

Bird Conservation Update for AAV Members: May, 2007

Delisting bald eagles: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) had been under court order to decide by February 16 if bald eagles should be declassified, but the deadline has been extended to June 29, 2007. Proponents of delisting say the eagles will still be protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act & The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Opponents contend that these acts do not protect the eagles' *habitats*. They also believe that delisting will "neuter" special eagle protection projects, wipe out funding and leave the eagles' fate to "voluntary acts of kindness." The small size of the bald eagle population, they say, justifies continued endangered species protection. The FWS map shows less than 9800 breeding pairs in the U.S., with some states (R.I. and D.C.) having only one pair to a maximum of 1312 pairs in Minnesota. (See www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/baldeagle.htm).

Eagle Conservation Alliance (ECA) Formed: Last fall, specialists from ten countries on four continents met in Spain to form a "consortium of ...eagle specialists who would integrate their knowledge, scientific expertise and other resources to benefit wild and captive eagles" worldwide. The second annual ECA workshop takes place in September, 2007, at African Safari, Puebla, Mexico. For more info on ECA, contact Juan Manuel Blanco (uhofleh@wanadoo.es), Frank Carlos Camacho (fcamacho@africansafari.com.mx) or David Rimlinger (Drimlinger@sandiegozoo.org)

First Crowned Eagle Conservation Workshop: AAV member, Dr Miguel Saggese, recently participated in this workshop in Buenos Aires city, where members also formed the Crowned Eagle Neotropical Conservation Group. Contact Dr Saggese (msaggese@cvm.tamu.edu) at The Schubot Exotic Bird Health

Center for info on his raptor work and the next international meeting of this new organization.

More Raptor Info: The Peregrine Fund's Global Raptor Information Network (GRIN) is "working to conserve birds of prey in nature." See www.globalraptors.org

Lead Toxicity Literature: U.C. Davis Wildlife Health Center has recently compiled extensive literature regarding lead toxicity in California sentinel species such as condors, golden and bald eagles. Download at www.dfg.ca.gov/hcpb/whatsnew/whatsnew.shtml

Critically-endangered Grenada Dove: Four Seasons Hotels plans to build a new resort that opponents say will destroy the last stronghold of the Grenada Dove, the national bird of Grenada, in the Mt Hartman National Park. New legislation in Grenada allows the government to sell national and other parks land to private developers. See www.grenadadovecampaign.com or contact Paul Salaman, ABC's Director of International Programs at psalaman@abcbirds.org

Longline fishing legislation: President Bush recently signed HR 5946, the reauthorization of Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), which is the U.S.' primary legislation governing fisheries. ABC successfully fought for inclusion of provisions in the bill that will protect seabirds such as endangered albatrosses from drowning on longline hooks. This is the first time that the MSA has directly referenced seabird interactions with fisheries and has allowed for incentives for "bycatch" reduction.

Midway, Hawaii, albatrosses need help: Peeling lead paint is killing 10,000 curious Laysan Albatross chicks every year on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge on Sand Island, at the center of the newly-created Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine

National Monument. The Monument, according to authorities, represents the “largest single conservation area in our nation’s history and the largest protected marine area in the world.....(it) contains 2.7 million acres of coral reef, 14 million nesting seabirds and 250 fish species.....a quarter of (all species) exist nowhere else on earth.” President Bush has budgeted \$8 million for the National Monument, but ABC is asking for some of this funding to go toward removal of lead-based paint on 100 decaying buildings on Sand Island. See www.friendsofmidway.org

Threatened bird habitats in U.S.: See ABC’s new report on “Top 20 Most Threatened Bird Habitats in the United States” at www.abcbirds.org/habitatreport.pdf

EPA limits rodenticides: Three of the most toxic rodenticides (brodifacoum, bromodialone, difethialone) will now be classified “restricted use,” so can only be used by certified pesticide applicators. Also, non-restricted rodenticides must now be packaged in tamper-resistant bait stations. These measures are part of the EPA’s pesticide mitigation plan that is the culmination of a nine-year review. Conservationists believe these changes will save thousands of birds, foxes, etc.

The Hungry Owl Project is one example of an organization promoting use of natural predators such as barn owls for rodent control. Their website is www.hungryowl.org

Global warming: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a body of about 2500 scientists, has just released its newest report on the effects of global warming. The IPCC was established in 1988 by members of the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program. Its stated role is to “assess the scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of risk of human-induced climate change,” basing its assessment mainly on

peer-reviewed and published scientific and technical literature.
See www.ipcc.ch/

“Birds in a Changing Climate” was the theme of this year’s FWS’ International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), aimed at celebrating and supporting conservation of migratory birds. IMBD is always held on the second Saturday of May. See www.birdday.org. The second annual World Migratory Bird Day was also held in May. See www.worldmigratorybirdday.org.

Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) Conservation Science:

This highly-respected research institute is “dedicated to conservation of birds, other wildlife and ecosystems through innovative scientific research and outreach.” Their website has solid information on effects of global warming along with many other conservation issues. For example, recent information from Bill Sydeman, director of marine ecology at PRBO, suggests that the unusually large numbers of seabirds (such as horned puffins and rhinoceros auklets) washing up dead on beaches in California and Oregon are due to shifts in the California Current’s primary productivity. This, in turn, leads to redistribution and/or decline in food for the seabirds. Go to www.prbo.org/

Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) volunteers in Toronto registered a record number of birds that collided with buildings in Toronto last year: 5400 birds from 93 species, many of which are in dangerous decline. Many of the birds were migrating to/from breeding grounds in the Boreal Forest. Only 40% could be saved. See FLAP’s 40-page “Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines” manual written to assist developers and architects in designing bird-friendly buildings at www.toronto.ca/lightsout/guidelines.htm

New Study on West Nile Virus reports that many species of birds may suffer *long-term* decline and some may never recover. The study, examining West Nile Virus’ impact on 21 species of North

American birds over the past eight years, was conducted by the Consortium for Conservation Medicine (CCM) and the Smithsonian Institution's Migratory Bird Center. Dr Kilpatrick of the CCM states, "The extent of these declines shows how devastating introduced pathogens can be. The globalization of trade and travel that brought West Nile virus to the western hemisphere has completely altered our bird communities and may make some of our backyard birds relatively uncommon." Results of this study were published in the journal, *Nature*, on May 16, 2007. See abstract at www.nature.com/nature/journal/vaop/ncurrent/abs/nature05829.html

Wind Turbine Issues

"Gone With the Wind: Impacts of Wind Turbines on Birds and Bats" was the subject of a May 1, 2007, hearing of the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans, Committee on Natural Resources. A transcript of the hearing, which included speakers from ABC, Audubon and Bat Conservation International, can be seen at www.resourcescommittee.house.gov/hearings/ (click "hearings," then 5/1/2007) or you can read testimony from ABC's Director of Pesticides and Birds Program, Dr D. M. Fry, at www.abcbirds.org/policy_wind_testimony.htm.

Read ABC's position on wild turbines at www.abcbirds.org/policy/windenergy.htm.

Renewal of Tax Credits for Wind Energy is being considered by the House Ways and Means Committee. The tax credit worth 1.9 cents per kilowatt-hour generally expires and is renewed every two years and, until now, has not required wind energy developers or providers to do anything to mitigate adverse effects on federally protected migratory birds. ABC's Dr Fry states, "Any renewal of the production tax credit for wind energy should include provisions

that require developers to follow best management practices in avoiding and minimizing bird and wildlife impacts.” He says there “has been much discussion and almost no real action on the part of the wind industry to (voluntarily) resolve bird collision issues.”

The Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee has been established by the Department of the Interior to “provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior on developing effective measures to avoid or minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitats related to land-based wind energy facilities.”

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* this spring to seek public comment on the effects of communication towers on migratory birds and on the many legal and procedural issues related to adopting measures that would decrease bird collisions with the towers. Results pending.....

“The Blue Macaws” was the subject of the third annual Parrots International Symposium held in April in Los Angeles. A very impressive group of dedicated avian conservationists described their studies and research work. One speaker, Rosemary Low of the U.K., has specifically asked for our assistance. Ms Low is the renowned avian author and conservationist, former curator of Loro Parque and co-founder of The World Parrot Trust. She fears for the survival of the magnificent black cockatoos of western Australia. Many have already died from the recent severe drought, but now the government has overturned a 2001 moratorium on logging and burning of their remaining habitats. Ms Low hopes that if government officials hear from non-residents, they will realize the value of these birds as “priceless natural treasures” and “tourism assets.” Ms Low provided us with sample letters to send to the Minister of the Environment (david-templeman@dpc.wa.gov.au). If you would like a copy of her

sample letters, contact Dr Cheryl Clark: Drmimismom@cox.net.
For more info on the black Cockatoos, see
www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/black-cockatoo.html , www.wwf.org.au , or
www.birdswa.iinet.net.au/.

The Australasian Ornithological Conference will be held in Perth in December, 2007. See www.birdswa.iinet.net.au/

“Parrots of the Caribbean” is the theme of next year’s Parrots International Symposium. Watch their website for info:
www.parrotsinternational.org

Celebrate on July 1st: Rosemary Low says that the happiest day of her life was when she learned that the European Union has finally and permanently banned imports of wild birds, for which she has worked ceaselessly. We thank Ms Low for her efforts and join her in celebrating this victory. Let’s continue our individual efforts, no matter how “small” we think they are, to help save birds around the world.

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**“Nobody made a bigger mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.”**

**(Edmund Burke, 1729-1797, British statesman who also said, “All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”)**