

NEWS

1992 Annual Meeting. Almost 500 people attended the 1992 Annual Meeting of the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc., in Bellevue, Washington, on 11-15 November 1992. The Local Committee, chaired by Lenny Young, organized an excellent meeting and even arranged for a little blue sky in the Seattle area in November!

Curt Smith, Director of the Washington Department of Natural Resources, kicked off the scientific session with a keynote address that emphasized the need to use good science in wildlife management. Mark Stalmaster, Chair of the Scientific Program Committee, assembled a stimulating and varied array of papers for the general scientific session. Two symposia, one on the Spotted Owl, arranged by Mike Collopy and Bruce Marcot, and the other on Burrowing Owls, organized by Jeff Lincer, supplemented the general scientific session.

A sumptuous banquet on Saturday night featured a Pacific Rim theme including a performance by the Cape Fox Dancers and a presentation on "The Significance of Birds of Prey to Native Pacific Northwest Cultures." At the banquet the following awards were announced: the Fran and Frederick Hamerstrom Award to Dr. Riley McClelland, the Tom Cade Award to Les Boyd, the James R. Koplín Travel Award and the William C. Andersen Memorial Award to Laura Rivera-Rodriguez, the Stephen R. Tully Memorial Grant to Martha Desmond, and Leslie Brown Memorial Grants to Kevin McCann and G.E.A. Banfield. Watch for more information on these award recipients and their research in the next issue of *Wingspan*.

Newly elected Directors of the Raptor Research Foundation are Karen Steenhof, Mike Collopy, Josef Schmutz, and M. Isabel Bellocq. Steve Hoffman, David Bird, Mike Collopy, and Eduardo Iñigo-Elias ended terms as director. Several amendments to the bylaws were discussed and voted upon, but this action was nullified by a procedural problem discovered later.

The following resolutions were endorsed by the membership:

- A) Whereas the birds of Europe are an international resource to be conserved for future generations; and
Whereas these birds are under increasing threat from human pressures; and
Whereas the majority of these birds are legally protected throughout Europe including Malta; and
Whereas the Island of Malta is an important stopover for these birds while on migration; and
Whereas Maltese bird shooters and trappers annually kill millions of these birds, including an estimated 50 000 raptors, mainly for recreation; and
Whereas such activities are neither consistent with a sustainable world or a civilized society.
Therefore, be it resolved that the Raptor Research Foundation Board Members, Officers, and General Membership condemn the selfish actions of the Maltese bird shooters and trappers and urge the government of Malta to enforce the laws protecting these birds and to also encourage their conservation by promoting their non-destructive use, such as through ecotourism.
- B) Whereas earth's wild flora and fauna, including those species threatened with extinction, provide a wide variety of benefits for humankind; and
Whereas many people believe that wild species have intrinsic value and a right to exist; and
Whereas the Endangered Species Act is the key federal law promoting the conservation of endangered species, and
Whereas authorization to expend money under the Endangered Species Act is required for the effective administration of endangered species conservation programs; and
Whereas past listing and recovery efforts have been substantially underfunded; and
Whereas weakening proposals such as those contained in H.R. 6134 (the Tauzin Bill) would seriously reduce the effectiveness of endangered species conservation efforts.
Therefore, be it resolved that the Raptor Research Foundation Board Members, Officers, and General Membership urge President Clinton to pass the Endangered Species Act amendments (H.R. 4045, the Studts Bill) without any weakening amendments such as those contained in H.R. 6134.
- C) Whereas secondary poisoning of birds of prey has been attributed to fenthion, an organophosphate chemical, both in the field and laboratory; and
Whereas fenthion is used to kill birds deemed to be pests, on a large-scale in Africa (e.g., weaverbirds) and on a smaller scale in North America (e.g., pigeons, house sparrows and starlings).
Therefore, be it resolved that the Raptor Research Foundation Board Members, Officers, and General Membership urge the appropriate government agencies throughout the world to halt the further use of fenthion until it can be demonstrated that it can be used without hazard to birds of prey.

- D) Whereas Joseph William Taylor was a member of the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association Board of Directors since 1948; and
 Whereas Mr. Taylor was President of the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association for 25 years and guided, with wisdom and aplomb, the activities of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.
 Therefore, be it resolved that the Raptor Research Foundation Board Members, Officers, and General Membership recognize Joseph Taylor's substantive contributions to raptor conservation and education and wish to extend their condolences to the members of the Taylor family, the Hawk Mountain Board of Directors, Sanctuary staff, and the members of the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association.
- E) Whereas the Raptor Research Foundation finds that:
1. many species of raptors are widely dispersed during the breeding and wintering seasons,
 2. there are numerous sites around the world at which one or more species of raptors are temporally concentrated during migration.
 3. at these sites large numbers of migrating raptors can be observed with a reasonable degree of predictability,
 4. no world atlas of these sites exists, and
 5. a registry of internationally-significant sites could foster the conservation of raptors in a number of ways, including:
 - a. stimulating public interest in the birds and their essential habitats, as well as the need to conserve them,
 - b. fostering migration-related research and monitoring,
 - c. helping to identify gaps in our basic knowledge of these birds,
 - d. enhancing opportunities to raise funds for individual sites, and
 - e. benefiting local economies through revenue from tourism.
- Therefore, be it resolved that the Raptor Research Foundation Board Members, Officers, and General Membership:
1. Endorse the twin concepts of an international raptor migration atlas project and a registry of sites of international importance to migrating raptors.
 2. Encourage Hawk Mountain Sanctuary to pursue its goal of developing an international atlas of raptor migration, along with a registry of sites of international importance to raptors on migration.
- F) Whereas Burrowing Owls depend on burrows produced by burrowing mammals (e.g., prairie dogs and ground squirrels) for breeding, roosting and escape, and
 Whereas reproduction and survival of Burrowing Owls is affected strongly by the availability of such burrows, and
 Whereas this need for burrows exists throughout the owls' annual life cycle and throughout their range, and
 Whereas past poisoning campaigns have been remarkably effective in reducing prairie dog and ground squirrel distributions to a fraction of pre-settlement levels.
 Therefore, be it resolved that the Raptor Research Foundation Board Members, Officers, and General Membership:
1. Urge all levels of the Canadian, Mexican and U.S. governments to phase out their subsidy and involvement in poisoning and other control programs aimed at prairie dogs and ground squirrels.
 2. Remove prairie dogs and ground squirrels from their lists of "pest" species.
 3. Prohibit the destruction of prairie dogs and ground squirrels on public lands, except when in accordance with an approved conservation plan.
 4. Involve local natural history societies, in those special cases where control of prairie dogs and ground squirrels is warranted, to explore alternative biological methods of control.
- G) Whereas the 1992 Raptor Research Foundation annual meeting was successful, stimulating, and entertaining for all who participated; and
 Whereas the host committee chaired by Leonard Young did an outstanding job of organizing the 1992 meeting, finding both comfortable accommodations and providing lively entertainment, and
 Whereas the program committee chairperson, Dr. Mark Stalmaster, organized over 100 excellent scientific presentations and prepared an excellent program booklet,
 Therefore, be it resolved that the Raptor Research Foundation, Board Members, Officers, and General Membership thank all the members of the local, host and program committees for their long hours of hard work, making this annual meeting one of the best ever.