

# World Briefs

## **Bald Eagle**

The Bald Eagle, national symbol of the United States, has recovered significantly since the days in the early 1970s when fewer than 800 adult nesting birds could be found in the lower 48 states. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, synchronizing with the nation's 4th of July birthday, has begun the process to reclassify the eagle to Threatened status under the Endangered Species Act. In the past 20 years, stricter laws, eagle recovery plans, and public education have contributed to the bird's comeback. Today there are nearly 8000 adult birds outside Alaska. The bird will remain Endangered in Arizona, New Mexico, and western Texas.

In the early 1960s, the Bald Eagle was victim of hunters and growing pollution from pesticides. Stiff fines for harming the birds under the Endangered Species Act and stricter environmental laws—most importantly the banning of DDT in 1973—were important milestones for the Bald Eagle.

## **Uruguay**

Uruguayan conservationists were delighted recently by the visit of birders and Elderhostel members to the wetlands of Rocha on the country's Atlantic Coast. The Banados del Este is a Ramsar Site under the International Convention on Wetlands of Importance. But unless local residents can see the beneficial economic impact that ecotourism and conservation can have, the wetlands will continue to be converted to rice fields, report Patricia Cook and Omar Martinez of Punta del Este, Maldonado, Uruguay.

The 325,000 hectares are important to migratory shorebirds that breed in North America, as well as to 120 species of resident birds.

## **Peregrine News**

Six immature Peregrine Falcons, five females and one male, were released June 16 at the National Audubon Society Borestone Mountain Sanctuary in Monson, Maine. Since 1987, 31 captive-bred Peregrines have been released from the site; only one has been lost in the release.

## **Kirtland's Warblers**

The Endangered Kirtland's Warbler had a banner year in Michigan: Researchers and volunteers counted 633 singing males during the census this June. That represents a 30 percent increase over last year, and surpasses the previous record of 502 singing males heard in 1961. Numbers have increased every year since a record-low 167 in 1987. Intensive wildlife man-

agement, coordinated by state and federal agencies under the Endangered Species Act, is credited.

## **Korea**

A nesting colony of the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill has been discovered in the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. As many as 10 nesting pairs are thought to be on an island in the Han River, which flows through the undeveloped narrow strip between the two nations. The birds were observed by a South Korean ornithologist from a site just south of the DMZ, which is off-limits to South Korean scientists.

## **Festival!**

Over one million people are expected to participate this fall in Festival Mundial de las Aves (World Birdwatch). The educational event focuses on bird conservation. Last October nearly 100 countries participated. Planners are seeking assistance, specifically donation of binoculars, educational materials in Spanish, field guides, and financial help. For information, contact George Shillinger, BirdLife International, P.O. Box 57242, Washington, D.C. 20037-7242 (fax 202-293-9342).

## **Least Tern Loss**

Endangered (California) Least Terns suffered a devastating loss at the Bolsa Chica wetlands near Huntington Beach, CA in May and June. A red fox raided 60 of the 90 nests at the reserve, which is home to about 10 percent of the state's population of the species. A professional trapper stalked the fox for 10 days, unsuccessfully. Later, an American Kestrel preyed on more than a dozen of the surviving chicks. Biologist Troy Kelly of the California Department of Fish and Game said it was the most serious attack on the breeding population since the area was set aside in the late 1970s. About 200 mating pairs have been using the area in recent years. Kelly is uncertain whether they will return next year in the wake of the damage.

*This column will be devoted to conservation notes concerning birds and birding. The format will vary—some issues will include briefs of interest, others will focus on one single issue of importance. We want it to be your forum, also. We invite our readers to contribute bird conservation news from your communities, essays on issues of controversy, summaries of conservation victories. Please send any contributions to Susan Roney Drennan, Editor-in-Chief, National Audubon Society Field Notes, 700 Broadway, NYC, NY 10003.*

JOHN FARRAND, JR., died of a heart attack June 24 at the age of 56, at his home in New Haven, Connecticut. He was a man of letters, a man of scholarship, and his death is a poignant loss to the ornithological and birding communities and to his many friends.

John was born in New York City and grew up in rural Connecticut where, as a very young child, his interest in natural history began and where, with schoolboy curiosity, the beauty and complexity of birds inspired him. He lived the majority of his life in and around New York and to the last was intensely interested in everything related to its natural history.

In the mid-1960s, under the late George M. Sutton, Farrand earned a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Oklahoma and in the early 1970s, he received a Master of Science degree in Zoology at Louisiana State University under the late George H. Lowery, Jr., of whom he always spoke with affection.

As an eager, budding ornithologist, he traveled in such widely separated parts of the world as Central and South America, Europe and Africa, with special emphasis on Greece and Peru.

Among the many positions—some full-time, some part-time, and some honorary—to which Farrand brought unflagging energy and enthusiasm were both Associate and Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Ornithology at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), where he completely reorganized the specimen collection; Zoologist in the Division of Birds at the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, where he worked on the Palearctic Migrant Survey in Egypt and Ethiopia; co-editor for a decade of *The Kingbird*, the quarterly journal of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc.; President of the Linnaean Society of New York; and Natural Science Editor at Chanticleer Press, Inc.

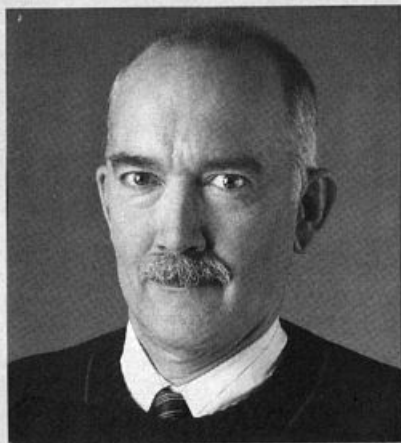
Many of the leading ornithologists and birders of today will recall with gratitude John's helpfulness at the AMNH and National Museum in their younger days. His contributions of knowledge to others, especially of taxonomy and specimens, were massive. He was an assiduous letter writer, responding to correspondents with alacrity and usually at length. He was that rare combination of a first-class field naturalist and a careful and accurate museum worker who, for those he helped, will not soon or easily be forgotten.

In the decade between 1975 and 1985, John's accomplishments as author included the *World Atlas of Birds* (North American

section), *Reference List of Birds of the World* (with John J. Morony and Walter J. Bock) published by the American Museum of Natural History, and *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds, Eastern Region* (with John Bull).

As Natural Science Editor at Chanticleer Press during that same decade, he developed and oversaw the publication of 12 volumes in the *Audubon Society Field Guide Series*, including those on insects and spiders, seashore creatures, fossils, fishes, whales and porpoises, weather, and the monumental three-volume *The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding*. He is, perhaps, best known as the editor of this work, and it is certainly among his

## In Memoriam



JOHN FARRAND, JR. (1937-1994)

most useful contributions. The project called for assembling a team of 63 accomplished birder/writer/consultants, 13 bird artists, several special reviewers, and over one hundred photographers. He kindled the enthusiasm of this formidable group, and the result was an astonishing distillation of the combined state of the art in field identification at the time. Throughout the duration of the project he had amazing patience and determinate pertinacity, and untiring appetite for details. Nothing was too small for his notice.

When, in 1984, Farrand assumed the editorship of *American Birds*, only his intimate friends realized the zest which he brought to the heavy work that this responsibility entailed. He labored with considerable success not only to maintain the high standards of the journal but even to improve it. As editor, he was sympathetic, quick-witted, and indulgent, which, of course, was of incalculable comfort and encouragement to regional editors and authors. A passion for accuracy

and scientific truth were always his hallmarks. He had a natural talent as editor and cultivated it until, for reasons of health, he resigned the post in mid-1985.

He then turned his attention to full-time writing. A free-lance author, working in a corner of his own home, producing his own manuscripts on his old, first-generation computer, operates on a Lilliputian scale and must struggle to avoid an insularity of outlook. But this was a period in which Farrand wrote with the gusto of pure genius. He indulged his insatiable curiosity. He freshly examined old subjects, giving extensive attention and up-to-date meaning in some of his most engrossing narratives. In *Weather*, published in 1990, and *Masterpieces of Bird Art*, coauthored with Roger Pasquier in 1991, one can easily see his versatility, originality, and splendor of description. His flair for synthesizing complicated subjects in readable and readily assimilable form is evident in his three-volume *Audubon Handbook* on how to identify birds, and coordinated field guides, published in 1988. These books illustrate his capacity for marshaling multitudinous facts and discriminations and his ability to communicate in a simple and direct way.

Like few of his contemporaries, John Farrand was possessor of an individual literary will combined with a strong propensity for natural history. His immense erudition was wielded by one of the finest minds in the field. He was a walking encyclopedia of the knowledge culled by others. He belonged to a class of original thinkers and writers who made other practitioners of wordsmithing look clumsy. Take, for example, his consistently intelligent and entertaining columns entitled "Moments In History," appearing in *American Birds* from 1990 through 1993.

His death was untimely, coming at the height of his knowledge and powers. Ornithology and the natural world is the poorer by much that he had in mind to write. It is not, however, for his attainments but for himself that John Farrand will be best remembered by his friends, for he had qualities that endeared him permanently to those who knew him best. Notable among these were his appreciation of beauty, earthy sense of humor, animation in the field, almost childlike zest for the opera, charming companionship, absence of intellectual conceit, essential modesty, and quick warm smile. His name will occupy an honorable place in the annals of North American natural history, for he's left behind so many tangible mementos of his talents.

—Susan Roney Drennan