

NOTES, NEWS, AND QUERIES

Editorial Notes. Interesting material has been arriving and is being processed for the next two issues; we look forward to the receipt of other contributions. Two parts of the Supplement are published with the current number, four others are in process, and six others will be done as soon as possible. The first issue of *Raptor Research Abstracts* is in process and we hope to be caught up on both series in December.

Publication Date of Spring Issue 1972. Volume 6, Number 1, Spring 1972 was officially published on September 23, 1972.

Cover Illustration. Our new cover illustration is the art work of Robert Katona of Denver, Colorado. We are grateful to Mr. Katona for this contribution. It is based on a photograph of a Prairie Falcon taken by Babette Cranson. We will have further information in a future issue.

Radio Tagging Raptors? The Biotelemetry Committee of the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. is conducting a survey in an effort to compile and make available information about recent studies utilizing biotelemetry in raptor research studies. If you are using telemetry techniques in raptor research work and would like to be included in the survey, please send your name and address to: Mark Roy Fuller, University of Minnesota, Department of Ecology and Behavioral Biology, Bell Museum of Natural History, Minneapolis, MN 55455. A questionnaire will be sent to you. A summary of the information obtained in response to these questionnaires will be sent to all respondents. Thank you for your cooperation.

British Peregrines—The 1971 Situation. The census of the Great Britain Peregrine breeding population in 1971 involved visits to 689 out of 806 known territories where breeding has been attempted since 1930, giving 86% coverage. (All percentages are based on number of territories visited.) Out of the 689,

319 (46%) of territories were occupied by Peregrines, either pairs or single birds, and in 142 (20%) of these, broods of large young were found. Probably most of these broods successfully flew, and only five additional broods were known to have been removed. Occupation of territories and successful breeding showed the same general increase from south to north which characterized the Peregrine population during the previous enquiry of 1961-1962. In 1971 only 32 occupied territories (13%) were known in southern England and Wales combined, and only eight broods (3%) were reared. In northern England and southern Scotland combined, there were 67 occupied territories (54%) and 21 broods (17%) were reared. The bulk of the population is still concentrated in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, and here there were 220 occupied territories (67%) and 113 successful broods (35%).

The British Peregrine population appeared to reach its lowest ebb in 1963, when a sample census gave 38% occupation of territories, and 10% of territories producing flying young. Up to 1966 there was little change, but a slow increase in numbers and breeding success has since become apparent. This recovery has been mainly in districts north of the Crowen Pennines. Moreover, the total figures conceal the finding that there has been a substantial improvement in inland northern districts, but virtually no change on the coast. Nationally, occupation of territories and breeding success for inland districts were more than double those for coastal districts.

The post-1955 Peregrine decline has been attributed largely to widespread contamination of the species by persistent, toxic pesticide residues, and it was predicted that a decrease in use of these chemicals should be followed by an improvement in status of the Peregrine, first in the least contaminated northern districts. Analysis of Peregrine eggs from northern inland districts confirms that recovery here has been paralleled by a decrease in organochlorine insecticide residues since 1966. The absence of recovery in northern coastal districts may be connected with general predation on sea birds by these Peregrines. Available evidence suggests that the other pollutants (especially the PCBs), to which these coastal birds are exposed through their marine food chains, persist at a relatively high level in the sea, and may well have increased during the last decade.

Successful broods averaged 2.1 young nationally, so that about 300 young Peregrines were reared in Britain in 1971. A similar output has been estimated for 1970. With this order of annual recruitment, there would seem to be enough surplus Peregrines to allow fairly rapid recovery in the still depleted districts of Wales and southern England. Adverse factors must therefore be operating against recovery here and though the simplest explanation is that level of exposure to toxic chemical residues may still be critically high in southern Britain the reasons could be complex.

A final, detailed report on the Enquiry is being prepared for publication in *Bird Study*. The figures given above for 1971 are not final, but will probably not change significantly. (By D. A. Ratcliffe; from *BTO News* 49:1, February 1972.)

Rare Captive Falcon Hatch Noted. Three new falcon chicks have been bred by a New York state ornithologist who only last year succeeded in breeding the first falcon in captivity. Dr. Heinz Meng, a professor of biology at the State University of New York at New Paltz, raised conservationists' hopes for consistent breeding of the birds in captivity when the three Peregrine Falcon chicks were hatched this spring. As this CN issue goes to press, Dr. Meng is awaiting the birth of a second clutch nearly ready to hatch. Until the first chick was hatched last year, it was considered nearly impossible to breed hawks and eagles, high on the list of endangered species, in captivity and thus save them from extinction.

Breeding of the birds has proved difficult in the past because their mating behavior pattern includes a spectacular, soaring, aerobic flight that is not possible in a cage. Dr. Meng said that after seven unsuccessful years of trying to breed the birds, he finally succeeded by "thinking like a bird," constructing a natural hawk environment in his own backyard, complete with sun shelves, padded perches, and a ledge that looked like a rock cliff. (From *Conservation News* 37(10):10, July 1, 1972.)

Endangered Species Legislation to Be Taken up Soon. Both the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries and the Senate Commerce Committee are scheduled to begin marking up legislation which will further protect the nation's threatened wildlife species. The pending legislation includes two House bills (H.R. 13081 and H.R. 13111) and three Senate bills (S. 249, S. 3199, and S. 3818).

The proposed legislation is surrounded by some controversy, due to the fact that all of the bills seem to ignore opportunities to draw on existing scientific, law enforcement, and other expertise already available in federal and state wildlife agencies. The present legislation would vest full authority for all designated endangered species, at home and abroad, in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. The Bureau, unfortunately, is one of the most inadequately staffed and poorly financed agencies of the Department of the Interior.

Most conservationists feel that in order for endangered species legislation to work a strong and closely coordinated federal-state program is needed. Federal authority is needed to handle international and interstate problems, while state participation is needed to respond to mainly intrastate problems. And the combined scientific expertise and law enforcement manpower and financial resources of both levels of government are needed to mount the most effective program.

In a comparison, state wildlife agency personnel total more than 18,000 in the fifty states, while the Bureau is budgeted for about 3,960 employees nationwide. As for funding, the Bureau's net appropriation for this year is \$92.9 million while the states spent in excess of \$247 million last year. (From *Conservation Report* 92nd Congress, 2nd Session, Report 28:303, September 8, 1972.)