

Map showing Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve

CHILKAT BALD EAGLE PRESERVE IS THREATENED BY NEW MINE

A massive proposed copper mine is threatening to devastate one of the last unspoiled and unprotected wildlands in North America. The National Audubon Society has joined with regional and local groups in Alaska and Canada to preserve the area, known as the Tatshenshini Wilderness, located in extreme northwestern British Columbia, between the Yukon and the Alaskan panhandle.

The Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve, haven for the largest concentration of wintering Bald Eagles in the world, is right in the heart of this area and would be disrupted by the mine.

Windy Craggy Mountain is the site that Geddes Resources, Ltd., a Toronto-based company has chosen for the mine. The problems are legion, say environmentalists, including destruction of the area's wildlife quality; sulfuric acid in the wind and water; dumping of acids on the nearby glacier; and contamination of ground-water.

To bring heavy equipment to the mine, a 65-mile road would be carved into the wilderness. That road

would cut right through the Bald Eagle Preserve. Estimates are that a truck would roar through the refuge every four minutes.

The British Columbia government rejected Geddes Resources' first proposal last May. The company is expected to submit another proposal this fall.

BALD EAGLE IS TOPS WITH BIG SPENDERS

The Bald Eagle received more than its fair share of government funds spent on threatened and endangered species. In 1989, almost \$43 million of state and federal money went directly to assisting 347 species in peril. According to a report released by the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bald Eagle topped the list of recipients at \$3.1 million!

—*Ornithological Newsletter*, June 1990

CHRISTMAS ISLAND BIRDS FORECAST THREE EL NINOS

"Can Birds Forecast the Weather?" is the always-provocative subject of a story in *Terra* (Vol. 28, No. 4); the magazine of The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. The article explains how birds on Christmas Island in the Pacific warned of El Niño-Southern Oscillations (ENSO) three times between 1982 and 1990.

An ENSO occurs in response to a change in high and low pressure zones in the Pacific Ocean. No one knows why they occur but they cause the normal easterly winds across the central Pacific to reverse and become westerly, affecting climates — and birds — around the world.

Nesting failures and the abandonment of chicks at the nesting site on Christmas Island signalled the coming ENSOs up to three months in advance. "We do not know what the birds are



Christmas Island

responding to that makes them sense an ENSO before all of our advanced weather-forecasting technology," wrote the author, Elizabeth Anne Schreiber. "They probably begin experiencing difficulty in finding food due to changes in wind levels or in the upwelling areas where

they feed." Ms. Schreiber, a research associate in the Museum's Ornithology section, with her husband Ralph (now deceased), surveyed the birds on Christmas Island for a decade beginning in 1979.

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE OPENS NEWS BUREAU

Calling the destruction of the rainforests the "most important news story of our era," Daniel Katz, president of the Rainforest Alliance, announced the opening of a news bureau in Costa Rica that will cover environmental issues in Central America.

Stories from the bureau will be supplied to the world's press through the Alliance's New York office. The bureau staff will include Diane Jukofsky, formerly of the National Wildlife Federation and the Scientists' Institute for Public Information, and Chris Wille, a conservation writer for 20 years and former Vice President for conservation information for the National Audubon Society.

The Rainforest Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising world awareness about the plight of the rainforest.

OVERVIEW

2 MARBLED MURRELET NESTS FOUND ON SAME DAY

The difficulty of finding the actual nest sites of the Marbled Murrelet are legion. Every year in the Pacific northwest, hundreds of birders search the forests to no avail. However, the survival chances of the Marbled Murrelet seem to have increased after two nests were found on the same day in Northwest old-growth forests. Hundreds of volunteers had been searching for the nests of this robin-sized bird that spends most of its life on the ocean.

These two nests, one in Washington State and one in Oregon, plus two

discovered earlier in the year in Washington and on Vancouver Island, Canada still bring the total ever found to only 15.

Researchers at the site of one occupied nest reported that parents share parental duties on a shift basis. While one nest-sits, the other spends the day or night feeding in the ocean. In 1988, the National Audubon Society, 37 of its chapters, the Oregon Natural Resources Council and Point Reyes Bird Observatory petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to have the Marbled Murrelet listed under the Endangered Species Act. A request that same year to the State of Oregon's Fish and

Wildlife Commission to have it listed as endangered was denied on the grounds of lack of detailed information. The coastal breeding population was tentatively estimated at 2,500 breeding pairs, but more data on its nesting habits was needed.

WHAT KILLED THE CONDORS?

There's no question that over the past two centuries shooting was a major cause in the decline of the California Condor. However, since the mid-1980s, it's also been known that many of these magnificent vultures died of lead poisoning.

How large a role poisoning played in the decline of the California Condor is examined in "To the Brink and Back," by Lloyd Kiff, *Terra* (Vol. 28, No. 4). The birds were undoubtedly exposed to bullets during the hunting season when they feed on deer carcasses. But, the author notes, they were also exposed to an abundance of nongame animals that were shot, especially coyotes.

Kiff makes the point that lead poisoning may have, indeed, been very important in the condor's historical decline. He notes that birds can survive for weeks or even months after ingesting lead, and therefore may die far away from the source.

"In the pre-management condor era," Kiff writes, "there was little likelihood of a dead condor being analyzed for contaminants."

EXTRA-PAIR COPULATIONS: WHY BIRDS DO IT

There's some interesting theorizing in "When Monogamy Isn't" an article by David F. Westneat and Paul W. Sherman in *Living Bird Quarterly* (Vol 9, No. 3). Discussing Darwin's theory of evolution in relation to extra-pair copulations, the authors speculate on what male and female birds achieve by this behavior.

The male gains are perhaps more obvious. He sires more offspring in different nests (less chance of total loss to predation) and he doesn't have to do any extra parenting.

So what's in it for the female? More than you might think, Westneat and Sherman suggest. They pose the possibility that she get additional courtship feedings and possibly assistance in rearing chicks. Or, she may engage in extra-pair copulations as a hedge against possible sterility in her mate.

The most likely advantage, the authors believe, is that the extra-pair male is superior to the pair-bonded male in some way, such as size, health or vigor, and therefore will sire offspring of higher quality.



Marbled Murrelet

American Birds extends an invitation to all of its readers to contribute items to our new Overview department. Tell us about something of particular interest to birders: new products, relevant legislation, exhibits, grants, awards, honors, career transitions, or interesting quotes about birds and ecology taken from articles and speeches. Use this issue as a model for items we'd be likely to publish. Send items to: Overview, *American Birds*, 950 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022

BIRDER OF NOTE

Jimmy Carter

Age: 66

Home: Plains, Georgia

Profession:

Professor (currently)
President of the United States (formerly)

How long birding?

About 5 years

Why do I bird? Looking at birds gives me the opportunity to have first-hand nature experiences no matter where in the world I happen to be.

Binoculars: Nikon 8 x 40

Life List? Yes, presently with about 400 species on it.

Latest life bird: Prairie Falcon in Montana

Favorite North American bird: Wild Turkey

My favorite birding habitat is woodlands around water and my preferred method is on foot.

My favorite birding companion is my wife Rosalynn.

My biggest birding thrill was participating in two Breeding Bird Surveys near our home where I sighted 12 new species.

The most interesting place I've ever birded is in Nepal, high in the Himalayas.

I'd next like to bird southwest Texas.

Quote:
"Birding has added an exciting new dimension to our lives, either in our own home or during our frequent travels overseas."



PHOTOGRAPH LOWER LEFT: THE WHITE HOUSE

UPDATE

Exxon Valdez Spill

AT LEAST 300,000 BIRDS DIED IN EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL

When the eleven million gallons (260,000 barrels) of crude oil escaped the hull of the Exxon Valdez on March 24, 1989, every environmentally aware birder was shocked and outraged. After all, Prince William Sound in the northern Gulf of Alaska hosts some of the largest and most productive seabird colonies in the entire world. Oil-goo-coated fish, birds, otters, shellfish, and intertidal zone fauna washed relentlessly up on fouled beaches, rocky shorelines, and into wilderness fjords.

In our Summer 1989 issue (*AB* Vol. 43, No. 2), we reported on the initial estimates of birds lost to the spill. In the September 1989 issue of *Audubon* magazine, the disaster and its possible implications are further covered.

During the weeks that followed the spill, currents and prevailing winds pushed oil out of the Sound and into the Gulf of Alaska. It drifted approximately 750 kilometers to the southwest; first as an enormous fluid slick and later as a patchy "mousse" emulsion of oil mixed with seawater. The most vulnerable birds were those that aggregate in big flocks at sea and those that spend the majority of their time swimming on the water's surface. This, of course, includes loons, grebes, sea ducks, and various alcid species.

Now, in a recent issue of the *Auk* (Vol. 107, No. 2), five biologists detail the magnitude of the bird mortality. They report that based on aerial and ship-based surveys and extrapolating from the numbers of dead birds recovered, that

the total kill from oil pollution was in excess of 300,000 birds.

The study results of John Piatt *et al.* show that more than 30,000 dead oiled birds, of 90 different species, were retrieved from polluted areas between the day of the spill and August 1, 1989. Murres represented nearly 75% and other alcids and sea ducks another 13% of the total. Between the beginning of August and mid-October 1989, another 7000 birds were retrieved. Of that total, very few were oiled birds but almost all had died of starvation. More



A dead oiled cormorant

than 50% of these birds were surface-feeding birds, mostly shearwaters, storm-petrels, kittiwakes, fulmars, gulls, and puffins.

The number of birds ever recovered after an oil spill represents only a small fraction of the actual mortality. Dead birds drift away from coastlines, many oiled carcasses sink in salt water, and, of course, a great many corpses wash up on inaccessible shorelines. The magnitude of loss owing to this disaster represents an unprecedented toll of marine birds. There is no telling which populations will continue to suffer because of future low productivity and recruitment, and contaminated breeding sites.



Puerto Rican Parrot

PUERTO RICAN PARROTS SURVIVE HUGO'S FURY

When Hurricane Hugo swept across Puerto Rico's Luquillo Rainforest in October, 1989, islanders and ornithologists feared for the Puerto Rican Parrot (*Amazona vittata*). The endangered parrot had been doing well, nurtured back from 13 wild birds in 1975 to 50 wild-flying individuals (as well as a captive stock).

Immediately after Hugo departed, reports were gloomy. Now, however, according to World Birdwatch, field program staff at Luquillo report that all breeding pairs survived the hurricane, and that in fact, a new pair has formed.

CHEYENNE BOTTOMS GETS MUCH NEEDED THUMBS UP FROM STATE AND FEDS

Cheyenne Bottoms, Kansas was designated as a part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), a voluntary, collaborative effort of wildlife agencies and organizations. At the dedication, the Bottoms was also named a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. And the "Save the Bottoms" campaign, headed by Jan Garton, has new state and federal commitments of more than \$1 million to restore the Bottoms. All of this good news came shortly after *American Birds*

went to press for the Summer of 1990. In that issue, we chronicled the complete drying of the Cheyenne Bottoms and the devastating effect on the nearly one million migrating birds that stopped there each year.

The International Shorebird Survey has identified the Bottoms' 20,000 acres as the most important rest and refueling stop on the Central Flyway.

AUDUBON REPORT

WHITE-CROWNED PIGEON

If the White-crowned Pigeon is to survive, biologists need to learn more about the bird's habitat and needs.

The species is now listed as "threatened" in Florida and "endangered" in much of the Caribbean, the two areas of its northernmost range.

The Society's Ornithological Research Unit of Thomas Bancroft, Allan Strong and Richard Sawicki are studying the interaction between fruit production in tropical hardwood forests and the ecology of the bird. The White-crowned Pigeon feeds on the fruit of tropical hardwood trees and seems to be a major disperser of its seeds.

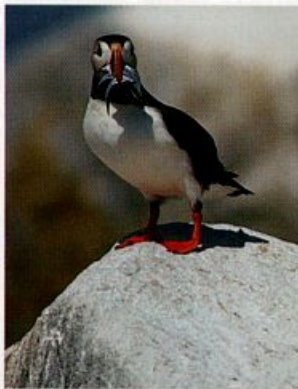
How those forests are conserved and managed could have a profound effect on the survival of this species. Everything the Unit learns should be helpful in making future decisions.

PUFFIN PROJECT

The National Audubon Society's Puffin Project is based on the coast of Maine where it works in conjunction with the Society's Maine Coastal Sanctuaries Program. Steve Kress, the Project's leader, is concerned with developing seabird colony restoration techniques for puffins, terns, storm-petrels, and other seabirds.

Since the early 1970s, the Project has restored Atlantic Puffins, Arctic, Common, and Roseate terns. Presently, efforts are underway to restore puffins to Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Besides studying colony formation, Puffin Project staff study the food habits of puffins, razorbills, and terns. These are providing the first details about food requirements of these species on the Maine coast. Such information is invaluable to the conservation of Maine coast seabirds, as this is also an area of intense commercial fishing pressure.



Atlantic Puffin

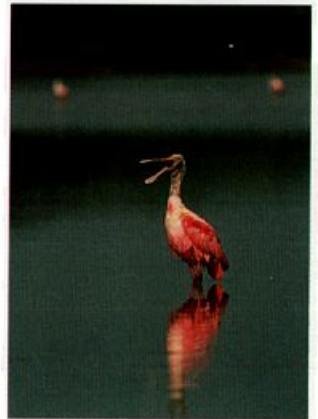
ROSEATE SPOONBILLS

George Powell and Robin Bjork, research biologists with Audubon, are collaborating on a four-year study examining the relationships between Roseate Spoonbill foraging habitat and breeding success. The synthesis of these elements will make it possible to

OVERVIEW

identify foraging habitat requirements of spoonbills and assess the current impact of upstream water management practices on the species' reproduction.

In addition to the spoonbill ecology study, Powell and Bjork are continuing to monitor reproductive success and foraging ecology of the Great White Heron in Florida Bay.



Roseate Spoonbill

THE WAR TO SAVE THE WETLANDS

More than 200 Audubon members recently received "wetland protection" training at Florida workshops as part of the Society's grassroots campaign to save these precious ecosystems. With wetlands disappearing at a rate of 250,000 to 500,000 acres a year, Audubon has marked their preservation as a high priority. Many of the participants subsequently formed "wetlands task forces" in their chapters and have begun surveying marshes, bogs, and swamps using Audubon's data forms.

The Society is working to pass strong state wetlands protection laws and encourage federal actions based on the recommendations of the National Wetlands Policy Forum.

PHOTOGRAPHS, CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: MIKE BACON; LAURA RILEY; M. ROTHMAN

13 ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS SUE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has failed to take the essential steps required to ensure the recovery of the Spotted Owl," according to Hope Babcock, Audubon's general counsel. For this reason, the Society and a dozen other environmental groups are suing the Service.

Society President Peter A.A. Berle in a strong attack on the Service stated: "The Endangered Species Act was enacted to protect America's dwindling wildlife populations. The Fish and Wildlife Service's hesitation to determine the owl's critical habitat indicates, at best, their less than enthusiastic commitment to carrying out the mandate of the Endangered Species Act."

"At worst, it signals that they and the Bush Administration may be willing to gut Endangered Species Act protection altogether."

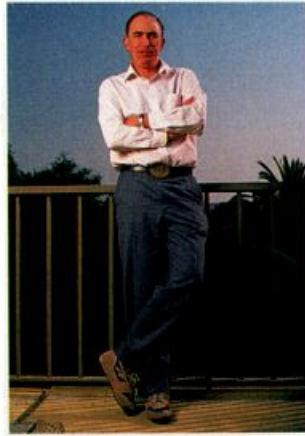
DIRECTIONS

TWO BIRDERS WIN MACARTHUR AWARDS

Paul R. Ehrlich, the eloquent advocate of human ecology, and Guy Tudor, naturalist and master painter of birds, were both recipients of MacArthur Foundation "genius" awards for 1990.

Tudor and Ehrlich each receive sums in excess of \$300,000 to be spent in any way they choose.

Ehrlich is Bing Professor of Population Studies and Professor of Biological Sciences at Stanford University. An expert in ecology, human ecology, evolution and behavior, he has published hundreds of



Paul R. Ehrlich

scientific papers and numerous textbooks.

In 1968 he won world acclaim for his landmark bestseller *The Population Bomb*. His recent book, *The Population Explosion* (1990), has also received wide praise.

For more than three decades Ehrlich has been a leader in educating policy makers and the public on complex issues shaping the human predicament.

Birders will know Ehrlich best as co-author of *The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds* (1988), and as a columnist for this magazine.

Guy Tudor paints birds exquisitely, accurately, and with obvious love. Through talent and dedication, he has become the premier illustrator of birds.

Currently the artist is continuing his work on a four-volume set with ornithologist Bob Ridgely, entitled *The Birds of South America*. The first volume received elaborate praise and added considerably to the knowledge of Neotropical birds.

A native New Yorker, Tudor's first avian assignment was to illustrate a 1958 article in *Life Magazine*. He went on to paint birds for Time-Life Books, *Scientific American*, World Book Encyclopedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, *Readers' Digest*, and many more publica-

tions. He did plates for professional ornithological journals and was featured at art exhibits at several museums.

Through the years, Tudor developed a passion for the Neotropics and Neotropical birds. He was the principal illustrator and author of the field notes for *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia* (1986) and *A Guide to the Birds of Venezuela* (1978).

Renowned for portraying birds in their most characteristic postures, Tudor is an artist who takes to field, stream, jungle, marsh and rainforest to record birdlife.

The MacArthur Awards Committee has done well to honor Paul Ehrlich and Guy Tudor.



Guy Tudor

ALEXANDER SKUTCH WINS HAL BORLAND AWARD

Alexander Frank Skutch is a naturalist and ornithologist who for 50 years has delighted readers with the beauty of his prose and the depth of his knowledge. He is the recipient of the National Audubon Society's Hal Borland Award for distinction in the field of natural history.

A native of Baltimore and a graduate of Johns Hopkins, Skutch found his true callings — the tropics and birds — on a school field trip to Jamaica. He eventually settled in the



Alexander Skutch

tropics with his wife Pamela on a farm in the remote southern area of Costa Rica.

Skutch, 84 and still very active, is the author of *Parent Birds and Their Young* (1976), *A Naturalist on a Tropical Farm* (1980), *Life of the Woodpecker* (1985), *Life of the Tanager* (1989), *Birds Asleep* (1989), *The Birds of Costa Rica* (co-authored with F. Gary Stiles 1989), and *Life of the Flycatcher* (1990).

HONORED

At the American Birding Association Convention at Fort Collins, Colorado, Guy McCaskie was presented with the Ludlow Griscom Award, sponsored by the Bushnell Division of Bausch and Lomb. McCaskie is credited with changing the way birders "look" at birds in the field. He, by his own admittal, has been an avid birdwatcher since he "first opened his eyes." He influenced birders to search for rare and unusual birds and not just the common species. His concern with identification and distribution of birds in his own state of California as expressed in many articles set an example that has been followed everywhere.

HONORED (CONT.)

Rosemarie S. Gnam, known as the "Parrot Lady of the Bahamas," received a Chevron Conservation Award for her research and preservation efforts on behalf of the Bahama Parrot, an endangered subspecies. Her research, since 1985, has provided the information needed to expand the bird's breeding population, and, owing to her efforts, lawmakers are considering a 15,000-acre reserve for the parrots.



Rosemarie S. Gnam

The Manitoba Naturalists Society bestowed their distinguished naturalist award, the Ernest Thompson Seton Medal, on **Martin K. McNicholl** in recognition of his commitment to the study of natural history. He is Chairman of the ICBP-Canada and former executive director of the Long Point Bird Observatory.



Martin K. McNicholl

Luis Baptista, of the California Academy of Sciences, has been awarded honorable mention in the Rolex Awards for Enterprise competition for his proposed



Luis Baptista

project "Reintroducing the Socorro Dove to its island home."

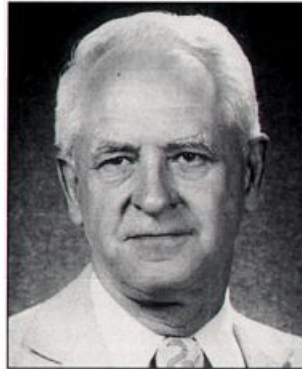
The Socorro Island Dove (*Zenaida graysoni*) from Socorro Island, Revillagigedo archipelago, Mexico, is extinct in the wild but exists in avicultural collections. Baptista has established a program to breed these doves and eventually to repatriate them to their ancestral homeland. He is also collaborating with Mexican biologists and the Mexican Navy in ecological studies of the island in preparation for the return of the dove.

The Chevron Conservation Awards Program, a 36-year old recognition program honoring outstanding "citizen conservationists," this year awarded **Jan Garton** of the Northern Flint Hills Audubon Society a Chevron Conservation Award for her inspired leadership in saving the 20,000-acre Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Management Area.

Dwight R. Platt received a Chevron Conservation Award for 1990. These awards are made to a very limited number of citizen conservationists who have significantly contributed to enhancing and protecting the environment.

Platt, the Director of the Prairie Reconstruction

Project at Bethel College, Kansas, began the project in 1984 for educational purposes. He has written prairie curriculum materials for teachers and has led workshops for teachers on prairie education. He was chair of the Scientific Advisory Panel to Save the Tallgrass Prairie. As the first zoologist appointed to the Natural and Scientific Areas Advisory Board, he developed a system of natural and scientific areas for the state of Kansas. Additionally, he served as Chairman of the Conservation Committee of the Kansas Academy of Science.



Dwight R. Platt

Bruce Peterjohn, biologist with the Ohio Department of Transportation, received the Ohioana Book Award. The venerable Ohioana Library Association, a statewide institution of Ohio literary figures, librarians, teachers, artists, academic professionals, and noted humanitarians bestowed the award for Peterjohn's authorship of *THE BIRDS OF OHIO*.



Bruce Peterjohn

ELECTED

At the annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union the traditional passing of the baton took place when **Glen E. Woolfenden** stepped down and **Burt L. Monroe, Jr.**, stepped up to fill the position of President of the A.O.U.



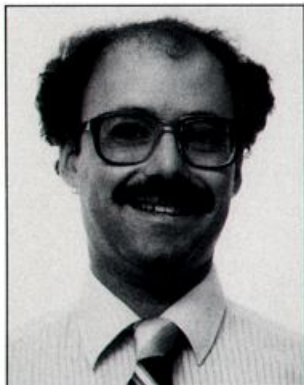
Glen E. Woolfenden



Burt L. Monroe

DIRECTIONS

David E. Blockstein, an avian conservation biologist, has been selected as the director of the Washington, D.C. office of the Committee for the National Institutes for the Environment. The committee is developing a network to support their proposed new federal research agency, which will conduct environmental research. Ultimately, the proposed National Institutes for the Environment would assign priorities, focus research, train scientists and educate the public and policymakers toward the solution of environmental problems.



David E. Blockstein

Gonzalo Castro, Peruvian ecologist with experience on various aspects of bird physiology, ecology, and conservation, has recently assumed the position of Program Manager for North America and Peru with the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network



Gonzalo Castro

(WHSRN), located at Manomet Bird Observatory, Manomet, Massachusetts. Castro has conducted studies on migratory shorebirds in Alaska, Kansas, Delaware, Panama, and Peru. This new position will allow him to make important contributions to the conservation of shorebirds and wetlands in the Western Hemisphere.

DEATHS

Oscar Owre, an active ornithologist in South Florida and the New World Tropics, died of a heart attack on August 9, 1990. Owre was well-known as a mentor to many students and novice birders. He was the first occupant of the Maytag Chair of Ornithology at the University of Miami, Florida, chairman of the board at Miami's Museum of Science and Space Transit Planetarium, and president of the Tropical Audubon Society. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Biscayne National Monument and served for years on the Dade County Pollution Control Hearing Committee.



Oscar Owre



Peter J. Grant

When cancer prematurely took Peter J. Grant, on April 16, 1990, the world lost one of the leading field experts in bird identification, an exemplary teacher and author, a superb tour leader, and to many colleagues, an inestimable friend. Grant, 47, died at his home in Kent, Great Britain. He is best known in America for his book, GULLS, A GUIDE TO IDENTIFICATION (1982). As Chairman of the British Birds Records Committee, he was instrumental in establishing an ongoing cooperative dialogue on matters of bird identification and review of rare-bird records.

WORLD BRIEFS

American Birds is looking for any readers who have birded, or who are planning a birding trip, in Eastern Europe. Please write the Editor with details. Thank you.

GERMANY

After the "walls" came down separating East and West Germany, five families of sea eagles were found nesting in what used to be called the "death strip" between the two countries. As a result, East German border guards were kept on duty to protect the sea eagle's eggs which are highly prized. According to the East German Foundation for Environmental Protection and Nature Conservation, collectors will pay up to \$12,000 for an egg. The sea eagles thrived in the ecosystem between Mecklenburg and Schleswig-Holstein.

AUSTRALIA

The good news from "down under" is that four active Red Goshawk nests were discovered in the Kimberley Ranges in Western Australia's tropical north. The Red Goshawk (*Erythrotriorchis radiatus*) is the country's rarest bird of prey and had not been sighted in Western Australia since 1910. The species feeds on medium to large birds.

ENGLAND

British ornithologists are attempting to re-introduce Red Kites into England and Scotland after a century-long absence. For the second time in two years, 11 young birds from Spain were released at a secret location in Britain. The Red Kite is an endangered species.



Red Kite

ZAIRE

The July 1990 issue of the IBIS (Vol. 132: No. 3: pp 349 - 353), contains information about yet another discovery of a distinct new species in eastern Zairean ornithology. Author M. Louette writes that Prigogine's Nightjar (*Caprimulgus prigoginei*) has been described from a single skin collected in 1955 in eastern Zaire. The species has a distinct morphology and is thought to be without