapping Franklin’s Gulls breeding in marshes.

To find and band breeding adult birds, Jewell and Bancroft located nests that had eggs or chicks in them. They quickly found that success depended on simple techniques and common sense. Their trap, a cylindrical-shaped welded wire cage, was positioned on the rim of the nest, but only after they knew from which direction the adult birds habitually approached the nest. Instead of using an automatic tripping mechanism, researchers sat, camouflaged and out of view, with string in hand. Then, once the parent entered the cage and was settled comfortably on its nest, they pulled the string and tripped the door.

Bancroft and Jewell learned when adults were most likely to abandon their nests, and avoided trapping during those key periods. Chicks fared better when they were at least four days old and when birds in nests were trapped early in the morning.

FISHING ETIQUETTE IS FOR THE BIRDS

Every year, hundreds of thousands of feet of monofilament fishing line are mindlessly thrown into

the ocean and along beaches. And every year, incalculable numbers of seabirds and shorebirds get entangled, strangled, cut, and choked. National Audubon Society and the Ande Line company, the biggest manufacturer and distributor of monofilament fishing line, have teamed up to bring an important conservation message to the public, via advertisements.

The text of the ad urges sport surfcasters and boat fishermen to practice proper fishing etiquette for the sake

mocks and 900 acres of adjacent wetlands, mainly mangroves, from south Key Largo to Vaca Key. Collectively, the properties, each no less than 12.5 acres, provide habitat for 45 rare, endangered, or threatened species.

Audubon researchers have found that White-crowned Pigeons play a major ecological role in maintaining the health and diversity of Florida’s tropical hammocks (see *Am. Birds*, Vol. 45 No. 2, p. 195). The majority of hammock tree species produce a fleshy fruit that



Adult Northern Gannet

of wildlife: “Always discard your line on land—in a covered trash container,” it reads. Cutting line loose and letting it drift or blow away “was just something no one thought about,” says Bill Munroe of Ande Line. The public service ads will appear in sportfishing magazines around the world.

TROPICAL FLYWAYS FOR CARL

National Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the Florida Natural Areas Inventory have formally proposed that a “Tropical Flyways” network of protected lands be created in the Florida Keys as part of Florida’s Conservation and Recreational Lands Program (CARL).

The proposed network of 16 land parcels encompasses 800 acres of upland ham-

White-crowned Pigeons eat. In the process they spread the seeds throughout the bird’s range. During their first two days of flight, 75% of fledglings land in hammock stands larger than 12 acres. The “Tropical Flyways” network would form a critical series of “stepping stones” linking White-crowned Pigeon nesting habitat with the larger protected forests in north Key Largo.

The joint “Tropical Flyways” is one of 58 new proposals submitted this year for the CARL program. Designated lands are protected by outright purchase by the state and conservation easements. A six-person panel, comprised of representatives from various state agencies, will review the proposals in three stages.

ESTUARINE STUDIES INFLUENCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

It took four years of mucking across the flats of Florida Bay from sunup to sundown, flying in tight circles at low altitudes in a small plane, scratching through mangrove thickets, and sitting for days in miniature observation blinds. But scientists George Powell and Robin Bjork endured in order to find out more about the Roseate Spoonbill and the complex functions of its estuarine habitat.

Now, in an effort to restore some natural order to South Florida’s ecosystems, the Army Corps of Engineers, Everglades National Park, and the South Florida Water Management District have proposed that system-wide water releases be rescheduled to improve conditions for wading birds and other wildlife. Changing the design of the C-111 canal and how it is operated is part of this plan. Bjork says, “it is critical that the impacts of C-111 canal operations on downstream Roseate Spoonbill foraging habitat be considered in the design of water management plans.” The C-111 forms the southernmost portion of an extensive canal network designed to control floods and supply water to residents and farmers along the Florida southeast coast. It lies just upstream of important wading-bird feeding areas. How much water and when are questions that Audubon’s study was designed to answer. Audubon scientist Bjork is consulting with the Corps and will help them evaluate the design plans.

QUOTES

“It is not enough to improve slightly on Ronald Reagan’s environmental record. That was too easy an act to follow.”

George Frampton, *president of The Wilderness Society, remarking on George Bush’s environmental policy.*

“It is just this year’s signal reminding us that we are messing up the atmosphere.”

Tom Clarkson *of the New Zealand Meteorological Service, responding to a report of a deep hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica for the third consecutive year.*

“At this rate, the only Baltimore Orioles kids will see in the next century will be baseball players.”

John Turner, *director of the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, on the steady decline of neotropical migrant birds.*

“Blaming the Act is not going to create jobs, revitalize rural communities, retrain workers, restore lost salmon runs or preserve our forests. It’s always been a false premise that the Northwest must choose between a healthy economy and a healthy environment.”

Representative Jim McDermott, *on the idea of weakening the Endangered Species Act.*

DIRECTIONS

APPOINTED

Amos S. Eno is now the executive director of the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in Washington, D.C. Previously the director of conservation programs at NFWF, Eno was appointed executive director by the Board of Directors of the Foundation at their March board meeting.

George Powell has been appointed director of Conservation Biology at the Rare Center for Tropical Bird Conservation. Powell was an important figure in Audubon’s field research department for 11 years, leading studies on wading bird ecology and nutrient cycling in Florida Bay. Among his contributions to ornithology and conservation is his discovery that the Resplendent Quetzal has a complex altitudinal migration. This re-

vealed that the boundaries of the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve in Costa Rica, which he founded, were not inclusive enough to adequately protect the bird.

At “RARE,” Powell will continue to study the habitat needs and migration patterns of birds in Central and South America. There he will help biologists, local governments, nongovernmental organizations, and environmental lawyers design refuges to accommodate the needs of flagship species and the concerns of landowners.

HONORED

Crawford H. Greenewalt, 89, former president and chairman of the board of DuPont, was awarded the 1992 Arthur A. Allen Award. Traditionally awarded to a professional ornithologist, Greenewalt, a hobbyist, was recognized for his innovative bird photography, bioacoustical analysis of bird songs, and excellence in ornithology. The award is given by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology to a distinguished ornithologist who has contributed greatly



Crawford H. Greenewalt

to the public awareness of, and enthusiasm for, avian life. Greenewalt, who lives near Wilmington, Delaware, also played a vital role in establishing VIREO at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

OVERVIEW

Under its Scholars Program in Conservation and the Environment, The Pew Charitable Trusts annually awards ten grants of \$150,000 each to scientists whom they describe as “environmental problem solvers.” One of this year’s winners was Carl Safina, research and policy ecologist with the National Audubon Society.

Russell Greenberg, a research zoologist at the Smithsonian Institution Environmental Research Center, who has spent the last 14 years studying migratory birds in Panama was another recipient.

RETIRED

James Baird, vice president of Massachusetts Audubon, retired at the end of 1991. A vital part of the organization since 1945, Baird spent much of his time on both conservation and ornithology, fostering and encouraging aspiring naturalists and conservationists. Baird intends to remain in close contact with Massachusetts Audubon as a consultant.

DEATHS

Ruth P. Emery of Waltham, Massachusetts died at the age of 93. Over the course of her birding career with Massachusetts Audubon, Emery was the original voice of the popular “Voice of Audubon,” a recorded message maintained by Massachusetts Audubon to keep birders abreast of bird sightings of note. Emery was also co-editor of Records of New England Birds and the sub-regional editor of New England regional report section of *American Birds*.

WORLD BRIEFS

NEW ZEALAND

The latest census reports that despite conservation efforts, the number of Yellow-eyed Penguins continues to plummet. The population is down



Yellow-eyed Penguin

50 percent from last year. Only 167 breeding pairs are left on South Island; the lowest number ever recorded. However, according to *Forest & Bird* and *Oryx*, the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust received a grant of \$65,000 from the dairy company Mainland Products, and is busy fencing, replanting, trapping predators and running education programs to alert people to the plight of this species.

VIETNAM

According to British Birds and the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP), Vietnam's once plentiful forests have been decimated by war and human incursion. There are now 34 bird species that are classified as threatened. The Vietnamese government has formed a Forest Birds Working Group (FBWG) which is cooperating with the ICBP to collect information on the country's little-known birds. A plan for a network of protected areas is also in the works.

Last spring, a team consisting of Jonathan Eames and Craig Robson, both from ICBP, and Dr. Nguyen Cu and Truong van La

of FBWG, surveyed threatened species and worked to identify areas for inclusion in the proposed protected-areas system. They discovered three displaying White-shouldered Ibises (*Pseudibis davisoni*) in Nam Bai Cat Tien National Park. Once widespread in Southeast Asia, this species has disappeared from much of its range—the only recent records were from Kalimantan, Indonesia. The wetlands within the park are severely threatened by disturbance from fishermen, and in 1991 the conflict between fishermen and the park staff ended in violence when a park guard and a fisherman were killed.

FRENCH GUIANA

The World Wide Fund for Nature has launched a campaign for a "European Tropical Park" in the rainforests of French Guiana. According to *New Scientist*, the park would be run by the European Commission and would protect nature reserves, keeping strict control of hunting, forestry and road building within the territory.

Although 90 percent of the country is covered with rainforest, Jean-Marc Thiollay, an ornithologist at the French National Research organization (CNRS), agrees with the call for conservation measures. "In percentage terms," says Thiollay, "there is as much destruction of primary forest as in the Amazon."

Logging itself is not the prime trouble, however. According to the Forestry Office of the French Ministry of Agriculture, only 100,000 cubic meters of prime timber are felled each year—all of it in the coastal zone. Forestry officials do agree however that roads and tracks opened by loggers are being abused by unchecked hunting. Thiollay has seen an enormous drop in wildlife. "Spider

monkeys, ibises, curassows, and macaws have disappeared from areas reached by people," he reports. Forestry officials, the World Wide Fund for Nature and CNRS all want the roads and tracks to be closed to the public. The hope is that in June when the Earth Summit takes place, France will consider an environmental policy for French Guiana.

PERU

Nature Conservancy reports that the U.S. Agency for International Development, a Conservancy partner overseas, recently awarded \$3.6 million to the Conservancy to help protect Peru's Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve, the second-largest wetland in the Amazon basin.

The 5.1-million-acre tropical lowland, set in northeastern Peru, has suffered from limited management and patrol activity since its establishment in 1986. Uncontrolled hunting, fishing, and slash-and-burn agricultural activities are threatening the reserve's wetlands, forests and rivers. Within the reserve, which is twice the size of Yellowstone National Park, endangered plant and animal species are at risk, including Harpy Eagles and various parrots.

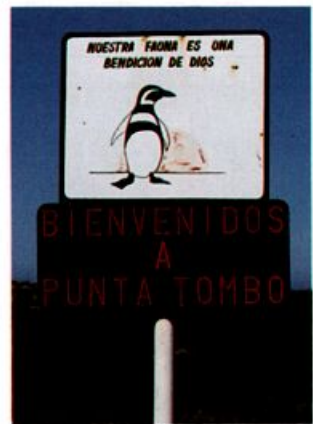
The Conservancy plans to use the new funds to hire additional staff, mark boundaries, and purchase basic equipment such as boats and radios. The plan also calls for development of better ways to manage the reserve's resources for the long term.

ARGENTINA

An oil spill in September 1991 northeast of Peninsula Valdez coated tens of thousands of Magellanic Penguins with crude oil. The birds were migrating from the southern waters of Brazil to their nesting grounds in Punta Tombo and the beaches farther south.

Scientists now report that at least 16,000 birds, and possibly twice that many, were killed as a result of the spill. According to Nathaniel Nash, a reporter for the *New York Times*, a month after the oiled penguins began washing up, there was a dead bird perhaps every 50 feet along the shore.

This apparently is not an



isolated event. Local environmentalists say that penguins are washed up coated with oil every year, although last year's number was ten times normal. It is not known, they say, how or where the other oil spills occur.

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