

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I was back in the US during February, and when my friend Bill Heinrich asked if I wanted to help him look for merlin on the way in to work, obviously I said yes. I imagined us taking a detour from the city into the wild-lands of Idaho and hiking out far from the beaten track to catch a fleeting glimpse of one of these pocket-sized predators – remember, I come from the UK and the last merlin I saw was a hard-won observation after trekking for a sodden 2.5 hours across a windswept, rainy peat bog in western Scotland. What I did not expect was to spend the following mornings cruising around the ghetto districts of Boise, listening to Lady GaGa (not my choice – but quite apt given this surreal fieldwork experience and Bill said it helped us to blend in to our surroundings) and finding merlin perching in small trees overlooking a neighbourhood of shacks, car-wrecks and discarded plastic toys. It wasn't just the ease of finding merlin in this habitat that surprised me. We saw harriers every single day, unmolested and quartering the ground outside our office, we saw bald eagles hunting on the river right next to a main road in the city centre, and one evening we also found a juvenile goshawk, perch-hunting from a tree in the middle of suburbia – so close to houses that it could have been watching television through the windows. For many of our North American members, these sightings would not be considered unusual. But believe me, for many of our UK members these sightings would be considered incredible. In the UK, most raptors are still persecuted (illegally) to the extent that many of their populations are severely constrained – the sight of a wild goshawk perching out in the open seemingly without a care in the world is virtually unheard of, even for those of us who monitor goshawk nest sites. The best we can hope for is a flash of the tail as the goshawk retreats from the wood at the first inkling of human presence.

So what's the point of this anecdote? The point is this. RRF's main attribute, in my view, is its diversity of membership. Not only do we have members with varying global perspectives from around the world, but also within that collective our members bring differing experiences and expertise to the table, ranging from academics, falconers, educators, rehabbers, students, conservationists and wildlife managers (not all mutually exclusive, of course). It's this diversity that is our core strength and will allow us to continue finding solutions to issues that affect raptors worldwide. I think we are exploiting this diversity in the best possible way, and we continue to explore novel practices to draw on this cumulative resource. Recent developments include a re-structured conservation committee comprising international experts from all global bioregions, a newly re-vamped website that showcases our varied activities, a newly-formed Early Career Raptor Researcher group that aims to foster and support emerging talent, and most recently, the formation of an ad-hoc committee to explore fundraising opportunities that would allow us to help support international attendance at our annual conferences.



There are a few individuals I would like to pay tribute to, whose time and skill has helped us to continue looking forward. Judy Scherpelz and Rick Harness organised

a thoroughly professional and enjoyable annual conference in Colorado last September. Not only was it flawless, they managed to raise a considerable amount of funding for us in the process. Joan Morrison stepped in (along with Rick Watson) to take on the challenge of the new conservation committee. Regrettably, this meant we lost Joan as our trusted secretary, but her dynamic productivity is already paying dividends as our conservation committee hits the ground running. Libby Mojica accepted the role of website coordinator after we lost Carl Marti last year. Libby embraced the Board's desire for a website overhaul and in a few short months she has led a team to produce an exceptionally stylish website, on time and under budget. Thank you to these people, and also to our outgoing Directors, Jim Bednarz, Carol McIntyre and Petra Bohall Wood, and our outgoing Committee Chairs, Jim Bednarz, Carol McIntyre, Kate Davis and Clint Boal. Welcome to our new or returning Directors, Munir Virani, Marc Ruddock, Carol McIntyre and John Smallwood, new Secretary Greg George, and new Committee Chairs Laurie Goodrich, Brent Bibles, Rick Watson, Joan Morrison, James Dwyer, Jessi Brown, Jemima Parry-Jones and Tom Sproat.

If you're lucky enough to be doing fieldwork this spring and summer, I hope it's full of surprises (good ones), with or without a Lady GaGa soundtrack. If you don't know who Lady GaGa is, you're probably better off keeping it that way.



Best, Ruth

### **Get Involved with RRF!! The Raptor Research Foundation Needs Your Help**

The Raptor Research Foundation is a relatively small society of researchers worldwide that have a passion for raptors. One of the nice things about being a small society is that it is easy to become involved, get to know your fellow researchers, and take part in shaping the direction of RRF. One way to do this is to serve on committees. Check the website for information on committees and their activities. Another way to become involved is to serve on the RRF Board of Directors.

We are currently seeking RRF members with an interest in serving on the Board of Directors beginning in January 2012. Whether you are a student or experienced researcher your energy, enthusiasm, and interest in being involved in the organization are ALL that is needed! We have four Director positions to be elected in fall 2011: (1) a North American director position, (2) a Eurasian director position, and (3 and 4) two at-large positions with no geographic restrictions (i.e., can be from any country).

Directors interact through quarterly e-meetings to discuss and vote through email on items of business. Most of them serve on a committee to assist the society with various tasks, and they attend the annual face-to-face board meetings when it is feasible. If you would like to add your name to the ballot or if you have suggestions for possible nominees for RRF Director positions, contact me, Laurie Goodrich, RRF Nominations Committee Chair, before April 30. Do not be shy about volunteering, RRF is inviting your participation! Call or email any questions or nominations to, Laurie Goodrich, [goodrich@hawkmtn.org](mailto:goodrich@hawkmtn.org) or 570-943-3411 x106. I look forward to hearing from you!

**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC**OFFICERS

President: Ruth Tingay  
 Vice-president: Ted Swem

Secretary: Greg George  
 Treasurer: Angela Matz

DIRECTORS

Eurasian: Fabrizio Sergio  
 Southern Hemisphere: Miguel Saggese  
 At Large Outside North America: Marc Ruddock  
 North America #1: John Smallwood  
 North America #2: Gary Santolo  
 North America #3: Laurie Goodrich

At Large #1: Munir Virani  
 At Large #2: Clint Boal  
 At Large #3: Michael W. Collopy  
 At Large #4: Carol McIntyre  
 At Large #5: Torgeir Nygard  
 At Large #6: Mike Kochert

For more information about the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. (founded in 1966), please visit the RRF website at: <http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/>.

Persons interested in birds of prey are invited to join the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF). *Wingspan* is emailed twice each year to all members of RRF and is available on the RRF website. Members also receive *The Journal of Raptor Research* (ISSN 0892-1016), which is published quarterly. For membership and subscription information, please contact: Ornithological Societies of North America, 5400 Bosque Boulevard, Suite 680, Waco, TX 76710, USA; 1-254-399-9636 (phone); 1-254-776-3767 (fax); [business@osnabirds.org](mailto:business@osnabirds.org) (email); <http://www.osnabirds.org> (web).

**Editor's Note** – Thanks to the following contributors for this issue of the *Wingspan*: Keith Bildstein, David Bird, Karla Bloem, Pete Bloom, Clint Boal, Travis Booms, Laurie Goodrich, Charles Henny, Jenny and Ken Hodge, Gene Jacobs, Lloyd Kiff, Antoni Margalida, Bill Mattox, Libby Mojica, Joan Morrison, Julie O'Connor, Darcy Ogada, Jeep Pagel, Micah Scholer, Ted Swem, Ruth Tingay, Susan Whaley.

*Wingspan* welcomes contributions from RRF members and others interested in raptor biology and management. Please submit contributions via email to Petra Bohall Wood, *Wingspan* Editor, at [rffwingspan@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:rffwingspan@mail.wvu.edu). For long contributions, please send as an MS Word attachment. Contribution deadline for the next issue is **15 August 2011**.

**2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION**  
 Duluth, Minnesota 2011

## RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### *Join us in Duluth!!*

The 2011 Annual Conference will be held in beautiful Duluth, Minnesota on October 5-9, 2011.



Releasing a banded raptor  
at Hawk Ridge Bird  
Observatory

Positioned at the southwestern tip of magnificent Lake Superior, Duluth offers a mix of great birding, picturesque scenery and an incredible fall raptor migration. Hawk watching in Duluth is at its best in early October, as the greatest number of the widest variety of species are migrating past Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory during this peak migration week! Duluth has a rich history in shipping, logging and railroads; several museums and historic sites are within walking distance of the Radisson Hotel and well worth a visit.

Extend your visit to Duluth by a day or two and take advantage of our field trip options. We'll be heading out to birding hotspots along the shoreline of Lake Superior, as well as pre- and post-conference day trips to the restored wetlands of Crex Meadows in Grantsburg, Wisconsin and the legendary Sax-Zim Bog, just north of Duluth.



Northern Hawk Owl



The 2011 Annual Meeting will feature the following symposia and special-topic paper sessions:

- Raptors and Contaminants
- Raptors and Wind Energy
- Breeding Ecology, Distribution, and Movements of *Aegolius* Owls
- Short-eared Owls: the need for a continental conservation plan
- Ecology & Conservation of Eastern North American Golden Eagles

We'll have a full day of raptor research short courses for our Early Career Raptor Research (ECRR) participants on Wednesday. Course topics are still being developed, but will likely include raptor harnessing and marking techniques, raptor trap construction and use, migration station trapping methods, accessing raptor nests via rappelling or climbing, and raptor tissue sampling and study skin preparation. Additional topics are still being considered and specific class offerings will be finalized in May. There will also be networking and social opportunities at the ECRR lunch social on Thursday.



Sandhill Crane

The 2011 Plenary Address will be delivered by **Dr. Scott Lanyon**, Professor and Head of the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Lanyon will explain how scientists discover the evolutionary relationships of modern species (the Tree of Life) and

how our changing understanding of these evolutionary relationships leads to changes in raptor classification.

In the evenings, plan to join us for our opening social (Wednesday), the annual Poster Session and Social (Thursday), a private-chartered scenic excursion and dinner aboard the North Shore Scenic Railway (Friday), and the Saturday Evening Awards Banquet.



Duluth Aerial Lift Bridge

For complete conference details, visit our website at [www.raptorresearchfoundation.org](http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org)

Register online, by mail or by phone beginning March 1, 2011. Abstract deadline is July 8, 2011. For more information, contact conference coordinator Julie O'Connor at [RRFinDuluth@aol.com](mailto:RRFinDuluth@aol.com) or at 218-348-2291.

Hawk Ridge **The 2011 RRF Conference is hosted by:**



NATURAL RESOURCES  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE



COLLEGE OF SCIENCE  
AND ENGINEERING  
Department of Biology

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## UPCOMING RRF MEETINGS

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**2012 Conference: 14-18 August 2012, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada**

Conference website: <http://www.naoc-v2012.com/>

RRF will participate in the North American Ornithological Conference V in a joint meeting with nine other ornithological societies. The 5th North American Ornithological Conference, organized jointly by the American Ornithologists' Union, Society of Canadian Ornithologists/ Societe des Ornithologistes du Canada, Bird Studies Canada, Association of Field Ornithologists, Cooper Ornithological Society, Raptor Research Foundation, La Sociedad para el Estudio y Conservacion de las Aves en Mexico [CIPAMEX], Waterbird Society, and Wilson Ornithological Society, will be held at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The 4 day scientific program (15-18 August) will be preceded by annual and council meetings of most of the ornithological societies, and scientific and ENGO workshops. The opening reception will be held on the evening of 14 August. Field trips will be offered before and after the scientific program. The Steering Committee for NAOC-V, with representatives from each of the participating ornithological groups, is engaged in the conference planning details.

### *FIRST CALL FOR 2012 SYMPOSIUM AND WORKSHOP PROPOSALS*

Proposals for symposia should contain the following details: symposium title; the names, institution or affiliation, addresses, phone, fax, email addresses of organizer(s) and keynote speaker(s); a description (500 words maximum) of the objectives and conceptual flow of the symposium. In addition, provide a

separate 300 word justification for why this symposium is important and timely (i.e., in terms of fundamental science or the application of science to address management problems) and why it would be interesting to attendees (e.g., to attract >100 participants). Proposals that provide opportunities for speakers to present alternate perspectives or evidence about controversial topics are encouraged. Additional information about the application process, selection criteria, presentation timing and format, and symposium structure will be placed on the NAOC web site at <http://www.naoc-v2012.com>.

Symposia will be limited to half-day sessions (approximately 3 hours, composed of 15 or 30 minute time slots); there will be no full-day symposia. Symposium and Workshop organizers and presenters will be expected to pay for full conference registration, and will be responsible for their own travel expenses. Presenters at symposia will not be considered for presentations in contributed paper sessions (i.e., Limit of one oral presentation per person at the meeting). Abstracts for papers given during symposia must be submitted as part of the normal abstract submission process and deadlines (to be announced). Symposium organizers should confirm attendance by prospective speakers.

Proposals for workshops should contain the following details: workshop title; the names, institution or affiliation, addresses, phone, fax, email addresses of organizer(s) or instructor(s); a 300 word justification for why this workshop is important or useful to attendees; maximum number of participants; and time, space and resource (e.g., computing) requirements. Workshops will be scheduled either before, during (evenings) or after the main conference.

The deadline for submission of proposals for Symposia or Workshops (Word file or PDF) will be in the fall of 2011; keep checking the website for the formal announcement. Decisions will be sent to applicants within 3 months of submission. Send enquiries and proposals to [NAOC2012@ec.gc.ca](mailto:NAOC2012@ec.gc.ca). In some cases, symposium and workshop organizers may be contacted via email by the Chair of the Scientific Program Committee (Bob Clark) prior to final decisions to discuss proposals.

**2013 Conference: Argentina** (details forth-coming)

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## **Highlights of the 2010 RRF Conference: Fort Collins, Colorado**

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Submitted by Libby Mojica, Conference Committee Chair

The 2010 Raptor Research Foundation annual conference was held in Fort Collins, Colorado USA from 22-26 September. The conference was hosted by the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program and EDM International. The conference was attended by 261 participants from 10 countries including 36 students. The scientific program included plenary speeches by Pat Shipman and Bruce MacDonald as well as symposia on Raptor and Human Conflicts, Raptors and Zoonotic Infections, The Role of Banding in Raptor Conservation: Past, Present, & Future, Raptors and Energy Development, and Raptors in Education. A total of 108 oral papers and 27 posters were presented at the conference.

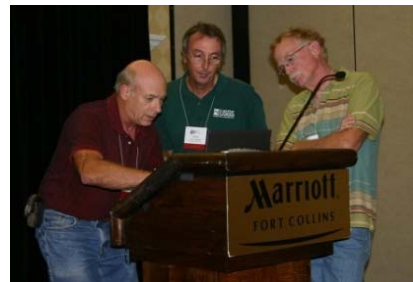
The conference would not have been possible without the generous support of the following groups: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Tri-State Generation & Transmission, Assoc., Inc., Thunder Basin Coal Company (Arch Western), Marathon Oil Company, High Plains Power, Poudre Valley REA, Yates Petroleum, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, US Forest Service, Colorado State University Dept. Wildlife Biology, New Belgium Brewing Company, Cotleigh Brewing Company, USGS Fort Collins Science Center, and Heartland Hosting.



Judy Scherpelz, local conference committee chair, with key local committee member Rick Harness. Dan Varland photo.



Local conference volunteers from the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program. L-R: Zarah Stegall, Judy Scherpelz (local organizing committee chair), Lisa Winta, and Nissa Osheim. Dan Varland photo.



L-R: RRF Director and Scientific Program Chair Jim Bednarz (USA), Bruce Peterjohn (USA) and Olin Allen (USA). Dan Varland photo.



Scientific Program Committee member Jim Dwyer (USA) helps upload speaker presentations. Dan Varland photo.



Geoff Holroyd (left, Canada) and Filepe Chavez-Ramirez (USA/Mexica) at the poster session. Dan Varland photo.



Bill Mannan (USA) and Isabel Caballero (Argentina) at the poster session. Dan Varland photo.



L-R: Lloyd Kiff (USA), John Elliott (Canada), and David Bird (Canada). Dan Varland photo.



L-R: 2013 Conference Committee Chair Sergio Lambertucci (Argentina), Isabel Caballero (Argentina/USA) and Miguel Saggese (Argentina/USA). Dan Varland photo.



Kate Davis (USA) and Kit Lacy (USA). Dan Varland photo.



Conference participants enjoying the Friday night social at the New Belgian Brewery. Wayne Nelson photo.



RRF Conference Committee Chair and Webmaster Libby Mojica (USA) and RRF Director Torgeir Nygard (Norway). Wayne Nelson photo.



Education Committee Chair Jemima Parry-Jones (UK), Early Careers Committee Chair Travis Booms (USA), RRF President Ruth Tingay (UK) and RRF Director Gary Santolo (USA). Wayne Nelson photo.



Alvaro Camina (Spain) and Jeff Smith (USA). Torgeir Nygard photo.



Field trip, Rocky Mountain National Park. Wayne Nelson photo.



USFWS biologist Doni Sprague speaks to RRF conference participants during a field trip to the National Eagle Wildlife Property Repository. Dan Varland photo.



The Iron Family Dancers and singers performing at the Awards Banquet. Dan Varland photo.



RRF Treasurer (left) Angela Matz (USA) and Secretary Joan Morrison (USA) are recognized for their service to RRF at the Awards banquet. Dan Varland photo.

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## News from the RRF

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### Recent Donations to the RRF Memorial Endowment Fund

**RRF** acknowledges the following individuals for their generous donations to the Endowment Fund. The interest earned on the Endowment is used to fund RRF's annual grants and awards, many of which help students. The larger the Endowment Fund grows, the more funding is available for the various grants and awards.

- James Harper (Chair of the Koplín Student Travel Award Subcommittee) sent a donation of \$1,000 USD.
- Jemima Parry-Jones has donated royalties from the sale of her falconry films in the US, estimated by the publisher (Western Sporting) at \$75 - 100 USD per year.
- Petra Wood donated \$200 USD to the endowment.
- Judy Henckel donated \$500 to the endowment in memory of Ed Henckel, an RRF Life Member.

Thanks to all!

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### 2010 RRF Award Recipients

Submitted by Clint Boal

#### 2010 Fran & Frederick Hamerstrom Award

Dr. Keith L. Bildstein is Sarkis Acopian Director of Conservation Science at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Kempton, Pennsylvania and Adjunct Professor of Wildlife Biology at the State University of New York-Syracuse. Since receiving his B.S. in Biology at Muhlenberg College, in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and his M.S. and Ph. D. in Zoology from the Ohio State University, in Columbus, Ohio, Dr. Bildstein has held the positions of Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology at the College of William and Mary, in Williamsburg, Virginia, and Distinguished Professor of Biology at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina, from 1978 to 1992.



(Photo by Dan Varland)

In addition to having served as Vice-president of the Raptor Research Foundation, he is a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, and has been President of the Wilson Ornithological Society and the Waterbird Society. He has also served as editor of the Wilson Bulletin and as a member of the editorial board of *The Auk*. He has also helped organize the scientific programs of seven national and seven international ornithological meetings, including the 2007 Raptor Research Foundation Meeting at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.

Keith's current research involves the geography, ecology, and conservation of the world's migratory raptors, the energy management in migrating raptors, the feeding and movement ecology of New and Old World vultures, and the ecology of American Kestrels.

Dr. Bildstein has authored or coauthored more than 100 papers in ecology and conservation, including 40 on raptors. He is especially known for his work in migration ecology and authored, among several other books, "Migrating Raptors of the World: Their Ecology and Conservation (2006)." In 2010, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Fundacion Migres, a Spanish non-governmental organization that studies and monitors the movements of migrating raptors, other birds, and marine mammals at the Strait of Gibraltar.

The Fran and Frederick Hamerstrom Award is given in recognition of individuals who have contributed significantly to the understanding of raptor ecology and natural history. It is with pleasure that the Raptor Research Foundation recognizes Dr. Keith Bildstein as a very deserving recipient of the 2010 Fran and Frederick Hamerstrom Award.

**2010 Amadon, Brown, and Tully Grants** – reported in the September 2010 issue

**2010 William C. Anderson Student Poster Award**

Recipient: Elizabeth Wommack for her poster "Examination of Clinal Patterns of Black and White Tail Coloration for male American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) across the North American Continent"

Honorable mention: Joseph Barnes and Matthew Boggie

**2010 William C. Anderson Student Paper Award**

Recipient: Joseph Barnes for his presentation "Call-Broadcast Surveys as an Effective Tool for Detecting Breeding Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*)"

Honorable mention: Chris Briggs and Jessi Brown.

**2010 James R. Koplín Student Travel Award**

Recipient: Romeo Tinajero for his project "Raptors in Desert Scrub"



RRF 2010 Student Award Winners, L - R: Elizabeth Wommack, Chris Briggs, Joe Barnes, Jessi Brown. Dan Varland photo.



Clint Boal congratulates Romeo Tinajero. Dan Varland photo.

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### PRESIDENT'S AWARD 2010

The President's Award, given in recognition and appreciation of exceptional service to RRF, was presented to Dan Varland at the annual conference in Colorado last September.

Dan has worked tirelessly on behalf of RRF for many years, including several terms as a Director and five years (2003-2008) as the Chair of the Conference Committee. This demanding and un-sung role involved everything from the initial persuading of local hosts to hold a conference (often a few years in advance), helping build the proposal, offering guidance on the preparation of the budget and overseeing the logistics, to providing support and practical help during the actual conference and helping to produce the final report after the completion of the event. Dan continues to help out behind the scenes, serving on the Conference Committee and also on the Website Committee.



Congratulations and thank you, Dan; this award is well deserved. (Photo by Torgeir Nygard.)

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### Raptor ReWeb – RRF's Website Receives a Full Facelift!

Submitted by Libby Mojica

We are excited to announce the new face of RRF – our revised website! Visit us at <http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/> and check out the new design. We welcome suggestions for future content to add to the website. You can also check us out on [Facebook](#).

- Online access to the Journal of Raptor Research
- Back issues of Wingspan
- Photo gallery of raptors of the world
- Conference abstracts, photos, final reports
- New education and conservation sections

This endeavor was only possible with the contributions of dedicated volunteers:

**Website committee:** Miguel Saggese, Libby Mojica, Dan Varland, John Smallwood, Travis Booms, and Ruth Tingay

**Additional contributors:** David Bird, Petra Wood, James Dwyer, Julie O'Conner, Cheryl Dykstra, Angela Matz, Jemima Parry-Jones, Tom Sproat, Michele Losse, Clint Boal, Joan Morrison, Rick Watson, Ted Swem, Jessi Brown, and Travis Rosenberry.

**Photographers who donated their photos:** Anita Gamauf (Brazil), Bill Clark (USA), Dan Varland (USA), Linda Wright (UK), Michael Furtman (USA), Munir Virani (India), Nick Dunlop (USA),

Ramón Moller Jensen (Argentina), Rishad Naoroji (India), Rob Palmer (USA), Satish Pande (India), and Steve Dale (USA).

We are looking for volunteers to write short biographies to add to the grants and awards section of the website. Biographies would ideally emphasize contributions to raptor research/conservation and history with RRF. Please [contact us](#) if you are interested in writing on one or more of the following people:

- William C. Anderson
- Fran and Frederick Hamerstrom
- James R. Koplín
- Stephen R. Tully
- Leslie Brown
- Dean Amadon

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### **First Annual Early Career Raptor Research Event Held in Fort Collins**

Submitted by Micah Noel Scholer

Fort Collins played host to the first formal meeting of the Early Career Raptor Researchers (ECRR) during the 2010 RRF conference. A diverse mix of 60 students and early career biologists along with RRF board members, academic researchers, and agency and NGO representatives attended a lunch at a local restaurant on the first day of the conference. By all accounts, the event was a great success and allowed the unique mixture of students, early career professionals, and the RRF vanguard to mingle, share ideas, and network.

For students and raptor biologists in the early stages of their career, connecting with the professionals and peers with whom they share a common interest is important in establishing the next generation of raptor researchers. With the development of the ECRR the RRF hopes to help foster these relationships and provide a social network through which young professionals can improve their research skills and make connections with fellow biologists.

The RRF will hold a similar gathering this coming October during the 2011 annual conference to be held in Duluth, MN. In addition to meeting with the raptor vanguard, the ECRR is also planning a hands-on workshop event to provide professional training to ECRRs on a variety of raptor research topics such as marking techniques, trapping, grant writing, climbing, and other skills vital to raptor research. We encourage you to join the ECRR by contacting Travis Booms at [travis.booms@alaska.gov](mailto:travis.booms@alaska.gov) or email [rrf-early-career-raptor-researchers@googlegroups.com](mailto:rrf-early-career-raptor-researchers@googlegroups.com).

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### **Early Career Raptor Researcher Skills Short Courses.**

Submitted by Travis Booms

The RRF Early Career Raptor Researcher (ECRR) Committee will be hosting a day of raptor research short courses for RRF ECRR's at the annual meeting in Duluth, MN on Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2011. Course topics are still being developed, but will likely include raptor harnessing and marking

techniques, raptor trap construction and use, migration station trapping methods, accessing raptor nests via rappelling or climbing, and raptor tissue sampling and study skin preparation. Additional topics are still being considered and specific class offerings will be finalized in May. Classes will focus on hands-on skill-building that is typically not available in traditional undergraduate or graduate classes. Courses will be taught by leading experts and may occur at locations outside the conference venue as field opportunities arise. Course lengths will vary from 2-8 hours and will be scheduled to allow students to select from a variety of courses throughout the day. Class sizes will be small (4-15 students per class) to provide an intimate and interactive learning environment. A small fee (approximately \$10) will be charged to help defray class expenses. *Classes are only available to students and early career professionals that are paid members of RRF.* ECRR's will be able to register for these courses on a first-come basis through the online conference registration process after course details have been finalized. Please note the short courses will occur on the day before the scientific program commences and will require that participants arrive at the conference venue by 08:00 on Oct. 5. If arriving the night before, we encourage participants to share lodging expenses by finding other participants via ECCR Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=104371966266385>) or the ECCR Google Groups (<http://groups.google.com/group/rrf-early-career-raptor-researchers>) with which to share rooms.

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### **Conservation Committee Restructured and Revitalized**

Submitted by Joan Morrison

The structure, policy, and guidelines for RRF's Conservation Committee were reestablished and accepted by the Board in fall 2010. The purpose of the Conservation Committee is to prepare and disseminate written communications on contemporary issues of conservation concern involving birds of prey that usefully lend the RRF's scientific expertise and credibility to resolution of the conservation issue.

Currently co-chairing the Conservation Committee are Dr. Rick Watson and Dr. Joan Morrison. The committee also includes a network of regional committee members who are responsible for collecting scientific and other related information on conservation issues involving birds of prey that pertain to their particular region. Such information may come from the general public, other raptor-focused organizations, other organizations, or may be brought forward by the regional committee members. When an issue is brought forward, regional committee members will inform the co-chairs about the issue and nature of the request to RRF, and present the scientific and other information in a concise and complete report for evaluation by the co-chairs.

The co-chairs will review and assess the nature of such information and request and determine if a response by RRF is appropriate. Upon receipt of satisfactory information about the issue, the co-chairs will have ultimate responsibility for preparing and disseminating the written communications in response to these issues. The communications prepared by the committee co-chairs will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

Subsequent to approval of the communications by the Board, the co-chairs will disseminate the communications to the requesting organization and other appropriate recipients and post the communications to the RRF website.

The Conservation Committee has recognized 7 biogeographical regions for the purposes of identifying regional experts (Table 1). Suggestions for committee members from the Oceanian (Pacific) regions are welcome. Further questions or requests for information can be sent to Rick: [rwatson@peregrinefund.org](mailto:rwatson@peregrinefund.org) or Joan: [joan.morrison@trincoll.edu](mailto:joan.morrison@trincoll.edu).

Table 1.

| <b>Biogeographical Region</b> | <b>Regional Experts</b>             | <b>e-mail</b>  |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Afrotropical                  | Munir Virani (east)                 | tpf@africaonline.co.ke                                     |
|                               | Ralph Buij (west)                   | ralph.buij@gmail.com                                       |
|                               | Rob Simmons (south)                 | Rob.Simmons@uct.ac.za                                      |
| Australasian                  | Richard Seaton (New Zealand)        | rseaton@golder.co.nz;<br>richseaton@gmail.com              |
|                               | Victor Hurley (Australia)           | victorghurley@yahoo.co.uk                                  |
| Indomalayan (Oriental)        | Jayson Ibanez (Philippines)         | falcon2car@yahoo.com                                       |
|                               | Francesco Germi (Papua)             | fgermi@yahoo.co.uk   |
|                               | Adam Supriatna (Indonesia)          | asianraptor7@gmail.com                                     |
| Nearctic                      | Ricardo Rodriguez-Estrella (Mexico) | estrella@cibnor.mx   |
|                               | Scott Thomas (NA)                   | redtail1@cox.net   |
|                               | Travis Booms (NA)                   | travis.booms@alaska.gov                                    |
|                               | Todd Katzner (NA)                   | todd.katzner@mail.wvu.edu                                  |
| Neotropical                   | Kirsty Swinnerton (West Indies)     | kirsty.swinnerton@islandconservation.org                   |
|                               | Hernan Vargas                       | hvargas@peregrinefund.org                                  |
|                               | Ursula Valdez                       | ursvaldez@hotmail.com                                      |
| Oceanian (Pacific)            | <b>none yet</b>                     |  |
| Palearctic                    | Sundev Gombobataar (Mongolia)       | mongolianbirds@mail.com;<br>gombobaatar@biology.num.edu.mn |
|                               | Lucia Severinghaus                  | zobbowl@gate.sinica.edu.tw                                 |
|                               | Eugene Potapov                      | eugenepotapov@gmail.com                                    |

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## Raptor News

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### MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE FOR OWLS

Submitted by Karla Bloem

The world's best owl researchers and conservationists received the accolades of their peers during the 9th annual International Festival of Owls. Professor Dr. Claus König of Germany received the Festival's highest tribute, the

Champion of Owls Award. In addition to discovering several new species of owls, he authored the authoritative guidebook to owls of the world.

Barnaby the Barn owl touched the lives of over 1.8 million people in the United Kingdom. In his twenty years at Paradise Park in Cornwall he appeared on television and in person to promote public engagement in protecting wild barn owls, helping to raise over £140,000 for bird conservation. He received the Lady Gray'I Award.

Lastly, receiving the Special Achievement Award is Raju Acharya of Nepal who has worked diligently to survey owl populations and human attitudes toward owls in his country. He has educated millions of Nepalese people about the importance of owls in a balanced ecosystem that also supports the local economy.

The International Festival of the Owls took place the first weekend in March in Houston, Minnesota. The World Owl Hall of Fame is sponsored by the World Owl Trust, Global Owl Project, and Gray Owl Fund. More information is available online at [www.festivalofowls.com](http://www.festivalofowls.com). High resolution photos of the winners are available in the Festival's online press room at [www.festivalofowls.com/pressroom.htm](http://www.festivalofowls.com/pressroom.htm).

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### **Kenya Celebrates Culture Awareness Day**

Submitted by Darcy Ogada

There's no better place in Kenya to hold International Culture Awareness Day celebrations than at the world famous Masai Mara Reserve. Besides being a spectacular venue for wildlife, the area bordering the reserve is a hotspot for illegal wildlife poisoning, targeting lions and hyenas, and unfortunately vultures have not been spared.

In October 2010 members of the Raptor Working Group of Nature Kenya braved the bone-jarring road to the Mara to meet with 150 school kids from 11 primary schools that border the reserve. In fact the actual turnout was 300+ kids! The event was hosted by Sekenani Primary School and supported primarily by The Peregrine Fund with additional support from Basecamp Foundation. We had organized with head teachers for the children to perform songs, plays, or other activities that highlight the important role of vultures in the environment and the kids did not disappoint. They performed poems, jokes, plays, dances and even rap songs about vultures. Their knowledge of vultures and of the consequences of baiting carcasses with poison really surprised us and was a credit to their teachers. Besides being informative, their performances were creative and at times very funny. Who wouldn't get down to the 'vulture' rap or laugh at three kids crouched under a blanket hopping around the ground imitating a 'demon' to some, and to others a vulture.

In addition to the performances, we displayed six vulture skins from the National Museums of Kenya Ornithology Section, which were of great interest to all who attended. An art competition was also held with the theme, 'the role of vultures in maintaining the cycle of life', winning entries were hung on the schools' walls and winners were awarded their prizes at the event.

A number of guests attended representing the Masai Mara Reserve, Basecamp Foundation, the community, and BirdLife International. They spoke to the children about the harm of using poisons and the importance of conserving birds and the environment. Dr. Munir Virani of The Peregrine Fund presented the school's Headmaster with a canvas vulture painting that was made during last year's event by a children's arts group from Nairobi. All the attending schools were given two posters, one

about the problems facing vultures and the other about biodiversity and donated by Nature Kenya. The event was a tremendous success and plans are underway to work more intensively with a couple of the schools whose performances really stood out.

International Vulture Awareness Day began in 2009 to highlight the plight of vultures worldwide and to educate people about the importance of these birds. The day is now celebrated by 100 zoos and conservation organizations worldwide (see [www.vultureday.org](http://www.vultureday.org)).

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### News from the Peregrine Fund

Submitted by Susan Whaley

**Study shows poisoning, changing land uses cause alarming drop in vulture numbers in Kenya's Masai Mara National Reserve** -- Vultures in one of Africa's most significant wildlife reserves are declining at such an alarming rate that at least three species are threatened with extinction, according to a new study by The Peregrine Fund, National Museums of Kenya, and Princeton University.

Researchers found that vulture populations around the Masai Mara National Reserve in southwestern Kenya have dropped up to 60 percent over three decades. The primary causes are changes in land use and other human activity, particularly the poisoning of livestock carcasses intended to kill lions and other large predators. Vultures quickly die after scavenging on the tainted carcasses. "Staggering declines in abundance were found for seven of eight scavenging raptors surveyed," said co-author Munir Virani, director of The Peregrine Fund's Africa-based programs. "Better land management and a ban on certain pesticides are needed to preserve these keystone members of the scavenging community." In addition to Virani, the study was co-authored by Corinne Kendall, Peter Njoroge, and Simon Thomsett. The peer-reviewed paper was published online Nov. 25 in *Biological Conservation*. The study recommended that three species – African white-backed, Rüppell's, and Hooded vultures – be relisted as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, an international compilation of threatened species. No Egyptian vultures were observed during the field studies, leading the authors to call for additional research to determine the status of this and other types of vultures.

Read more: [http://www.peregrinefund.org/press\\_full.asp?id=196&category=General](http://www.peregrinefund.org/press_full.asp?id=196&category=General)

**The Peregrine Fund is honored for spearheading effort to recover endangered California**

**Condor in Arizona** -- The Peregrine Fund was honored by the Public Lands Foundation and state and federal agencies in October for its dedication to the recovery of the critically endangered California Condor. "The California Condor simply wouldn't be where it is today if it weren't for The Peregrine Fund and its tenacious conservation efforts on their behalf," said Linda Price, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument manager. Bill Heinrich, head of The Peregrine Fund's endangered species recovery program, accepted the Landscape Stewardship Certificate of Appreciation at a ceremony in St. George, Utah. The Public Lands Foundation presented the award in conjunction with the Arizona Strip District Bureau of Land Management and the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Read more: [http://www.peregrinefund.org/press\\_full.asp?id=192&category=California%20Condor](http://www.peregrinefund.org/press_full.asp?id=192&category=California%20Condor)

**Earthspan, Inc. and Peregrine Fund study effects of oil spill on Peregrine Falcons in Gulf of Mexico** -- Plummeting numbers of Peregrine Falcons alerted the world to the environmental dangers of DDT in the 1970s. Now, Peregrine Falcons are being used to measure any long-term effects from the

oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The Peregrine Fund partnered with Earthspan, Inc., to collect blood samples from migrating Peregrine Falcons on Padre Island, Texas. Samples collected from Padre Island and Assateague Island, Maryland, will be analyzed and compared with archived samples collected prior to the oil spill to detect changes in amounts and composition of PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) and other pollutants. Captured falcons were evaluated for signs of oil exposure before blood samples were taken. Each bird was banded, then immediately released to continue migrating. The results of this year's study will be used to evaluate the need for further investigations on summer breeding grounds and additional migration sampling next year.

Read more: [http://www.peregrinefund.org/press\\_full.asp?id=190&category=Peregrine%20Falcon](http://www.peregrinefund.org/press_full.asp?id=190&category=Peregrine%20Falcon)

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### **Gateway to the Raptor Literature: The RIS-GRIN Merger**

Submitted by Lloyd Kiff, The Peregrine Fund

A decision was made recently to merge the two largest raptor literature bibliographies, the Raptor Information System and the Global Raptor Information Network bibliography. The resulting combined database will offer researchers and raptorophiles an unprecedented opportunity to access the global raptor literature. Here are a few background notes on this historic merger.

#### **The Peregrine Fund Research Library:**

The Peregrine Fund Research Library consisted of only a few scattered boxes of unsorted books until Dr. Robert Storer, a highly respected ornithologist at the University of Michigan, donated the bulk of his superb library to The Peregrine Fund in mid-1995. Bob's endorsement of our efforts served as a recommendation to other leading ornithologists of his generation, including Harold Mayfield, Kenneth Parkes, and Robert Bowman, to donate all or large portions of their personal libraries, and we were on our way. Over the years, several well known raptor biologists, including the family of the late Bill Burnham, Clayton White, Bill Clark, Jim Enderson, Carl Marti, Brian Walton, Sandy Wilbur, and Sally and Walter Spofford, also donated their large collections of books, journals, and/or reprints to us. Other particularly important acquisitions included Ron Ryder's extensive wildlife biology library, Elliott McClure's huge accumulation from SE Asia, the austral South American library of William Belton, and the purchase of the large personal libraries of Chris Thompson and the late Steve Speich.

The acquisition of multiple similar libraries led to a lot of duplication, and we have sold or exchanged the extra copies as often as possible to be able to acquire new titles. We also received significant support from Idaho's Laura M. Cunningham Foundation for several years in the 1990s, which allowed us to acquire many newly published ornithological books and expand our journal subscriptions list. As of February 2011, our research library had received donations of over 40 major libraries, and exactly 100 individuals or organizations have donated at least \$300 worth of publications since 1995.

By the early 2000s, the library collection was spread around the periphery of three rooms of the administration building at our World Center for Birds of Prey, and an additional large portion was stored in an outbuilding. Some folks complained that the library was threatening to displace our administrative staff. Fortunately, we received a large bequest from the estate of a former chair of our Board of Directors, Jerry Herrick, which made possible the construction of a handsome new building to house our Research Library and specimen collections. Through the efforts of Col. Kent Carnie, the

falconry community came together at the same time and contributed sufficient funds to double the size of the building and thereby provide a home for the world-famous Archives of Falconry. We moved the library collections into the newly completed Herrick Collections Building in the Fall of 2003.

The TPF Research Library collection presently contains about 22,500 books and reports, full or partial runs of over 1,500 journal titles, and nearly 30,000 reprints. There is a parallel collection of PDFs of many of the latter papers and book chapters. Through subscriptions or exchange agreements, we receive over 200 different journals annually. It is important to emphasize that this is not just a raptor library, but rather a broadly based ornithological collection, and it also includes many basic references on non-avian taxa.

Our searchable library catalog and PDFs of our journal, magazine, and newsletter inventories are posted on the main TPF website at [www.peregrinefund.org](http://www.peregrinefund.org). PDF lists of our duplicate journal holdings and duplicate books for sale can also be found there. The latter list is presently 165 pages long, with several hundred more titles to be added, and the listed items are priced at 60-75% of comparable online bookseller prices. All proceeds from the sale of books or journals are plowed immediately into new acquisitions for the library collection.

Except for the indomitable Tom Cade, we have almost no on-site users, which is surprising, given our close proximity to Boise State University and the central offices of various wildlife agencies. As I have pontificated elsewhere, including a co-authored chapter in *Raptor Research and Management Techniques*, the recent RRF meeting in Missoula, and a workshop last June at the ARRCN meeting in Mongolia, barely half of the literature needed to do a proper paper for publication in a primary journal is available online at this point, and only half of those sources are open access. The situation is dynamic, as more and more material is brought online, but in the meantime, traditional libraries will continue to be essential for quality research projects.

We doggedly preserve the original paper copies of as many publications as possible. As far as I am aware, paper is still the only reliable long-term archival storage medium (aside, perhaps, from papyrus), and none of the modern media, e.g., 8-track tapes, film, phonograph records, videos, floppy discs, CDs, DVDs, flash drives, or hard drives, have yet demonstrated long-term security properties. Furthermore, much useful electronic content is treated as almost ephemeral, and there does not appear to be any broad systematic approach to preserving much of it, except by commercial publishers like Blackwell, Elsevier, and Springer. Recently, I heard of one formerly well regarded electronic journal on Neotropical topics that has completely disappeared. No trace of it remains unless someone took the time to print out and save all the content on paper.

A time will doubtless come when such problems will be solved, though, and we already rely almost entirely on digital techniques to transfer information from our research library. Our assistant librarian, Travis Rosenberry, singlehandedly manages our PDF program, which is a free service to anyone who asks. Travis has sent over 8,000 PDFs to persons representing 73 countries in the past six years. Despite the trend toward making more and more literature available online, Travis is receiving an ever-increasing rate of PDF requests. Most likely, this is because the greatest strength of our collection is in the minor, esoteric publications, often from other countries and in non-English languages, that no other library has saved and which are not likely to find their way online very soon, if ever. Virtually every library we have received has contained something unique of this nature.

Our main user audience lives in other countries, particularly in South America, Western Europe, and SE Asia. For many researchers and students in remote places, e.g., certain U.S. states and Canadian provinces, our library is their only conduit to the global ornithological literature. Grateful

recipients of PDFs frequently send us unsolicited paper or PDF copies of their own publications, and we often receive pre-prints of new papers before they actually appear in print.

I urge all RRF members to take advantage of our PDF service. Try to stump us – we love the challenge! (and if we don't have what you need, we will try to find it). Furthermore, all donations, including reprints, to The Peregrine Fund Research Library, are tax deductible, and we suggest that this is a better option than throwing them out or taking them to the recycler.

### **Global Raptor Information Network (“GRIN”):**

GRIN ([www.globalraptors.org](http://www.globalraptors.org)) was started in 1999 as a sort of hit list for The Peregrine Fund to identify distressed raptor populations that everyone else might have overlooked. As I began compiling more and more information on the distribution, conservation status, and systematics (which was being rapidly revolutionized by molecular studies) of raptors, it occurred to me that this sort of tabulation might be useful to a broader audience and that it was a good fit for the web.

The original intent was to deal only with endangered and threatened forms, but the boundary between such species and the rare populations and subspecies of globally common species became increasingly blurred to me. Therefore, I decided to tackle all diurnal raptors and summarize all conservation-relevant aspects of their biology. I gradually compiled a database consisting of a matrix of 330 diurnal raptors species and 260 countries or major island groups, and added designations on their conservation status, continent, zoogeographic region, population size, and population trend, insofar as such information was available.

The other major components of GRIN are:

*Species accounts*, roughly resembling those in *Handbook of Birds of the World* and *Birds of North America*, but with the sections restricted to conservation-relevant topics and therefore lacking detailed descriptions and notes on identification.

*Searchable bibliographic database*, which now includes 48,000 records, mostly on diurnal birds of prey. We are now in the process of adding hyperlinks to non-copyrighted PDFs of as many of these references records as possible.

*Researcher homepages*, which now include 332 participants, representing 78 countries. The homepages include contact data, brief biographies, notes on research interests, and the complete list of publications of the respective researchers. We are presently adding links to PDFs of as many of the publications as possible.

Over 1,000 *links* to other raptor-related websites, including raptor organizations, useful databases, hawkwatches, and about 200 technical journals with useful raptor content.

*A bulletin board* with information on current raptor news, upcoming raptor meetings, requests for assistance, and abstracts from recent raptor conferences.

Early on, I was faced with the choice of fleshing out the species accounts as completely as possible one after another, or putting the whole lot online in rudimentary form. I chose the latter course, realizing that it placed me in a situation where the world would be looking over my shoulder while I tried to build the site by fits and starts. Indeed, I have encountered considerable difficulty in keeping the various accounts at more or less the same level of detail.

So far, I have focused most on Neotropical species, partly reflecting my own life history, as well as the challenge of bringing together a large amount of disparate literature from a large number of countries. I have spent relatively meager time on Holarctic species, including most of the ones in North America, partly because I have rationalized that there is already a large body of literature on these species. The incomplete nature of some of the accounts is no doubt disturbing to some users (especially me!), but most folks seem to understand the colossal nature of the task. My only hope is

that researchers using GRIN will find the material that has made its way into the species account accurate and useful and that they will be patient with me as I add additional information, especially from their publications. I appreciate hearing of factual errors, typos, and other blunders in the GRIN species accounts, as this is about my only form of quality control.

Above all, GRIN is intended to be a database, not a narrative, and nothing about it, including the list of accepted species, will ever be "complete." However, there will be constant efforts to make it as current as possible. GRIN presently contains over 4,000 pp of text, and there is simply no limit to the amount of material that can be added to it, given the nature of the web. GRIN is currently receiving visits at a pace of >100,000/yr and over one millions hits annually.

### **Raptor Information System (RIS):**

What eventually came to be known as the Raptor Information System evolved partly from a comprehensive raptor bibliography that was compiled by the late Richard "Butch" Olendorff, and his wife, Sharon, in the late 1960s. Butch caught on early to the potential of computers and databases, and some of his friends claim that he invented dBASE before some company invented it. He was one of the most central figures in the first decades of the Raptor Research Foundation, and his premature death from diabetes in the early 1990s was a terrible loss to the raptor community.

Butch's database came to be known at the Raptor Management Information System (RMIS) when he was at the Californian State Office of the Bureau of Land Management. When he moved to Boise, Idaho in the 1980s to help create the Raptor Research Center, the RMIS was merged with the Snake River Birds of Prey Area Literature File which had been developed by Karen Steenhof at the Boise District Office, BLM. Both were created in response to the land use planning, wildlife management, environmental assessment, and research needs of the Bureau of Land Management. They were transferred to the National Biological Service and later to the Biological Resources Division of the United States Geological Survey. The RIS database was expanded to include all publications of the Raptor Research Foundation, an extensive reprint collection donated by Dean Amadon of the American Museum of Natural History, and reprint files used to prepare bibliographies published by the National Wildlife Federation on Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, and Golden Eagles.

The RIS in all its incarnations has been one of the lynchpins of North American raptor biology during the last four decades, a period that saw an enormous amount of raptor research supported by Federal and state agencies and NGOs. It was also an era marked by the evolution of raptor biology from backyard breeding projects to a respected place in the body of ecological, behavioral, and systematics research literature. By 2010, the RIS database contained well over 30,000 records on raptors, including owls, as well as the actual paper copies of almost all of them in the form of journal and magazine reprints, books, reports (published or merely completed and promptly filed away), and agency memos.

Over the past year, USGS made the decision to centralize or transfer to other depositories various single-focus library collections which existed in their regional offices throughout the country, both as a cost-saving measure and to increase overall management efficiency. After considerable deliberation, USGS officials decided that moving the RIS from their Snake River Field Station in downtown Boise to TPF Research Library at the World Center for Birds of Prey seemed like the best available option. The two collections complement each other nicely, with the RIS being strongly North American in content and uniquely strong in the "gray literature," especially inter-agency and intra-agency documents which preserve the history of the California Condor, Peregrine Falcon, Bald and Golden Eagles, and Spotted Owl recovery programs. In contrast, almost 40% of the records in the

GRIN bibliography are from non-North American journals, and most of the citations in other languages include English translations of the title. Both databases are heavily keyworded.

The actual move of the RIS physical files was made in October 2010. The RIS print holdings are presently being merged into TPF's Research Library collection, and more than half of the electronic records have already been integrated into the GRIN bibliography. It appears that the merged bibliographic database will contain over 60,000 records. Many of the duplicate documents will be passed along to the fine library at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary's Acopian Center.

Butch Olendorff was a real visionary, and it is a privilege for The Peregrine Fund to carry on the work that he started and which Karen Steenhof and many others at the Raptor Research Center continued in the years after his death. It is hoped that all raptor biologists will come to regard the combined RIS-GRIN database as the starting point for their research, and we look forward to becoming the "World Center for Birds of Prey Information."

My late father, who was an organic chemist, was fond of telling people that I was prone to "telling him more about the aardvark than he cared to know." I plead guilty, especially in the present instance, of probably drowning my audience with too many details, and you can blame it on my enthusiasm for this project. I hope that I can convince members of the RRF that (1) libraries are still essential to good conservation and research, (2) databases are essential to life, but they need constant care and feeding, and (3) when you help our research library and GRIN with contributions of publications or purchases of duplicate books, you help the entire global raptor community.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS and BRIEF NEWS ITEMS

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### Announcements

A **50-year review paper** "North American Osprey Populations and Contaminants: Historic and Contemporary Perspectives" was recently published by Chuck Henny and colleagues in the Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health, Part B (Critical Reviews), 13:579-603 (2010). This 25-page review includes more than 100 Literature Citations. For more information, contact [hennyc@usgs.gov](mailto:hennyc@usgs.gov)

### **Raptor Workshop: Accredited through University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point**

Two 5-day workshops entitled "Introduction to Raptor Field Techniques" will be held in Stevens Point, WI by Eugene Jacobs of the Linwood Springs Research Station and Loren Ayers of the Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources. Session #1 June 6-10, 2011 and session #2 June 20-24, 2011. Receive first hand experience working with: live raptors, capturing, handling, banding techniques, broadcast call surveys, tree climbing and rappelling, blood sampling and more. Cost is \$435 and space is limited, so register early. For more information and a registration form visit <http://www.RaptorResearch.com>

Jenny and Ken Hodge, white-bellied sea eagle researchers in the Gippsland Lakes area in Australia, have formed a new Australian association to protect them called **S.E.A. E.A.G.L.E.** Contact them for more details at [khodge07@bigpond.com](mailto:khodge07@bigpond.com)



**Senior Research Biologist Job Opportunity**

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary (HMS), the largest and oldest member-based raptor conservation organization in the world, seeks a team-playing, Ph. D.-level biologist with demonstrated statistical and technical-writing skills. This person works mainly during the week and occasionally on weekends and reports directly to the Director of Conservation Science, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.



**Requirements:** Two years experience as a Ph. D.-level biologist in the natural sciences, with demonstrated skills in the use of statistical, data management, graphical, and word-processing software, and writing skills commensurate with publishing papers in peer-reviewed journals. A solid working knowledge of field biology and research techniques in natural-resource management. Excellent interpersonal skills. A solid publication record in raptor biology. Must be capable of working with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures and be willing to teach Sanctuary interns in areas of expertise including statistics. Must have a strong commitment to the HMS mission and be capable of working both as part of a team and alone, as necessary.

**Duties:** Assisting the Director of Conservation Science in helping to protect populations of birds of prey worldwide and in maintaining Hawk Mountain's role as a global leader in raptor conservation through research, monitoring, and the dissemination of information about birds of prey in both technical and non-technical formats; overseeing analysis aspects of the Sanctuary's databases, conducting Sanctuary research, on- and off-site, and publishing regularly. The person in this position manages, maintains, and develops the Sanctuary's long-term raptor-migration and American Kestrel nest-box databases, and is the lead person for the Sanctuary in providing these data to on- and off-site users.

Available 1 February 2011.

Applications to Dr. Keith L. Bildstein, Acopian Center—Hawk Mountain, 410 Summer Valley Road, Orwigsburg, PA 17961; email: [Bildstein@hawkmtn.org](mailto:Bildstein@hawkmtn.org). No telephone calls please.

**Requests for Assistance****Important 90-day comment period -- draft guidelines for golden eagles and wind energy**

Two federal register notices regarding golden eagles and wind energy are available on the website <http://www.fws.gov/windenergy> for public comment. Draft guidelines have been developed for the long-term conservation of golden eagles and other raptors that may be struck or otherwise impacted by alternative energy development. Interested raptor biologists are encouraged to comment on these draft guidelines during the 90-day comment period which is currently open.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Fish and Wildlife Service 50 CFR Part 22

[FWS-R9-MB-2011-N018; 91200-1231-9BPP] RIN 1018-AX53

Migratory Birds; Draft Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance

Federal Register /Vol. 76, No. 34 / Friday, February 18, 2011 / Proposed Rules pg 9529

[FWS-R9-FHC-2011-N013; 94300-1122-0000-Z2] RIN 1018-AX45

Fisheries and Habitat Conservation and Migratory Birds Programs; Draft Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines

Federal Register /Vol. 76, No. 34 / Friday, February 18, 2011 / Proposed Rules pg 9590

The National Park Service's **Yellowstone Raptor Initiative** solicits proposals by research biologists and ecologists who may wish to conduct breeding and non-breeding season research on diurnal raptors within Yellowstone National Park. Detailed research proposals to acquire National Park Service permits for self-funded work are being accepted by Yellowstone National Park in the hopes of advancing knowledge of raptors and the unique role they play in the Yellowstone ecosystem; (please refer to <http://www.nps.gov/yell/naturescience/howtoapply.htm>).

Photo © Joel E. (jeep) Pagel, 2010



Further, to augment our records on resident and migratory raptors, we encourage Raptor Research Foundation members who may be visiting Yellowstone National Park on family or personal holiday to carefully record their diurnal and nocturnal raptor sightings. We are especially interested in any raptor nest site locations which visitors may observe roadside, trailside, or seen in the back-country and request that you submit your detailed observations, field notes or a completed Raptor Observation Form (available at any Visitor Center) to **Dr. Douglas Smith, Yellowstone Raptor Initiative, PO Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190**. You may also drop off your completed form or copies of your field notes to any Visitor Center. Somewhere on your notes or form, we encourage you to let us know that you are a RRF member. During your visit to the Park, please do not disturb or approach any occupied or unoccupied raptor nests without a valid Yellowstone National Park permit. - -- Joel E. (jeep) Pagel (USFWS), Douglas Smith (USNPS), and Katy Duffy (USNPS)

### **Observations of Raptor Winter Site Fidelity**

Request information of any unpublished observations of winter site fidelity in migratory raptors, for possible inclusion in a compilation of similar observations. Define 'winter site fidelity' as a situation in which 'a migrant raptor, positively identified, winters in the same location for two or more successive winter seasons'. Positive identification should be documented by color alpha banding or other individual identification technique, such as radio tags, PTTs, patagial marking, etc. Please include usual details of researcher's name, species of raptor, dates, location, identification technique, etc. The examples should qualify as demonstrating winter site fidelity according to the above criteria. Therefore, under this definition, raptors that are year-round residents do not qualify. Please send particulars, preferably by e-mail, to: Bill Mattox, 8300 Gantz Avenue, Boise, ID 83709, [wgmattox2@earthlink.net](mailto:wgmattox2@earthlink.net), (208) 362-3435

## **For Sale**

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**RRF Publications, Pins, and Decals** –Hard copies of The Journal of Raptor Research (Vol. 1-30), most Raptor Research Reports, and RRF pins and decals may be purchased directly from RRF (Angela Matz, 101 12th Ave., Room 110, Fairbanks, AK 99701, USA; email: [angela\\_matz@fws.gov](mailto:angela_matz@fws.gov)). See [http://raptorresearchfoundation.org/back\\_issues\\_jrr.htm](http://raptorresearchfoundation.org/back_issues_jrr.htm) for details and prices. Orders for 4 or more issues receive a 30% discount. Hard copies of The Journal of Raptor Research (Vol. 31+) may be purchased from Ornithological Societies of North America (5400 Bosque Blvd, Suite 680, Waco, TX 76710, USA; phone: 1-254-399-9636; email: [business@osnabirds.org](mailto:business@osnabirds.org); web: <http://www.osnabirds.org>). Some older issues are not available in hardcopy; but all issues from Vol. 1-39 are available on SORA (<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/jrr/>) for free download.

## **Raptor Books and Publications**

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**Raptor Research and Management Techniques** -- Copies are still available from many natural history booksellers or order from Hancock House online at [www.hancockhouse.com](http://www.hancockhouse.com). Look for the reduced price for RRF members.

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## **RECENT THESES ON RAPTORS**

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**Booms, Travis L. August 2010. Gyrfalcon Breeding Biology in Alaska. University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK. 200 p.**

This dissertation addresses specific research needs identified by a panel of experts on Gyrfalcon biology and conservation convened on 3 September, 2003 at the Raptor Research Foundation Scientific Conference in Anchorage, Alaska. The first chapter is a significant update and revision of the 1994 Gyrfalcon Birds of North America (BNA) species account, using all published papers and available grey literature from 1994 - 2007 and personal expertise from over 3,000 hours of coordinated observations. The second chapter reports results from a spatially explicit model, based on the best available compiled data from Alaska, that predicted Gyrfalcon breeding distribution and population size across Alaska. The model predicted that 75% and 7% of the state had a relative index of nest occurrence of <20% and >60%, respectively. Areas of high predicted occurrence primarily occurred in northern and western Alaska. Using environmental variables, the model estimated the size of the breeding Gyrfalcon population in Alaska is  $546 \pm 180$  pairs. In Chapter 3, I used repeated aerial surveys to estimate detection probabilities of cliff-nesting raptors from fixed-wing aircrafts and helicopters. Detection probabilities ranged from 0.79 – 0.10 and varied by species, observer experience, and study area/aircraft type. Generally, Gyrfalcons had the highest detection probability, followed by Golden Eagles, Common Ravens, and Rough-legged Hawks, though the exact pattern varied by study area and survey platform. In the final chapter, I described for the first time in North America Gyrfalcon nest site fidelity, breeding dispersal, and natal dispersal using molted feathers as non-invasive genetic tags. Gyrfalcons were highly faithful to study areas (100% fidelity) and breeding

territories (98% fidelity), but not to specific nest sites (22% fidelity). Breeding dispersal distance averaged  $750 \pm 870$  m, and was similar between sexes. Natal dispersal of three nestlings representing 2.5% recruitment varied from 0 - 254 km. Mean territory tenure was  $2.8 \pm 1.4$  yrs and displayed a bimodal distribution with peaks at 1 and 4 years. Mean annual turnover at one study site was 20%. Gyrfalcons in one study area exhibited low, but significant population differentiation from the other two study areas.

**Margalida, A. 2010. Conservation biology of the last and largest natural population of the European Bearded vulture *Gypaetus barbatus* (Linnaeus, 1758). PhD thesis. Bern: University of Bern. 387 pp.**

Numerous New and Old World avian scavenger species are declining very rapidly as a consequence of direct and indirect anthropogenic activities. This regressive scenario is leading to the formation of relatively small and isolated populations, a trend that is of great concern to biodiversity managers and conservationists. Thus, it is essential that we increase our knowledge of the ecology and demography of these species in order to design effective corrective measures aimed at conserving their populations and at optimizing the allocation of the rare financial resources available.

This dissertation integrates different aspects of the behavioural ecology and conservation biology of a threatened scavenging raptor, the bearded vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*. My hope was to broaden our understanding of the factors negatively affecting its demography so as to improve the design and application of targeted conservation action. From 1992 to 2009 I carried out a long-term study of this species in the Spanish Pyrenees where there survives the last viable wild European bearded vulture population. I first delve into foraging ecology, describing the diet composition and its temporal and spatial patterns, the function of bone-breaking sites, and kleptoparasitic behaviour. I found that breeding individuals positively selected remains of medium-size ungulates (*Ovis/Capra* and Pyrenean chamois *Rupicapra pyrenaica*), showing a clear preference for extremities probably because these body parts are nutritious and easy to swallow. Meat remains seemed to play an important role in the diet of chicks during the first month of development and, because breeding failures take place principally during this period, food quality could be a factor limiting breeding success. A second research line was breeding ecology and behaviour. I described sex-division roles and copulatory behaviour in monogamous and polyandrous trios, sibling aggression behaviour, inter- and intraspecific interactions at nesting sites, and nest-site selection. Bearded vultures selected breeding cliffs in rough areas far from human settlements. Breeding habitat selection did not change during recent decades but the growing population, instead of colonizing new adequate areas in the periphery of the mountain massif, crowded into core areas, which led to the formation of an increasing number of polyandrous breeding units. Specific video surveys were carried out to monitor aggression between siblings. Drawing on these findings, I established a protocol to rescue condemned second-hatched chicks that may in the future be used for captive breeding programs and reintroductions. Finally, I analysed demographic parameters such as age at first reproduction, fecundity and survival, also investigating the mechanisms underlying population regulation. In particular I modelled the effect of supplementary feeding, a management measure that has been widely applied to boost population demography. I could demonstrate that supplementary feeding was closely related to the appearance of polyandrous trios. It generated density-dependent depression in productivity while significantly improving pre-adult survival. Yet, population viability analyses demonstrated that the positive effects of supplementary feeding would be unable to compensate for the heavy mortality caused by illegal poisoning and lead contamination, the two main anthropogenic causes of death detected during this research. As a

consequence, demographic simulations consistently predicted a high extinction probability of the Pyrenean bearded vulture population within the next 50 years, which could only be mitigated by more appropriate artificial feeding practices, and by reducing the use of poison and lead ammunition. The results obtained are transferable to the management and conservation of other relict European bearded vulture populations. They also bear some significance for the management of other endangered populations of long-lived birds of prey which share common life history traits and ecological requirements with the bearded vulture.

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## Memorials to RRF Members

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### Tributes to Ed Henckel

I had the distinct privilege of working with Ed & Judy Henckel in the field for about 10 years. Ed and I met at a Raptor Research Foundation meeting some time around 1977, but in 1987 in Eilat, Israel, at the World Working Group Conference on Birds of Prey we had what Ed called “A Life Changing Event” for both of us and his wonderful wife Judy. Ed had just retired from his career with the railroad and approached me with an idea about linking up with a long-term raptor study, ideally focused on Turkey Vultures. He explained that he had a truck and trailer and that all he would need would be \$25/day, a place to capture raptors and a place for his trailer and Judy (not necessarily in that order). I considered my wallet and how many days of trapping might be accomplished in a spring and how many new or misplaced nests might be discovered with two full-time biologists working with me. Most importantly Ed & Judy came with considerable trapping skills and could focus on recapturing previously banded hawks and owls that were banded years before as chicks.



Ed could be a little testy. As anyone who ever attended an RRF board meeting can attest, Ed Henckel did not suffer geniuses gladly. Anyone who thought they had the only answer quickly learned that Ed had another one. Likewise I quickly learned to direct Ed toward the target birds and let him trap his own way. Because he was old enough to be my father, I knew better than to instruct him very much.

The Henckel's work, really their volunteerism, would continue with me from 1987 – 1997 during which time they helped band 1,000s of resident raptors, find thousands of nests, and recapture dozens of hawks and owls banded as nestlings decades earlier.

Ed was the consummate raptor biologist, interested in everything raptorial, passionate about trapping and lover of the outdoors. As many of you know, I am very fond of the eloquent quote from Dr. Joseph Hickey in Fran Hamerstrom's book *Birding with a Purpose* which truly captures Ed's personality as a trapper of raptors and supporter of all people (well, maybe most people) working with birds of prey. It goes like this.

"You've heard of wolf trappers, fox trappers, muskrat trappers, and the like. Raptor trappers are different. Officially, they want to band birds to learn about their weight and moult, their later movements, their longevity, and all that. Underneath they are unabashed admirers of the wildness, magnificent strength, and awesome flight of creatures at the top of the animal pyramid. I wouldn't call them childlike; but they do have a youthful zest, and they will endure any hardship and go to any length to catch their birds."

That quote pretty much captures Ed Henckel.

Ed's legacy will likely be that he sincerely loved his wife Judy, that he loved the Raptor Research Foundation, that he loved a good raptor trapping challenge, and that his passion for things raptorial and conservation overflowed into all the people he touched.

From all of us Ed, thank you for all the good moments. --- Pete Bloom

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I have always fervently believed that the Raptor Research Foundation is not just about raptors, it is equally all about the people who love them. And that is what I am going to focus on in this tribute to my friend, Ed Henckel.

I first met Ed at the Tempe, Arizona meeting in and around 1977. He was dressed to the nines in sharply pressed slacks, shined shoes, a black sportscoat and a red vest, his basic plumage for RRF meetings in those early years. I'm not sure what he thought of me as a brash, cocky young Canadian, but I was in a bad need for mentors then and he seemed as good as any I could find. Perhaps it was the fact that we both felt strongly that there is always room for humour. And along that vein, he would be most disappointed if we did not have a chuckle at his expense, especially at this very moment right now. In any event, for better or worse for the rest of you, Ed Henckel essentially became my surrogate father in the world of birds of prey.

He was not called Ranger Ed for nothing. As a former leader in the Scouting movement, he fully lived up to their motto "be prepared". For example, it did not take long for him to recognize that I tend to scarf my food down as fast as a raptor with an amazing ability to spill food on my clothing. After the first incidence, he always kept a handy can of spot remover with him for my use at future conferences. And I did use it more than once.

Upon first impression, some folks would refer to Ed as a "grouchy old bugger" or a "shit-disturber", but if you took the time to get to know him, he was in fact a kind, caring, gentle man. Perhaps with an eye to keeping himself youthful, Ed always took a great interest in the younger people who attended RRF meetings. It's also common knowledge that he especially enjoyed flirting with the fair sex, including my wife, Toni, and I am not sure this behavior abated, even when he took the very young, lovely, and innocent Judith as his wife. To him, meeting and marrying Judith was the best thing that

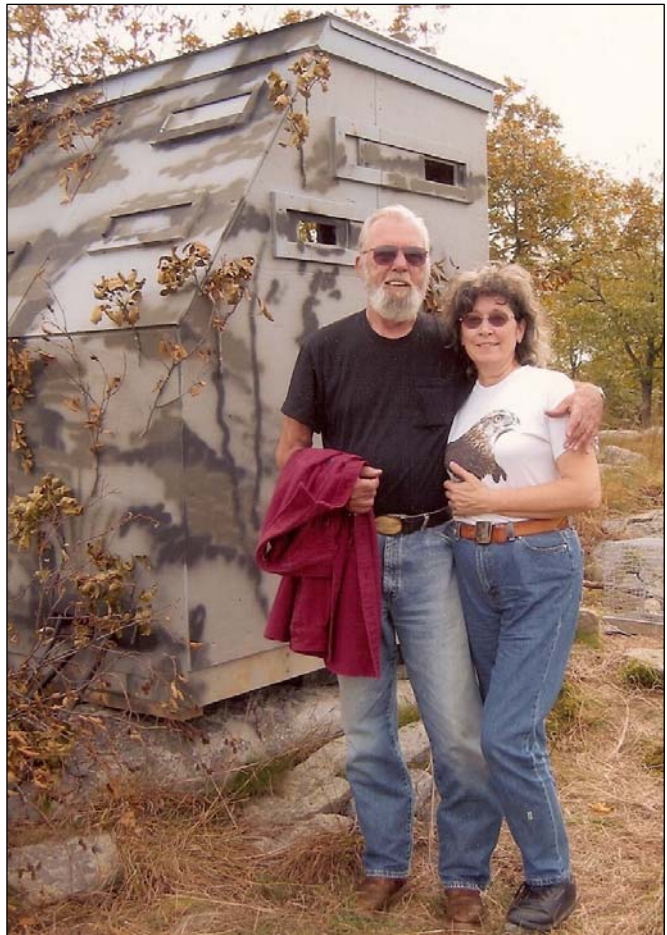
ever happened to him. And if you know Judy like many of us do, you will not argue with that. She did her absolute best to keep Ed's exuberant behaviour down to a dull roar and not always with success.

Ed deeply cared for our organization. He and Judith were among the very few RRF members who would dutifully attend the board meetings, partly out of interest but also to keep everyone there honest. Ed did serve a brief term as Secretary of RRF whose job it is to keep the minutes of the board meetings, among other things. It was brief because, typical of Ed's love for a good laugh, he had a terrible habit of infusing the minutes with personal humorous observations of the behavior of various directors, including me. Not everyone was amused.

Besides his uncompromising love for Judith, Ed felt the same way about birds of prey. He was second to none in this regard. I am not sure what triggered his love for vultures; maybe it was an attraction to their gruesome good looks or perhaps an admiration for their seemingly playful pugnacious behavior. But I think it was the fact that at that time, no one else seemed to be paying any attention to them.

My most poignant moment with Ed Henckel did not deal with raptors, but instead with raptor prey. While staying with him at his quaint farmhouse in rural Mount Bethel in Pennsylvania, he woke me up at the crack of dawn one morning to watch the sky absolutely blackened with hundreds of thousands of migrating American robins passing right over his front yard. It was pure magic and I shall never forget not just the spectacle but also sharing it quietly with him.

If there is a God, a heaven and angels out there somewhere, I am sure that Ed is sitting in on every judgement board meeting complaining about the way things are being run down here, making personal comments on the folks he has left behind, i.e. all of us, and impatiently waiting for his angel wings so that he can soar along with those birds he so dearly loved. ----- David M. Bird, Sept. 25, 2010



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