

awareness of this marine resource. Anyone interested in further information should contact the group's acting secretary, George Divoky, c/o U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1412 Airport Way, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

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A preliminary planning meeting held at Washington, Conn., Jan. 6-7, 1973 by a group active in the leadership of hawk watching in the Northeast resulted in tentative plans for a conference whose purpose it will be to further the coordination, research, and publication of information on the migration of diurnal birds of prey in eastern North America (west to the eastern edge of the Great Plains). The first *North American Hawk Migration Conference* will be held in the spring of 1974, tentatively April 19-21, at a location convenient to Canadians and Americans, and adjacent to a good hawk lookout. Syracuse, New York, near Sandy Point, is being considered. Pershing B. Hofslund has agreed to serve as Program Chairman. For further information write to Michael Harwood, Box 51, Washington, Conn. 06793.

## Communications

To the editor—

On Oct. 3 we had an influx of jays, thrashers, and flickers. It appeared to be a normal fall migration, and the jays continued to arrive daily. During the night of the 6th a week cold front passed over Dauphin Island; the wind was from the NE but not very strong. In the morning the Blue Jays were literally everywhere. Overhead there were thousands in a continuous flight from NE to SW and, to my astonishment, on out over the Gulf and Mississippi Sound. Here the flight became erratic, a senseless milling in all directions. I wasn't aware of it at the time, but even then they were falling into the water and being drowned, as later reports proved.

There were just as many on land as there were in the sky; as you walked through the woods you could hear the steady plop of green acorns falling like rain. We had practically no rain for weeks, so little water was available. This enormous concentration lasted from Oct. 7 to Oct. 9, and on the 9th we began to see sick and dead birds everywhere. Three of us walked the beach

and saw dozens of dead jays washed up by the tide. None were in good enough condition to pick up, but when I left one fell right in front of me, still warm. Someone brought me another good specimen on Oct. 14. I have enclosed the report from Auburn (Alabama Dept. of Agriculture and Industries, Pesticide Residue Laboratory Division).

The second report, on the Bobwhite, was the result of a road kill on Bellingrath Road. The man who picked up the quail said that the field was covered with doves, nighthawks, and "songbirds". (I don't doubt that many of them were warblers). In that area they were spraying soybean fields from a plane.

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[The report from Auburn indicated that the Blue Jay had pesticide residues as follows: Hept Epoxide 1.12 ppm, DDE 112.0 ppm, DDT 6.4 ppm — total 118.4 ppm. The Bobwhite had residues of Toxaphene 70.6 ppm, DDE 14.12 ppm, Dieldrin 49.4 ppm, feathers: Methyl Parathion, trace. Total — 131.12 ppm].

## Harvard

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became particularly well represented at Harvard. The collections from China and the West Indies, for example, are still unexcelled and the series of diurnal birds of prey is notably large and complete. Research centered almost entirely on classifying and describing the world's avifauna, it was in this period when Peters began his monumental multi-volumed *Check-list of Birds of the World* (Vol. 1, 1931), a project half-completed at his death in 1952 and which, with the aid of specialists from throughout the world, should be terminated within a few years.

World War II closed the era of rapid growth of the collection and emphasis shifted to filling gaps and specializing in particular groups. Most recently, to keep abreast of current trends in ornithological research, an especial effort was begun to build up the skeletal collection, which already contained some great rarities that had been obtained by Agassiz, and to preserve specimens in alcohol for anatomical study. The MCZ bird collection now numbers about 320,000 skins (including 1,500 type specimens), approximately 6,000 skeletons, a modest number of "alcoholics", and a large and nearly complete representation of the nests and eggs of North American species.