

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings!

I can't believe it is already the last days of April when I found myself writing this letter. So much has happened during the first months of this year in your Foundation, keeping all of us very busy. Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs, and Editors have been very active attending to different matters that pertain to the present and future of our organization. So, perhaps the best way to start is by acknowledging and thanking them for all of the hours and hard work to keep this organization running smoothly. Without their interest, altruistic dedication, and service there would not be RRF.

Of course, this has been the way RRF has worked since the beginning. A relatively small group of people working together with the goal of accomplishing RRF's mission and goals is not something new. We always have had people volunteering to serve; we couldn't have functioned for the past 50 years without them. However, what seems to be a new challenge for this and other ornithological societies is the declining level of membership participation and commitment during the last decade. Don't ask me how I know this. It is a feeling and impression; I cannot provide you with specific numbers or data. And it is not just me. You hear the same from friends involved in other professional societies. But it seems to be becoming increasingly difficult to have people committed to serve and to work extra hours to further a professional organization's mission and goals. Perhaps this impression (at least in my case as I have been already 10 years involved with the RRF Board), is supported by the fact we always see the same faces (including mine) representing our membership! These folks are driven to serve because of the lack of other members willing to take the torch. It has become more and more difficult to find someone willing to take care of a committee, such as the Nominations or Conference Committees. Both of these committees are extremely important to the adequate function of our organization and yet we are still without a volunteer (yes, please, consider helping RRF at least in this regards, read more about our call for Chairs and Directors in other sections of this issue of *Wingspan!*).



This decline of participation might also be driven by cultural and generational changes. The list of potential reasons goes on and on, while sociologists are still trying to find the perfect answer. But the truth is that no organization can survive or grow without the active participation of its members in the decision-making process. Perhaps it is a sign of modern times, where it is more and more difficult to fulfill our daily tasks, attend to family issues, and have a life in the same period of time. And yes, answering emails and following up with social media, texting, and twitter takes a lot of time now. Expectations in how we communicate are also different, perhaps preventing us from allocating time to serve. We need to answer that email right now; we cannot lose one minute, otherwise the sky may fall on our heads tomorrow...I am sure you know what I am talking about if this happens to you. Time is a precious resource, and for anyone working in academia, government, or private practice it is an obvious thing will not get better. But if this situation persists, time to serve in professional organizations decreases and at the same time participation also declines; how long can we keep RRF functioning? How can we grow in this scenario? We do not want a society that doesn't grow; on the contrary, our growth is what will keep it alive...

Of course, we should not worry in the short-term; things are not going to become apocalyptic overnight. But for our Officers and Directors, leading an organization is not just to consider what matters today, but they must think about the mid- and long-term future. It is our responsibility to identify and work on these problems and try to find solutions.

Your society is starting (baby steps so far) to develop a strategic plan to address this and many other problems and challenges the future will present. In my last message, I offered an open invitation to help us and it was received with lukewarm enthusiasm and only a few members responded willing to get involved. Is this just my lack of leadership skills or perhaps another of these subtle signs that tell us participation is no longer what used to be? I hope it is just the first case, easily solved with new blood in our organization. Irrespective, I want to once more invite you to join us. Take the future of RRF into your own hands. Things will not happen if we do not put our hands and minds to work. We need you, so together we can fulfill our missions and goals not only today but tomorrow. Getting involved on a committee, becoming a Chair, serving as a Director, and eventually as an Officer of our organization is a lot of fun. If you are a professional researcher (active or already retired), help us to continue maintaining the professional standards of raptor research by supporting the education of Early Career Raptor Researchers and bringing your expertise and experience to model our future. If you are an Early Career Raptor Researcher, becoming involved will help you to further expand your research skills, network, and to learn the management of our organization from those that precede us and prepare you to be the leader of the future. Bring your energy to become an active voice and prepare yourself to face the changes the future will bring upon RRF and all of us. Bring your dreams so we can make them happen.

I know you care about raptors and RRF. I personally want to invite you to reflect on what you want from your society and how much are you willing to invest to make things happen. We need you. Don't leave us alone.

One of RRF's yearly highlights is the Annual Conference. This year we are meeting in Salt Lake City, partnering with our friends from HawkWatch international. It has been 30 years since we

held a meeting in beautiful Utah. There is not a lack of National and State Parks and other visually stunning recreational areas to travel around for outdoor recreational opportunities before and after the conference. Bring your family with you and reconnect with nature in a way only Utah can offer while you learn cutting edge information about recent advances in raptor research. The local committee Chair David Oleyar, our conference committee (J. Niemi and D. Varland), and the Scientific Program Committee (Chair B. Wommack), among others, are preparing an amazing program that includes a wide diversity of workshops, symposiums, and field trips planned. Please, visit the conference website <http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/conferences/current-conference/> for more details and information. Don't forget early registration ends July 1st.

On a different matter...since 2016, President Elect Libby Mojica and former President Mike Collopy have represented RRF in Ornithological Societies of North America (OSNA)-related issues. As with any important change in life, the transition from the Schneider group to MemberSuite has not been always smooth, but thanks to the dedication and hard work of Libby, Mike and other OSNA committee members things are now pretty much close to being 100% functional. We owe them great thanks for all they have been doing to bring us to this point. And just a few weeks ago our Director Rob Bierregaard joined the team and will serve with Mike as our OSNA representatives. Libby and myself are remaining as alternates. In addition, Rob has become the OSNA Vice-President. Please welcome him in this new position.

The future of OSNA is rapidly changing, and only a few ornithological societies of North America remains as part of it. This has created a unique situation, and recently a proposal to dissolve OSNA was elevated for consideration. We will provide more information about this issue in the future.

Finally, if you haven't renewed your membership yet, please DO IT as soon as possible! The transition caused some delays in this year's membership renewal, and your membership fees are of extreme importance for keeping our budget healthy. We appreciate your prompt diligence on this matter.



Thanks for listening, I would be happy to hear from you as well.

I look forward to see you all in Salt Lake City later this year!

Miguel D. Saggese
RRF President

RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC
(Founded in 1966)

OFFICERS

President: Miguel Saggese
Vice-president: James Bednarz
President-Elect: Libby Mojica
Secretary: Joan Morrison
Treasurer: Jessi Brown
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North America #1: Joel (Jeep) Pagel
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At Large #3: Rob Bierregaard
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At Large #6: Jennifer Coulson

EDITORS

Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Raptor Research*: Cheryl Dykstra
Editor, *Wingspan*: Brian Washburn
Website Coordinator: Libby Mojica

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**, 1400 South Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60546, USA; 1-312-883-4670 (phone); OSNAMembers@gmail.com (email); <http://www.osnabirds.org> (web).

Editor's Note – Thanks to the following contributors for this issue of the *Wingspan*: Francisca Helena Aguiar-Silva, Karla Bloem, Michaela Brinkmeyer, Erin Katzner, Jody Millar, Libby Mojica, Jerry Niemi, Jemima Parry-Jones, Miguel Saggese, Dan Varland, Beth Wommack, and Michael Yates.

Wingspan welcomes contributions from RRF members and others interested in raptor biology and management. Please submit contributions via email to Brian Washburn, *Wingspan* Editor, at rrfwingspan@gmail.com. For long contributions, please send as a MS Word attachment. If you are submitting photos, please include them within the MSWord document with a caption and photo credit. Contribution deadline for the next issue is **15 June 2017**.

All issues of *Wingspan* and content guidelines are available at:

<http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/publications/wingspan-newsletter/online-newsletters-pdfs>

“Hatchlings and Fledglings”

**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION
2017 ANNUAL ELECTIONS
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

Submitted by Miguel D. Saggese (President) and Libby Mojica (President Elect)

RRF Board of Directors

RRF Directors are elected by the RRF membership, each for a 3-year term. Directors' responsibilities include attendance at and participation in face-to-face and electronic meetings. Directors represent the Foundation in all matters of decision-making and assisting RRF in pursuing its mission. Directors propose new initiatives and provide guidance to officers and committee chairs on Foundation activities. Directors of each geographic region are primarily available and responsive to RRF members throughout those regions, bringing any related issues to Board meetings.

The following Director positions are open for nominees for the upcoming term 2018-2020:

- ✂ DIRECTOR NORTH AMERICA #3**
- ✂ DIRECTOR AT LARGE #3**
- ✂ DIRECTOR AT LARGE #6**
- ✂ EURASIAN DIRECTOR**

Please, if you are interested, contact RRF President Miguel D. Saggese at msaggese@westernu.edu and RRF Secretary Joan Morrison at Joan.Morrison@trincoll.edu

COMMITTEE CHAIRS NEEDED

Three committees will have openings in fall 2017. These positions are 3-year terms. Current committee chairs will mentor the new chairs as needed for a smooth transition.

RRF Conference Committee Chair

The current Conference Committee Chair, Gerald 'Jerry' Niemi, will finish his term after the Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City in November 2017. Long-time Conference Committee member, Dan Varland, is willing to stay on the committee, but new leadership is needed. Substantial planning is already underway with the 2018 Annual Meeting already approved for November 2018 in South Africa. Also, the 2020 meeting is being planned for Boise, Idaho. Responsibilities include working with the RRF Board and President to: (1) locate organizations willing and able to host the annual meeting; (2) secure a financial agreement between the host organization(s) and RRF; and (3) work with the local committee to ensure a successful meeting according to RRF annual conference guidelines. If you are interested or have questions, feel free to contact Jerry Niemi at gniemi@umn.edu or Dan Varland at danvarland@coastalraptors.org.

RRF Conservation Committee Chair

The Conservation Committee Chair reviews and assesses the nature of any conservation issue or request brought forward by an RRF member or a member of the general public, and determines if a response by RRF is appropriate. The Conservation Committee Chair will have ultimate responsibility for preparing and disseminating the written communications in response to the issue. The chairperson may request help in preparing these communications from other RRF members who may have familiarity with the issue. Subsequent to approval of the communications by the Board, the chairperson will disseminate the communications to the requesting organization and other appropriate recipients, and post the communications to the RRF website. If interested, please contact the current committee chair Joan Morrison Joan.Morrison@trincoll.edu.

RRF Nominations Committee Chair

The Nominations Committee Chair is responsible for recruiting RRF members for Officer, Director, and Committee Chair positions. It is critical for RRF to have energetic Board members and this committee is key to finding and recruiting talented volunteers to lead our Foundation. This person will advertise open positions in *Wingspan* and through emails in the spring of each year. They will coordinate with the Secretary to prepare the election ballot with names and biographies of candidates. **This position is open now and RRF is urgently seeking to fill the opening. Interested? Contact the RRF President at msaggese@westernu.edu**

RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Submitted by Brian Washburn

Membership with RRF (and other scientific societies) is a fundamental supporting element for our Foundation. Membership funds, along with monetary contributions from our scientific publications (primarily the *Journal of Raptor Research*) and other sources of revenue provide the budgetary capacity for RRF to function. A number of recent changes have occurred with the Ornithological Societies of North America (OSNA), the organization that manages our memberships and provides other benefits to RRF. During the past few months, OSNA has sent numerous emails to RRF members regarding the new cloud-based member management system, MemberSuite, and (unfortunately) delays in the ability of RRF members to renew their memberships – or for new RRF members to submit their membership application. All members should have received an email from OSNA with instructions on renewing your membership through MemberSuite. I was able to renew my RRF membership with the new system without difficulty. I am including the pertinent portions of these emails for you here:



The new OSNA Member Portal is now open and available for you to renew your society memberships. Renewing online is fast and convenient for you and helps us gather information to better serve you.

The first step is to login to the new Member Portal and set up your account.

1. Visit the new **OSNA Member Portal**.
2. To set up your account on your first visit to the **OSNA Member Portal**, click on *Forgot Password* under the Login boxes. Next, enter your Login ID, which is the email

address where you received this message. You will receive an email to reset your password. When you click on the link in the email, this will take you to a page to enter a new password. Once you have done that, you will go to your personal *Profile* page (this is your home page).

3. If you have already set up your account, enter your Login ID, which is the email address where you received this message, and your password. You will go directly to your personal *Profile* page.

If you still need assistance logging in, contact **Scott Gillihan, OSNA Membership Manager:** OSNAmembers@gmail.com; phone 312-883-4670.

Now that you've signed into your *Profile* page, you will see the option to "Join/Renew" in each of the four societies. Immediately below this, you can "View" all of your 2016 membership types.

Next step, Join/Renew/Subscribe.

On your *Profile* page, click "Join/Renew" or the respective society in the *My Membership* section of the Member Portal homepage. You will have the opportunity to make donations and add additional society memberships later in the renewal process.

If we do not hear from you by January each year (by updating your profile, making selections, and renewing), we will mail you a printed copy of the OSNA renewal form. As in the past, OSNA sends out several reminder emails and printed renewal notices during our Renewal Season if you have not yet renewed. RRF incurs printing and mailing costs to send paper renewal forms so please consider using the online renewal option.

Your OSNA Membership Benefits

Your membership in any of the OSNA societies entitles you to the full benefits of those societies, which can be found on the society websites (links to all websites are on the **OSNA Member Portal** page). Membership in any of the OSNA societies also entitles you to the OSNA electronic version of the *Ornithological Newsletter* and the online version of the membership directory, *The Flock*. Members can access the current and historical electronic issues of the *Ornithological Newsletter* anytime, and download PDF copies from the **OSNA Member Portal**, by clicking the "OSNA Newsletters" tab at the top of the page. During the OSNA transition to Membersuite, Ornithological Jobs will not be available on the **OSNA Member Portal** or on the **OSNA website**. Please use the job postings on **Ornithology Exchange** to post or search for jobs in ornithology.

For questions about logging-in, your membership, missing journals and other issues contact **Scott Gillihan, OSNA Membership Manager:** OSNAmembers@gmail.com; phone 312-883-4670.

For questions about OSNA, contact **Bonnie Bowen, OSNA Executive Director:** OSNAexec@gmail.com; phone 520-558-0038.

Upcoming Conferences



RAPTOR
RESEARCH
FOUNDATION
2017
Salt Lake City, UT

**RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION
2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**7-12 November 2017
Salt Lake City, Utah USA**

The 2017 Raptor Research Foundation conference will be held at the Sheraton in Salt Lake City. Local host HawkWatch International is happy to welcome RRF back to Salt Lake City after 35 years. Utah offers a stunning diversity of landscapes so you may want to add some time to your trip to visit some of these wonders. Field trip destinations include Farmington Bay Bird Refuge, a full day trip to the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge and the Snowville area in northern Utah (think Ferruginous Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcons, and more), and a trip into the Wasatch Mountains.

Presentations on any aspect of raptor biology, ecology, research techniques, conservation, and management are invited. Early Career Raptor Research Program Workshops will include topics

such as banding and harnessing, necropsy, trapping techniques, climbing techniques for nest access, and western raptor identification.

Conference Information may be viewed at:

<http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/conferences/current-conference>

To offer ideas or financial support, for vendors, event sponsor opportunities, or for other information please contact the RRF 2017 local chair, Dave Oleyar (doleyar@hawkwatch.org).

RRF 2017 CALL FOR SYMPOSIA

The Raptor Research Foundation invites symposium proposals for our annual scientific conference. Presentations on any aspect of raptor biology, ecology, research techniques, conservation, and management are invited.

The deadline for submission of symposium proposals is **15 May 2017**. Early submission is welcome and highly encouraged. Chairs of symposia selected for inclusion in the conference will be notified as submissions are received and approved. Successful symposia at previous RRF meetings have included species-specific and genera-specific foci, interactions of raptors with anthropogenic influences, and topics of general interest to raptor ecologists. Symposia are already being considered include: (1) Raptor Science for Educators and Delivering Science to the General Public, (2) Conservation and Ecology of Under-studied Open Land Raptors, and (3) Raptors and the Energy Sector.

Symposium proposals should include:

1. Symposium title for the RRF conference website.
2. Name and contact information for symposium chair for the RRF conference website.
3. A 3-5 sentence rationale for the symposium's topic for the RRF conference website.
4. Names of authors the symposium chair has recruited to participate in the symposium, and general title or description of each senior author's oral presentation.
5. A picture for use on the RRF conference website to represent the symposium.

Successful symposia should include at least 6 related papers, or enough papers to fill at least a half-day session; they will run concurrent with general scientific sessions or other symposia. Prospective symposium chairs are encouraged to suggest symposia even if they have recruited fewer than the minimum number of speakers because relevant abstracts received through the general submission process may be used to complete symposium schedules.

Questions regarding symposia and general abstracts should be directed to Beth Wommack (ewommack@uwyo.edu).

RRF 2017 CALL FOR PAPERS – GENERAL SESSIONS

The Raptor Research Foundation invites oral and poster abstracts for our annual scientific conference. Presentations on any aspect of raptor biology, ecology, research techniques, conservation, and management are invited.

Abstract submission:

You may submit more than one abstract. Submit all abstracts via **OSNA Member Portal** page under the “Awards, Competitions & Submissions” section: You do not have to be a member of RRF to submit an abstract but you must create a free user account with Membersuite.

<https://customer265664c9b.portal.membersuite.com/competitions/ViewCompetition.aspx?contextID=dd4aa278-00aa-c25f-fb97-0b3c6eaa61d6>

The abstract submission period is 16 May – 15 June. Cover letters are not needed. Follow the format explained and exemplified in the Sample Abstract on the conference website:

<http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/conferences/current-conference/scientific-program/>. Failure to properly format abstracts may result in rejection or return to authors for reformatting.

Questions regarding **symposia and general abstracts** should be directed to Beth Wommack (ewommack@uwyo.edu).

Oral Sessions

Oral presentations include either full-length talks (20 minutes including questions) or Speed Talks (10 minutes including questions). Papers must be presented in English, and electronic presentations must be in Powerpoint format, for display on conference computers. Conference computers and organizers will be available to load presentations during the ice-breaker reception, and prior to the initiation of oral sessions during each day of the conference. Loading of

presentations must occur during these times. Presentations prepared on computers running software other than MS Powerpoint for Microsoft Windows will need to be converted prior to uploading on conference computers.

Poster Sessions

Posters will be mounted on 3' x 4' panels (vertical x horizontal). Materials for hanging posters will be available. All posters must be prepared in English. Poster presenters are required to attend their poster during the poster session.

The deadline for submission of papers is **15 June 2017**, concurrent with the deadline for abstracts for Andersen Award candidates (<http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/grants-and-awards/awards/william-c-andersen-memorial-award>). Authors of accepted abstracts will be notified via email by **15 Aug 2017**.

<https://customer265664c9b.portal.membersuite.com/competitions/ViewCompetition.aspx?contextID=dd4aa278-00aa-c987-ada9-0b3cbc14bcae>

Andersen Award candidates will be further notified via email whether their papers will be included in the Andersen Award competitive oral session, in a general oral session, or in the Andersen poster competitive poster session. Prior to the conference, all authors will be provided with a follow-up email with links specifying the room, date and time of their presentations.

Questions regarding Andersen Awards should be directed to Clint Boal (clint.boal@ttu.edu).



General questions regarding the conference should be directed to Dave Oleyar (doleyar@hawkwatch.org).

AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY 2017

**31 July – 5 August 2017
East Lansing, Michigan USA**

The joint meeting of the American Ornithological Society (135th Stated Meeting) and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists (35th Stated Meeting) will be held at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, 31 July – 5 August, 2017. This is the inaugural meeting of the American Ornithological Society, the new society formed in 2016 by merging the American Ornithologists' Union and Cooper Ornithological Society.

For more information, please visit: <http://aossco2017.fw.msu.edu>

10th ASIAN RAPTOR RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION NETWORK SYMPOSIUM

**18 – 22 October 2017
Davao City, Philippines**

The 10th Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network Symposium will be held on 18-22 October 2017 at Ateneo de Davao University, Roxas Avenue, Davao City, Philippines. Hosted by the Philippine Eagle Foundation in partnership with the Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network and co-organized by Ateneo de Davao University, City Government of Davao City, Department of Tourism Region 11, and the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines – Raptor Group.

Please check www.philippineaglefoundation.org for more information about the symposium. For inquiries and for those requiring official invitation, please send contact details like name of participant, designation, address and email to: arrcn2017@philippineaglefoundation.org



News from the RRF

Historical Hawk Count Data Available

Submitted by Gerald Niemi

The Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) collects hawk count data from almost 200 raptor monitoring sites throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. HawkCount is a near real-time database of hawk counts across the continent and is a driving force behind the Raptor Population Index (RPI) to promote scientific analysis of hawk count data. Many scientific articles that have used HawkCount data have appeared in *The Condor*, *The Auk*, the *Journal of Raptor Research*, and other peer-reviewed journals.

HMANA's mission is "to advance the scientific knowledge and promote conservation of raptor populations through study, enjoyment, and appreciation of raptor migration." HMANA, founded in 1974, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Hawk count data are available for research upon request as identified in its Data Policies and Data Submission guidelines that can be found on its website www.hmana.org. Please feel free to contact info@hmana.org for additional information.

2019 RRF Conference

Submitted by Jerry Niemi and Dan Varland

Help us Secure a Location for the 2019 RRF Conference!

The RRF Conference Committee is seeking thoughtful suggestions on a location and venue for the 2019 conference, to be held in the fall. Our strong preference is to secure a location in eastern half of North America, given that the 2015 conference was held in Sacramento and other upcoming North American conferences are scheduled for the West (2017, Salt Lake City, Utah, and 2020 in Boise, Idaho). Any location identified must include a dedicated leader, a solid local committee, and a venue that can accommodate 250-500 participants. Please contact Gerald Niemi (gniemi@d.umn.edu) or Dan Varland (danvarland@coastalraptors.org) with your suggestions.

Passing of Tom Maechtle

Submitted by Michael Yates

Tom Maechtle, a talented biologist and internationally recognized authority on tundra peregrine falcons, passed away unexpectedly on Christmas at the age of 58. Tom was keenly interested in falconry and falcons since his early teen years, and naturally gravitated to The Peregrine Fund's hawk barns in Ithaca. His projects included fostering captive-raised peregrine chicks into nest boxes of unproductive pairs. In 1979 he lent his energy and expertise to the Greenland Peregrine Falcon Survey, becoming an indispensable team member for almost two decades. Tom was a founding member and Director of Earthspan (www.earthspan.org), and directed our Padre Island Peregrine Falcon Survey for 20 years. A key figure in many Earthspan projects for decades, he also worked alongside us on peregrine projects in Alaska, Mexico, South America and Russia. He authored or co-authored many scientific publications, built his highly successful Bighorn Environmental Consultants firm in Sheridan, WY, mentored scores of young biologists, very successfully bred and hunted with gyrfalcons, and still found time for a rewarding family life with daughter Ireland and wife Kathy. Tom was a brother and steadfast friend, and his importance in our lives and those of countless others cannot be measured. His health took a sudden and unexpected turn since his time with us at the beach on our Assateague Island Peregrine Falcon Survey last October. We now endure the incalculable personal and professional loss of this seminal figure in peregrine research. As Earthspan's important projects continue, Tom's influence, ethic and spirit will always be an integral part of them.

Raptor News

American Eagle Foundation Accepting Eagle Grant Proposals

Submitted by Jody Millar

Beginning July 1, 2017, The American Eagle Foundation will again be accepting grant proposals for work that promotes the conservation of eagles. This will be the sixth year the AEF has funded efforts by scientists, agency personnel, and non-profit organizations to further our understanding and protection of Bald Eagles. Close to \$500,000 in eagle grants have been awarded since 2012, with about \$100,000 awarded yearly (no awards were granted for 2013). Grant proposals will be accepted between July 1 and September 1 for work to be carried out the following year (2018).

The AEF recommends interested parties submit pre-proposals so that we may provide guidance in relation to our grants, and gain awareness of the variety of projects to be submitted.

AEF uses a Bald Eagle Grant Advisory Team to numerically rank all grant applications. This team consists of some of the Nation's most outstanding eagle experts. The AEF Bald Eagle Grant Advisory Team has determined that for 2018, in addition to the criteria outlined in our Detailed Guidelines for Bald Eagle Grant Applications, three critical areas will be given priority. Project proposals directed in these areas will be assigned additional ranking points in the Application Rating Form, ranging from 0 – 5, with five additional points attributed to projects that fully meet the expectations of the priority areas. The three priority areas are as follows:

1. Conservation of Bald Eagle habitat is crucial for the continued survival of the species. Projects in this area would identify important Bald Eagle habitats, identify land ownership, determine alternative pathways to protection, and/or initiate habitat protection and/or enhancement.
2. Secondary ingestion of lead shot by Bald Eagles is lethal. Reduction of use and bioavailability of lead shot is crucial to avoiding mortality of Bald Eagles and other wildlife. Projects in this area may identify hot spots, instruct the public, and/or provide incentives to reduce lead shot in the environment.
3. Energy exploration and development may proceed at times in spite of adverse consequences to Bald Eagles and other wildlife. Projects in this area might include research and management to aid the avoidance of adverse eagle interactions with wind power, oil and gas exploration, power lines, and other areas of energy development.

The American Eagle Foundation is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to protect and preserve the United States' living symbol of freedom, the American Bald Eagle, and other birds of prey. The AEF is celebrating its 31st year of carrying out its mission through Preservation, Repopulation, Education, & Rehabilitation. It is headquartered in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains at Dollywood Family Theme Park in Pigeon Forge, TN.

Additional information on grant application may be found at www.eagles.org or contact Jody Millar, AEF Grants Coordinator at eaglegrants@gmail.com

**The International Centre for Birds of Prey,
Newent, Gloucestershire, UK**

Submitted by Jemima Parry-Jones

It has been a quiet winter at ICBP colder and drier than last winter thank goodness. I have to say I thoroughly enjoyed the RRF 50th anniversary meeting at Cape May. It was a great meeting and what a joy to be able to walk on the beach and see the sun come up every morning, a real treat for me as we are far away from the sea – at least in UK terms!

Avian Influenza has been causing us a few worries and problems, it has not gotten near us, but we are taking some fairly stringent precautions. We are only flying birds that we know will not go out of our field, we disinfect the perches in the flying field that our birds use and so do wild ones. We have put debris netting over the mesh where larger birds (magpies) were able to get in. They are very annoyed that their food supply is gone!

We reopen on February 1st and this year is ICBP's 50th anniversary! 50 years of being open to the public – amazing. We are planning a number of special events to celebrate with a Royal visit we hope, and an auction in December, plus various other options as well!

I have just gotten back from a teaching trip to South Africa. We taught an incubation husbandry and veterinary course at Vulpro at the foot of the Magaliesberg Mountains. It was open to anyone with an interest in conservation breeding, particularly vultures. The course lasted three days and we covered a huge amount of work.

Kerri Wolter who started and runs Vulpro is breeding both Cape Vultures and African White-backed Vultures and releasing them. She also takes in injured wild birds. In the first 16 days of



January she had in 26 injured wild vultures and we thought we had hard work in our hospital.

A high proportion of those coming in are collisions with powerlines, rather than electrocution or poisoning. There are those as well, but collisions seems to be the greatest problem. Also interesting some with bone problems, probably stemming from a lack of small bones around for the adult birds to feed the chicks during the first vital 30 days of their growth.

Escom the power company of South Africa is willing to put flappers or markers on new lines, but the cost of using helicopters and manpower for retrofitting the older lines is prohibitive. So we asked Rick Harness what the chances of using drones to do the job would be. Needless to say he is on the case. Kerri knows where the worst of the lines are because of the number of vultures brought in so we hope they will be able to work as a team and improve the situation. I guess the next horrific problem for vultures will be wind power.



We were taken up to Oliphants – a game park next to Kruger after the course. We were going to try and catch some vulture to tag. However our carcass did not attract much interest so we went out into the park to see where the vultures were. We found them, however the reason we found them was heart-breakingly sad. As we drove quietly through the bush to see what they were eating it turned out to be a recently poached young female Black Rhino with her horn hacked out and her ears and tail cut off. We called it in and left the scene as they do forensics and we would have been in the way. They found another, a male, a 100 yds on and a third on the next door reserve. Three endangered Black Rhino's in one night – and for what?

I suppose the only good thing about it was that these revolting people had not poisoned the carcasses so we did not find hundreds of dead vultures as well. Do not mistake this though. This is not poor and starving people doing this to feed their families, this is organized and well-funded crime, mainly for the far east market.



The Peregrine Fund

Submitted by Erin Katzner

Artificial Nests Sites May Not Always Benefit Populations

Dr. Chris McClure, Director of the American Kestrel Partnership, recently published a paper in the journal *Ecological Applications*, "Simulations reveal the power and peril of artificial breeding sites for monitoring and managing animals" describing the effectiveness of artificial nest boxes as a tool in conservation of species. In collaboration with the Department of Biological Science and Raptor Research Center at Boise State University, this study shows that changes in availability of unmonitored breeding sites can decouple trends in the occupancy of monitored sites from trends in actual population levels. Nest box managers should also not assume that providing artificial nest sites will necessarily benefit populations, but develop management programs carefully to consider the potential effects of providing artificial breeding sites.

To read more, check out the paper in the journal *Ecological Applications* at:
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/eap.1509/full>

First Rapid Response to Poisoning Training held in Kenya

United against Wildlife Poisoning: The first-ever anti-poisoning training was held in Kenya this past November. The Peregrine Fund has been collaborating with BirdLife International, the Mara Lion Project, and Nature Kenya to end the indiscriminate poisoning of vultures in Kenya, which is typically targeted at predators such as lions and hyenas. One crucial step toward this goal, is to train wildlife rangers in how to best identify, treat, and collect evidence at poisoning scenes. The first training workshop was held in the Masai Mara Reserve and provided expert guidance from instructor Andre Botha to 37 participants on identifying the signs and symptoms of wildlife poisoning, prompt reporting, incident scene treatment, collection of good information and sterilizing the scene to prevent further poisoning.

This historic event was inaugurated by the Masai Mara Senior Park Warden Mr. Samson Lenjirr. We are thrilled to partner with Birdlife International, Mara Lion Project, Nature Kenya, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Kenya Wildlife Service, and Narok County to help facilitate this important training. Thanks also to San Diego Zoo Global, African Wildlife Foundation, and others for helping to make this a fantastic event.

World Owl Hall of Fame

Submitted by Karla Bloem

Owl enthusiasts from around the world gathered March 3–5, 2017 at the 15th Annual International Festival of Owls in Houston, MN. They celebrated people who do amazing work with owls. Three individuals were inducted into the World Owl Hall of Fame to honor their exceptional contributions to the study, conservation, and public awareness of owls.

Dr. R. J. Gutiérrez received the Champion of Owls Award for his lifetime work on behalf of owls. His long-term research on the Spotted Owl in western North America provides a foundation for conservation of this rapidly declining species. Dr. Gutiérrez is also known as an inspiring educator, writer, and public advocate for the Spotted Owl. He is the Professor and Gordon Gullion Endowed Chair Emeritus, in the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology at the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Jonathan Slaght received a Special Achievement Award for research and conservation efforts with the endangered Blakiston's Fish Owl in Russia. His studies of Fish Owl populations have significantly expanded the world's understanding of this rare owl. Dr. Slaght is known for online publications that bring Fish Owls, other wildlife, and the Russian wilderness to viewers around the world. He is the Russia and Northeast Asia Coordinator for the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Mr. Sumio Yamamoto also received a Special Achievement Award for studies and conservation of the Blakiston's Fish Owl. His focus is the natural behavior, habitat, and captive rearing of the Fish Owl in Japan. For decades, Mr. Yamamoto has collaborated with the Japanese government and public on conservation efforts. His captive Fish Owl, "Don", is a conservation ambassador for many visitors from around the world. Don is a 2015 winner of the Owl Center's Lady Gray'l Award.

Each of these Owl Hall of Fame winners continue to make the world a better place for owls. All winners will be attending and speaking at the 2017 Owl Festival.

The Houston, MN Owl Festival – the only full-weekend, all-owl event in North America – celebrates the hatch day of Alice, a Great Horned Owl. Alice, the first owl ambassador at the International Owl Center, works under the tutelage of Karla Bloem, Center Director and festival organizer. The festival includes family-friendly activities such as live-owl demonstrations, nest-box building, a photo contest, owl-themed shopping, face-painting and art projects for children. Some activities, such as fieldtrips and banquet, require advance registration.

The World Owl Hall of Fame is sponsored by the International Owl Center, the Global Owl Project, Bob Kierlin, and Mary Burcher.

To register for the festival or for more information visit www.festivalofowls.com.

Recent Raptor Thesis

Resource use and selection by Harpy Eagle *Harpia harpyja* at multiple spatial scales

Submitted by Francisca Helena Aguiar-Silva,
Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia (INPA)

Studies of the effects of deforestation and forest fragmentation on species and ecological processes have provided important background to biodiversity conservation. The Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*), the most powerful bird of prey, with a long lifespan, and high nest-site fidelity, returns to a same nesting-tree for decades. Its long-term use of nest sites and use of surrounding resources means that the resistant of the species depends on its capacity to adjust to changing resources. This thesis describes aspects of Harpy Eagle ecology revealed by remote monitoring techniques, such as satellite images, individual movements recorded by satellite radio-transmitters and photos from camera trapping. In Chapter I, the dynamics of landscapes surrounding Harpy Eagle breeding sites were quantified at multi-scales from satellite images. Most nests located along the roads were surrounded by a heterogeneous matrix with anthropogenic uses, such as agriculture and pasture. In the region of the 'Deforestation Arc', the remaining habitat is functionally disconnected for dispersion of Harpy Eagles juveniles. However, the functional diversity of prey species consumed by Harpies indicated that deforestation may reduce the availability of food resources. Although protected areas have contributed to the maintenance of breeding sites of Harpy Eagles in the Atlantic Forest, the Amazon probably will be the last refuge of this species, with negative implications for a long-term viable Harpy Eagle population. These results indicate the priority areas for which management and conservation actions should be directed: Atlantic Forest, along the BR163 and BR230 highways, and eastern and southwestern Amazonia. In Chapter II, locations from satellite telemetry were used to quantify the home range of three Harpy Eagles in different situations of conservation threat in the Amazon, identifying behavioral modifications and displacement patterns in fragmented landscapes. In Chapter III, images from camera traps installed near Harpy Eagle nests in the Amazon and Cerrado forests reveal ecological intra- and interspecific interactions related to nest height, and predation risk while at the nest. In Chapter IV, the availability of prey species data sampled by standard methods (RAPELD method), allowed the comparison of resource availability and its use by Harpy Eagles in breeding sites near the Xingu River in the Brazilian Amazon.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and BRIEF NEWS ITEMS

For Sale

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 (Jessi Brown, RRF Treasurer; email: treasurer@raptorresearchfoundation.org). See <http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/publications/journal-of-raptor-research/back-issues/> <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 (1400 South Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60546, USA; 1-312-883-4670 (phone); osnamembers@gmail.com (email); <http://www.osnabirds.org> (web). 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.

Announcements

Raptor Management and Techniques Manual Available On-line!

The 2nd Edition of the *Raptor Management and Techniques Manual* – Edited by David Bird and Keith Bildstein – is now available for download (as a PDF) on the Raptor Research Foundation's website

<http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/publications/techniques-manual>

Please Help with the American Kestrel Genoscape Project!

The American Kestrel Genoscape Project is a collaboration between Boise State University, HawkWatch International, The Peregrine Fund, St. Mary's University, and UCLA with partners from Hawk Mountain, USFWS, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Texas Tech University, University of Northern British Columbia, Pacific University, and the Shenandoah Valley Raptor Study Area to develop high-resolution molecular markers for creating a spatially explicit map of American Kestrel breeding populations. This map will allow us to sample a bird on the wintering grounds, or during migration, and use the DNA from a single feather to map that individual back to its breeding population of origin. This information will allow us to

identify population-specific trends and migratory connectivity maps. This year we are asking for your help to collect 2 body feathers for DNA samples.

The first step for developing molecular markers for the American Kestrel Genoscape has been a success! In 2015-2016, we collected high-quality genetic samples from nine locations on the peripheral edges of the kestrel's breeding range. Then we used new DNA sequencing technology to look for single base-pair changes, or single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), that are unique to a specific breeding population. Preliminary data suggest this technique will be able to distinguish kestrels from different parts of their breeding range.

In 2017 we will attempt to collect samples throughout all of the kestrel's North American breeding range. **The more locations with samples, the better our tools for tracking populations will be in the future!**

If you monitor breeding kestrels, and have the proper federal, state, and in some cases international permits, you may provide feather samples that will be used to improve the American Kestrel Genoscape. Once you have the proper permits, we are asking for two (grown) body feathers from one nestling per nest. We are not requesting any pin feathers or feathers in-blood. Also, we want to avoid sampling related individuals, so it is not necessary to sample more than one chick per nest, or to sample the same individual more than one time. If you would like to contribute to this large collaborative project please contact Michaela Brinkmeyer at michaelabrinkmeyer@boisestate.edu. I can answer any questions you have and provide all the materials you will need for feather collection. Thank you!



WINGSPAN
c/o USDA WS
6100 Columbus Avenue
Sandusky, OH 44870 USA

rffwingspan@gmail.com
