

BIRD CALLS

*The Newsletter of the Policy Council
of American Bird Conservancy*



NOVEMBER 1998

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

Conserving Wild Birds and their Habitats throughout the Americas

Bird Calls, Vol. 2, No. 3.

A Message from Bruce Beehler, Chair, Policy Council of the American Bird Conservancy:

Reflecting on how much effort is put into conserving birds and bird habitats each year by ABC staff and colleagues from our many institutional partners that make up the Policy Council, I can only hope that these many dedicated people can periodically take time off to enjoy the fruits of their labors. For what they are doing is making sure that our generation and the ones that follow will live in a world that continues to be green, beautiful, and filled with color and song. My wife and I spent a long October weekend at Cape May recently and the rewards of bird conservation were there for all to see. The streams of Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks were breath-taking to me, mainly because I can remember that in my boyhood both of these species were in decline and rarely seen in my outings around suburban Baltimore. But there's more.... the Cape May of October 1998 is a world away from the Cape May of my boyhood. Now I encounter mixed flocks of naturalist friends, sharing the Cape May Point observation platform, or savoring the big breakfasts in the family restaurants along Beach Avenue, or bargain-hunting at the Bird Observatory shop or the other stores that offer bird- or nature-oriented goodies. Our work, then, has helped birds but also fostered enterprises and entire communities that today open their arms to the birding legions. It makes the lives of all of us a little bit better, and we all should stop and think about the magnitude of these accomplishments before we turn back to our pressing work. See you all on December 3rd in Washington, DC at the Policy Council meeting! Again, a special thanks to Rebecca Creshkoff for assembling *Bird Calls*.

Bruce M. Beehler, (202) 721-1532 or bbeehler@counterpart.org

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II. NEW ISSUES

GLOBAL ACCORD REACHED ON SEABIRD KILLING IN LONGLINE FISHERIES

Agreement was reached on a global accord to reduce the incidental killing of seabirds in longline fisheries. Representatives of eighty nations met at the Rome headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and agreed upon an International Plan of Action for Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries. This accord urges fishing nations to adopt avoidance measures to prevent the unnecessary death of hundreds of thousands of seabirds that become impaled on hooks (and eventually drown) while trying to eat the fish or squid bait. One factory autoliner vessel may deploy 35,000 baited hooks on fishing lines that may extend for 60 miles. The agreement, concluded on October 30, provides for each nation to assess their longline fisheries for seabird bycatch and, if there is a problem, develop and implement a National Plan of Action by 2001. Each nation is expected to implement cost-effective techniques to prevent seabirds from taking the baits. Some of these rather simple measures that are detailed in the accord include: weighing the hooks and lines; night-setting; avoiding the discharge of offal during setting; thawing bait; and using bird scaring lines off the stern during setting. These measures can significantly reduce or eliminate the killing of seabirds. Gerald Winegrad, Vice President of American Bird Conservancy, served as an advisor to the U.S. Delegation. Even though the agreement is voluntary and was weakened from the original draft, the accord is a giant step forward in focusing fishing nations attention to resolve this unnecessary killing that is clearly resulting in the decline of albatrosses and other great seabirds. Of the 61 species documented as killed by longliners, 25 are listed by the World Conservation Union as globally threatened. Seabird specialists have concluded that incidental mortality in longline fisheries poses the most serious threat facing albatross populations. The agreement is expected to be ratified by the FAO's Committee on Fisheries in February 1999. Without such a global agreement, a number of seabird species could become perilously closer to extinction. For a copy of the FAO agreement and an extremely informative technical paper (FAO Circular 937), see the FAO web site at <www.fao.org>. Contact: Gerald Winegrad at ABC, <gww@abcbirds.org> for more information.

~~SUCCESS IN LIMITING SEABIRD BY-CATCH IN WASHINGTON STATE~~

The 1998 non-treaty (non-Indian) sockeye fishery took place in northern Puget Sound during July and August. Despite a court challenge that was lifted just before the fishery opened, the non-treaty gill-net fleet was required to use "bird strips" on their gill nets—a five-inch opaque twine below the cork line that presents a visual barrier to Rhinoceros Auklets, Common Murres, and other diving birds. When combined with daylight-only fishing, this gear adjustment was estimated to reduce seabird by-catch by 70-75%. The actual results from wide-scale deployment indicate that there were very few seabird deaths. In contrast, the non-treaty fleet killed about 3,500 birds in 1994. A September editorial in *The Fisherman's News* entitled "Bird Panel a Real Success" stated the bird panels were "an unqualified success" and that gill-netters indicate that the panel has reduced the mortality of birds by as much as 98 percent in some cases. It heralded this success story because fishermen were in danger of being banned from fishing if they could not reduce by-catch. The Pacific Seabird Group has written the U.S. Treaty Indian fishery managers and Canadian authorities asking them to require similar gear for their fleets. With all the bad news about seabirds and gear entanglements, it is encouraging that these results seem to be a stunning success for everyone. For more information, contact Craig S. Harrison, Pacific Seabird Group, 202-778-2240 or <charrison@hunton.com>.

ALEUTIAN CANADA GOOSE SUCCESS

While recent Endangered Species Act success stories have focused on such well-known species as the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon, an overlooked victory is that of the Aleutian Canada Goose. Listed as endangered in 1967, this subspecies has recovered from a low of about 800 birds in the mid-1970s to 24,000 today—three times the minimum population target. The goose had been decimated by introduced Arctic and Red Foxes on its Aleutian Islands breeding grounds. Launched in 1974, the formal recovery plan called for eradicating fox and moving geese to other islands in the Aleutian chain. So effective were these strategies that by 1990, the goose's status was reduced from Endangered to Threatened. Elimination of foxes continues on remaining islands in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, along with efforts to prevent rats from invading additional islands via grounded ships. Breeding populations of Aleutian Canada Geese on specific islands have not reached the desired target in the recovery plan. However, the goose's status is under review and there may be a decision shortly to remove it from the list of threatened and endangered species. Contact: Karen Boylan, U.S. F&WS at 907-786-3431 or <karen_boylan@mail.fws.gov>.

NUMBERS OF CALIFORNIA CONDORS IN THE WILD CONTINUE TO SOAR

One of the California Condors bred and released by The Peregrine Fund traveled all the way along the Colorado River to Flaming Gorge, Wyoming recently, then returned to its Vermilion Cliffs, AZ release site. Three others also went up the same river drainage to Grand Junction, Colorado, where they stayed around a visitor's center on Grand Mesa for a few days. One of the birds actually went inside the visitor's center, toddled around a bit, and then emerged without comment. Peregrine Fund specialists are not happy when the released birds behave like this, since bad things eventually happen to condors that become acclimated to humans. Nevertheless, it was decided to let matters take their own course, and the birds eventually soared back "home" to the release site, covering a distance of 250 miles in part of a day. Survival of the Arizona birds has been wonderfully good so far: Fifteen of the nineteen birds released to date survived for over a year until one was found dead the first week of October. The remains are being necropsied at the San Diego Zoo to determine the cause of death. The peregrine Fund now has nine condors at the new Hurricane Cliffs site in Arizona to be released this month. Other birds will be released in California this fall, bringing the total number of condors in the wild to nearly 50 individuals—the most since the early 1970s. Contact: Lloyd Kiff at 208-362-3716 or <lkiff@peregrinefund.org>.

CHESAPEAKE HABITAT PRESERVED THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION

Pileated Woodpeckers, migrating waterfowl, and the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel all stand to benefit from ~~decisive action to preserve 500 acres of critical bird habitat in Queen Anne's County on Maryland's Eastern Shore.~~ Roughly 60 percent of the area is salt marsh; the rest is woodlands. Developers coveted prime waterfront real estate encompassed by a 155-acre wetland acquired by The Conservation Fund in 1995. The Fund then worked to protect both the wetland and the adjoining waterfowl preserve, Horsehead Wetlands Center, thus preserving the entire peninsula. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has approved use of Program Open Space funds to acquire both easements and the Maryland Ornithological Society contributed \$125,000 toward the purchase price. The tract falls within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area—land within 1,000 feet of tidal waters deemed critical to protect the Bay's water quality and habitat for waterfowl, fish, and plants. For more information, contact Dana Silliman at The Conservation Fund, 703-908-5825 or <DSilliman@conservationfund.org>.

ENDANGERED SHORT-TAILED ALBATROSSES KILLED IN ALASKAN WATERS

On September 21, 1998, an observer recovered the carcass of an eight year old Short-tailed Albatross caught by an Alaskan longliner and one other Short-tailed Albatross mortality was recently observed falling from another vessel's lines. The Short-tailed Albatross killings are of great concern as this species was once thought to be extinct and now numbers less than 1,000 birds. Despite the adoption of regulations requiring avoidance/mitigation measures on larger vessels in the Alaskan longline fishery in 1997, seabird mortality continues. In Alaskan waters in 1996, there were 2,646 vessels registered to fish for Pacific halibut and 15 million hooks were set. Another 1,281 vessels set 201 million hooks for other groundfish such as Pacific cod and sablefish. More than 13,000 seabirds were killed as bycatch in Alaska in 1996. These are estimates as there is very little observer coverage on halibut vessels and many other vessels do not have observers. Species killed include Northern Fulmars, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Sooty and Short-tailed Shearwaters, Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses and the endangered Short-tailed Albatross. ABC is leading efforts by the conservation community to increase the use of effective seabird avoidance techniques in Alaska and to require the adoption of seabird avoidance measures. In Hawaiian waters, an active fleet of 120 tuna and swordfish longliners killed an estimated 4,000 Laysan and Black-footed Albatrosses in 1997. Observer coverage is very low (4% of vessels). The vessels are not required to employ avoidance/mitigation measures. There is concern that this killing of Black-footed Albatrosses in Hawaiian, Alaskan, and other fisheries will cause a population decline. This seabird species has recently been accorded the IUCN status of Vulnerable, based on observed rates of decline. Each nation must assure that the unnecessary bycatch of seabirds in its longline fisheries is ended. The U.S. should set a global example in protecting seabirds from death to assure the full implementation by other nations of the FAO Global Plan of Action for Seabirds mentioned above. CONTACT: Gerald Winegrad.

CONGRESS ACTS TO WEAKEN THE MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT

In a last minute flurry of vote trading, the Congress passed legislation that would amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act by repealing the strict liability standard for the baiting of waterfowl. HR 2863, sponsored by Rep. Don Young (AK), was amended into another bill when it could not gain passage in the Senate as a stand alone measure. HR 2863, which was opposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and many conservation groups, would require the proof of *scienter* or knowledge in every baiting case. This changes the MBTA's strict liability standard that has been in effect since the law's enactment in 1918. A Federal or State agent would have to establish that the hunter knew or should have known that they were hunting over bait. The FWS rejected such a change in *scienter* in pending baiting regulations. The FWS stated "The strict liability doctrine has long been recognized in Federal courts throughout the Nation as a reasonable and necessary element in protecting the Nation's valuable migratory bird resource." Individual Federal and State Field Agents opposed these proposed changes and believe they will hinder the enforcement of anti-baiting laws and the conservation of migratory birds. Contact: Laura Hood, who testified against the legislation for Defenders of Wildlife, at: <lhood@defenders.org>.

NORTH AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVE - KICKOFF MEETING

One of the most interesting and perhaps most important meetings in the history of bird conservation in North America took place from November 4-6, 1998, in Puebla, Mexico. This meeting was attended by approximately 35 invitees each from Mexico, Canada, and the United States whose purpose was to set the direction for the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). The purpose of the NABCI is to integrate and achieve cooperation and commonality of objectives among all ongoing bird conservation initiatives within and among the three nations. The Initiative began as an attempt to capture those concepts

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regarding bird conservation that are shared among bird conservation initiatives (such as Partners in Flight and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan) and among the three nations of North America that are signatories to the North American Free Trade Agreement (Mexico, Canada, and the United States). The Initiative was spawned by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, a NAFTA offshoot, but was headed by a team of nine individuals, three each from each of the three nations, representing federal governments, state

and provincial agencies, and non-governmental conservation organizations. The heart of the meeting was a series of concurrent breakouts covering the topics of Mapping, Monitoring, Conservation Objectives, Implementation, and Support. Results include a Steering Committee for the NABCI loosely affiliated with CEC and the Trilateral Committee of federal wildlife agencies, members of which will be nominated by three national bird conservation committees, each of which represents all of the bird conservation initiatives in each country. This Steering Committee will lead in the establishment of Joint Venture-like bird conservation delivery units for every geographic unit of North America, with assistance from Monitoring and Support subcommittees devoted to the science and the money needed for good bird conservation. This may seem like a dry international bureaucratic exercise, but is in truth a turning point in bird conservation. All of what to now has been talk and good intentions regarding true cooperation is becoming institutionalized with the commitment of many of the most important players in the field from all three countries. The nature of the NABCI (and perhaps even the name) will evolve over time, but given the determination and momentum emerging from the Puebla meeting, it is likely to become the most important presence in wildlife conservation ever to exist on this continent. Contact: David Pashley of ABC at <dpashley@abcbirds.org>.

BIRDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects an increase in global mean temperature of between 1 and 3.5 degrees C by the year 2100. How will these changes affect North American birds? The Environmental Protection Agency is funding a team of scientists from American Bird Conservancy, University of Michigan, NASA/Goddard Institute for Space Studies, Boston University, and Stratus Consulting to examine this question. These scientists will be looking at a wide range of topics—how climate change might impact the distribution of summer birds in North America and the number of breeding ducks in the prairie pothole region; ~~how sea-level rises might impact the habitat available for migrating shorebirds and whether there have been any~~ detectable changes to date in the timing of migration. American Bird Conservancy's role will be to develop models examining how the summer distributions of North American birds might change under various climate change scenarios. As future funding becomes available, ABC will also be looking at how winter ranges might change. For more information, contact Jeff Price at 303-530-7239 or <jprice@mho.net>.

NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION BILL PUT ON HOLD

Despite easy passage in the Senate and widespread bipartisan support in the Congress and from the Administration and conservationists, the House blocked passage of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (S. 1970) in a political tug-of-war over an unrelated matter. The legislation would provide \$8 million annually in matching grants for projects to conserve neotropical migratory bird habitat in the U.S., Latin America and the Caribbean. Sen. Spencer Abraham (R-MI) promises to reintroduce the bill early next session. Contact: Gerald Winegrad at ABC.

NEW MONEY TO CONSERVE BIRD HABITATS

A new program, the Migratory Bird Conservancy, aims to raise \$500,000 annually to help conserve bird habitat in the western hemisphere. The funds will be available to public and private groups as challenge grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The Migratory Bird Conservancy was developed by representatives from Swarovski Optik, Birdwatch America, the Wild Bird Feeding Institute, and NFWF. The Conservancy's founding corporate sponsor, Swarovski, has pledged a portion from the sale

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of every birding optic sold in the Western Hemisphere—as much as \$50,000 a year. The birding business community launched the effort to help conserve birds and their habitats, particularly at the national and international level. Recognizing that funding for habitat conservation was critical, business people developed a program based on voluntary contributions, often linked to sales. Encouraging customers to donate is also key. NFWF has agreed to match industry contributions with at least \$100,000 in federal funds annually. Grantees will provide one-third of project costs, with the remaining two-thirds coming from the Migratory Bird Conservancy. Funds will be available for habitat acquisition, restoration and management projects. Preference

will be given to projects that complement conservation plans being developed by Partners in Flight. A Call for Proposals to be issued in December 1998 will provide details on the grant program. More than 30 businesses and dozens of individuals have already pledged funds. Momentum will increase next year as advertising for the program expands. Contact: Peter Stangel, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 404-679-7099 or <stangel@nfwf.org>.

CARIBBEAN SEABIRD NESTING THREATENED BY PROPOSED ROCKET SITE

One of the few undeveloped sites in the Caribbean, Sombrero Island—the northernmost island in the Lesser Antilles—provides nesting habitat for a number of seabird species. Among them: Roseate Terns and Brown Pelicans, which are endangered in the Caribbean. Red-billed Tropicbirds, Least Terns, and Masked Boobies—all species of special concern in the region—also nest on the island. However, this small, mammalian-predator-free island is currently being eyed by Beal Aerospace for a rocket-launch site. The proposed development of this mile long island would likely result in substantial loss of nesting sites. Also of concern are possible bird-aircraft collisions as planes approach the island to land. There is still time to comment on this proposal. Although slated for release in September, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) still had not been issued as of early November. The British National Space Center has promised to make the EIS or portions thereof available on its website at <www.open.gov.uk/bnsc/bnschome.htm>. Comments may be directed to Dr. Pippa Goldschmidt, British National Space Center, 151 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 955, UK and to the Honorable Hubert Hughes, Chief Minister, P.O. Box 60, The Valley, Anguilla. ABC, the Ornithological Council, and others have submitted comments. Contact: Gerald Winegrad at ABC or Ellen Paul, The Ornithological Council, <epaul@dclink.com>.

LEGISLATION PROPOSED TO STUDY AND MANAGE CORMORANTS

Due to its consumption of commercial and recreational fish, the Double-crested Cormorant was the subject of a House bill introduced by Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS) in early October. H.R. 4754 would require the Interior Department to conduct a one year study of the cormorants' current and projected effect on these fish species. After reporting to Congress, Interior would then be required to prepare a long-term, comprehensive, population-management strategy. A number of conservation organizations met with Rep. Thompson's staff and proposed additional language to be incorporated into the bill. Key points: Any management plan should be science-based and include monitoring, periodic reassessment and revision as needed. Moreover, since cormorants' perceived impact on sports fisheries exceeds their actual effect by a wide margin, education should be a component of any management plan. Finally, the bill should authorize funding to prevent money from being diverted from other U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service operations. Contact: Ellen Paul, The Ornithological Council, <epaul@dclink.com>.

III. UPDATES

ASMFC FAILS TO PROTECT HORSESHOE CRABS

Despite recommendations from its advisory committee, a technical committee, and a special peer review panel to substantially reduce the take of horseshoe crabs for bait, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) failed to require such reductions. The ASMFC instead adopted a fishery

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management plan for the horseshoe crab that only requires New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland to maintain existing restrictions on harvest. The special peer review panel appointed by the ASMFC found that horseshoe crabs as a species are "extremely vulnerable to over exploitation" due to the ease of harvesting them on spawning beaches, delayed sexual maturity (10 years), and breeding only once a year. They urged a reversal of the increasing catch to substantially lower levels to decrease the probability of over fishing and population decline. The ASMFC did adopt requirements for the states to conduct comprehensive horseshoe crab surveys to assess population size and egg deposition, to collect better harvest data, and to identify and

protect habitat. The ASMFC may adopt landing caps in 1999. Unfortunately, Virginia pressed for no actions on harvest restrictions while it still allows the unrestricted landing of Delaware Bay horseshoe crabs taken beyond the coastal three-mile limit. To protect horseshoe crab populations and the hundreds of thousands of shorebirds that feast upon the crab eggs, please contact Virginia Governor James Gilmore at: State Capitol, Richmond, VA 23219, fax: 804-786-3985. For a copy of the ASMFC plan, contact the ASMFC at 202-289-6400. For further information, Contact: Gerald Winegrad at ABC.

FEDS POISED TO DESTROY LARGEST CASPIAN TERN NESTING COLONY

Although Caspian Terns are declining in California and considered vulnerable in British Columbia, the federal government is apparently preparing to destroy this species' nesting habitat on Rice Island in the Columbia River estuary. Used by 30% of the North American population, this is probably the largest Caspian Tern colony in the world. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) blames terns for the demise of certain salmonid populations because the birds eat hatchery-raised smolts of federally listed coho salmon and steelhead populations. Pacific Seabird Group (PSG) has asked the natural resource agencies to focus recovery efforts on salmon habitat and other genuine causes for depleted salmon runs on the Columbia River. PSG has petitioned NMFS under the Freedom of Information Act asking for data on the past 20 years on the percentage of smolts that have returned each year to spawn in the Columbia River system. PSG will analyze this information to assess whether the growth of the Caspian Tern colony since 1987 has affected the recruitment of salmonids. At an October Senate hearing, NMFS, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pledged to Senator Dirk Kempthorne to destroy the habitat before the 1999 nesting season. The government has just released an Environmental Assessment for public comment; feedback is due by November 30. To obtain a copy, contact Bob Willis at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 503-808-4703 or <robert.e.willis@usace.army.mil>. A vigorous response by the birding community will be our best shot at preventing this senseless destruction. Contact: Craig Harrison, Pacific Seabird Group, 202-778-2240 or <charrison@hunton.com>.

UPDATE ON BIRD COLLISIONS AT TOWERS AND WINDOWS

On three days at dawn this fall, nocturnal-migration researcher Bill Evans organized surveys of nine New York State communications towers ranging from 185 to 1,019 feet in height. Although adverse overnight weather had been predicted, it didn't always materialize, resulting in lower-than-expected kills. The 16 casualties covered the phylogenetic spectrum from Common Moorhen to American Goldfinch, including eight warblers. Meanwhile, Michael Mesure of the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) says the season has been fairly quiet in Toronto, apparently due to favorable nighttime weather. However, three new species have been added to FLAP's list of birds killed from collisions with Toronto's tall buildings: Yellow Rail, White-eyed Vireo, and Peregrine Falcon. ~~In rural Maine, Mary Bunnell is leading the charge against a proposed broadcast tower. At 1,667 feet, the tower is taller than the Empire State Building and more than twice the height of the mountain on which it would stand.~~ There has been no movement on the proposed Federal Communications Commission rules to preempt state and local zoning and land-use laws for digital TV tower-siting decisions. Action on the request for an Environmental Impact Study on the FCC rules requested by ABC and others is likewise dormant. In New York City, volunteers surveying the mirror-like

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glass walls at the Metropolitan Museum of Art have found some 40 birds, mostly thrushes, kinglets, warblers, and sparrows. While birds reportedly crash into the windows throughout the day, volunteers can make only brief surveys, but are confident their documented toll represents only about 10 percent of the total number of birds killed at the Met each fall. For more information, visit <www.towerkill.com>, <www.flap.org> and </www.clickandgo.com/towertop>. Contact: Rebekah Creshkoff, 212-493-3525 or <rcreshkoff@mindspring.com>.

MOMENTUM SLOWLY BUILDING ON DICKCISSEL PROBLEM

The effort to address the Dickcissel problem in Venezuela -- where vast flocks inflicting crop damage are poisoned by farmers -- is slowly gaining momentum. The Dickcissel population has declined 40% since the 1960's due to the wide spread pesticide poisoning of the birds. The June workshop held at the heart of the birds' wintering ground brought together representatives from Venezuelan government agencies, local universities, conservation groups, farmers' cooperatives and biologists from agricultural extension services. The U.S. delegation included representatives from ABC, National and Florida Audubon, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and The Nature Conservancy, plus the U.S. Department of Agriculture's top expert on bird damage to rice. The Venezuelans were positively impressed by the strong U.S. showing, which underscored the importance of the issue. The group formed an alliance, and crafted a statement of their mission: to promote, develop and execute actions necessary to implement an integrated management strategy for Dickcissels in rice and sorghum fields of Venezuela. Producers of these crops also signed a letter of intention with Venezuela Audubon. The group also determined they need to hire someone to implement on-the-ground actions that would help farmers while also reducing the risk Dickcissels face from catastrophic mortality. There is considerable urgency to obtain \$20,000 and launch the program within the next two to three months. Meanwhile, the issue will be highlighted in part 2 and 10 of David Attenborough's new Life of Birds series; the series will begin airing this month on PBS. Contact: Gian Basili, Florida Audubon Society, 407-539-5700 or <gbasili@audubon.org>.

TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE GETS NEW LEASE ON LIFE

With the introduction of ground breaking bipartisan legislation in Congress this fall, Teaming with Wildlife (TWW) supporters have much to celebrate. Companion bills in the House and Senate propose a new source of funding for TWW's conservation goals. Widely hailed as the best opportunity we'll have to fund wildlife conservation in this country, the legislation would invest revenues from federal Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) oil and gas production in renewable natural resources, including wildlife conservation, coastal restoration, and land acquisition. Based on OCS revenue estimates for the year 2000 (\$4.59 billion), Title III of the House bill—the Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1998—would provide \$459 million for non-game wildlife conservation and associated education and recreation. Title II would provide \$1.06 billion for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery program (UPARR). Title I would send \$1.24 billion to coastal states (including the Great Lakes states) for impacts on coastal environments and infrastructure. Some environmental groups are concerned these funds will create an incentive for more drilling; others believe the legislation has great potential, and intend to work with Congress to improve the bill. The Senate version, the Reinvestment and Environmental Restoration Act of 1998, would provide an estimated \$321 million for wildlife conservation, \$734 million for LWCF and UPARR, and over \$1.24 billion for coastal impact assistance. Cosponsors plan to make this legislation their highest priority when Congress convenes next year. In the meantime, it's critical to broaden support to ensure Title III isn't weakened during the legislative process. Between now and February, proponents are urged to inform members of Congress of their support for this legislation. To learn more about the Conservation and Reinvestment Act and how you can help make it a reality, visit the TWW web site at <www.teaming.com>. Contact: Naomi Edelson, International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, 202-624-7890 or <iafish@aol.com>.

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UPDATE ON SALTON SEA

Recently, a feasibility study for the reclamation of the Salton Sea was approved by Congress as part of the omnibus appropriations bill. It authorizes (but does not appropriate) \$5 million for wildlife studies at the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge, which is renamed after the late Congressman Sonny Bono (R-CA). Another \$3 million is authorized for treatment of agricultural waters from the New and Alamo Rivers, which enter the Salton Sea. Additional legislation will be needed to authorize spending of more than \$300 million that is estimated for an engineering project to reduce the salinity and stabilize the shoreline levels of the Sea. Separate legislation funded \$8.5 million to the Salton Sea authority for engineering feasibility studies and \$1.9 million for the University of

Redlands. It is likely that there will be another legislative effort next session after the feasibility study is completed. Contact: David Blockstein, The Ornithological Council, 202-530-5810 or <oc@cnie.org>.

IV. ABC'S WORKS IN PROGRESS

CATS INDOORS! CAMPAIGN PROGRESSES: YOUR HELP NEEDED

Interest in *Cats Indoors!*, ABC's campaign to protect birds from cat predation, continues to exceed expectations. Requests for the brochure, *Keeping Cats Indoors Isn't Just For The Birds*, are coming in at the rate of 2,000 to 5,000 per week. There are now over 1,000 organizations and individuals who have joined the campaign. While many groups are helping distribute campaign materials, one organization in particular stands out--The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO). They purchased enough brochures to send to every small animal veterinary clinic in Wisconsin, and WSO is now mailing additional brochures to veterinarians who have requested them. The Society has also advertised the campaign in their newsletter twice during the past year. *Cats Indoors!* greatly appreciates WSO's commitment to the campaign. On October 11, National Geographic aired a documentary on cat predation titled, *The Secret Life of Cats*. ABC assisted the film company with research and contacts over the past year. The film contains graphic footage of victims of cat predation filmed at The Wildlife Center of Virginia, a Policy Council member, as well as cats preying on endangered birds in New Zealand. We encourage you to contact National Geographic for a copy of this film. Camera-ready public service announcements have been developed to make it easier for organizations to advertise the campaign in their magazines and newsletters. For a free copy and to learn how you can help keep *Cats Indoors!*, contact Linda Winter at (202)778-9619 or e-mail <lwinter@abcbirds.org>.

IBA: CHANGING OF THE GUARD

As the Important Bird Areas (IBA) program enters its final phase, it does so under new leadership. Jeff Price has moved to the American Bird Conservancy's Climate Change Impact Studies (see article), and ornithologist Robert Chipley has taken over the IBA program. Chip earned his doctorate at Cornell University (his thesis was on the winter ecology of migrant warblers), and joins ABC after 20 years at The Nature Conservancy, where most recently he was Director of Communications for science programs. Over the next six months, Chip will develop summaries of information received on the more than 1,200 sites that have qualified as IBAs. This includes 292 national-level sites, 300 continental, and 620 sites at the global level. Additional sites are still undergoing review. If there's a site you'd like to nominate, submit your form NOW; the window of opportunity is closing fast. Also, please urge your organization to review sites in your area, providing additional or corrected information where needed. Many IBAs have been identified by examining regional bird journals and databases. ~~While these sources provide bird numbers at the site, information on land ownership, habitat and conservation threats is often lacking.~~ For people who are already familiar with the site, such data should be easy to provide. To help out with the review process, contact Chip at 540-253-5780 or <rchipley@aol.com>.

Bird Calls
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V. THE BIRD IS THE WORD

COLONIAL WATERBIRD CONSERVATION PLAN: LOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS

Do you care about colonial nesting waterbirds—seabirds, terns, wading birds or gulls? Then you might want to get involved in the North American Colonial Waterbird Conservation Plan. Kicked off last July, this initiative aims to develop a plan whose implementation will yield sustainable populations, distributions, and habitats of colonial nesting waterbirds throughout North America, including their breeding, migratory, and wintering ranges. The plan will be hammered out over the next two years by a partnership of non-governmental agencies, researchers, private individuals, academics, and federal and state governmental agencies. It will be developed in concert with other bird conservation efforts under way, including the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight, Important Bird Areas, and the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. A

series of workshops will be held to gather information and develop different portions of the plan. The first—to identify research and information needs for the management of colonial waterbirds—was held in October at the annual meeting of the Colonial Waterbird Society in Miami. A follow-up workshop is planned for next February at the Pacific Seabird Group's annual meeting in Blaine, Washington. Additional workshops on monitoring, management, and outreach and information needs will be organized and announced in the near future. Participation is open, and all stakeholders are urged to contribute to the plan's development. Contact: Melanie Steinkamp at 301-497-5753 or <Melanie_Steinkamp@usgs.gov> or Dr. James Kushlan at 301-497-5500 or <James_Kushlan@usgs.gov>. Information about the conservation plan is available at <www.nacwcp.org>.

COTTON PESTICIDES ENDANGER BIRDS

It has been estimated that pesticides unintentionally kill at least 67 million birds annually in the U.S. alone. In addition to killing birds, sublethal pesticide exposure can inhibit birds' abilities to feed and reproduce. Cotton is one of the most intensively sprayed crops in the world and accounts for 25% of global insecticide use. U.S. cotton farmers use 35% of the total pesticides used on cotton worldwide. Pesticides used on cotton are among the most hazardous on the market. The 1997 list of U.S. cotton pesticides included at least 13 documented as causing die-offs in migratory birds: aldicarb, azinphos-methyl, carbofuran, chlorpyrifos, dicofenphos, dimethoate, disulfoton, endosulfan, methamidophos, methomyl, methyl parathion, oxydemeton-methyl and phorate. Conservationists can help to end the use of dangerous pesticides on cotton by supporting organic cotton production. Organic cotton is grown without synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. Purchasing organic cotton products supports sustainable farming. To learn more about organic cotton or to join the organic cotton campaign, CONTACT: Margaret Reeves, Ph.D., Pesticide Action Network (PAN), Tel: (415) 981-1771 or <panna@panna.org>.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DEVELOPING BIRD-CONSERVATION PLANS

Managing more than 25 million acres of land with virtually every type of bird habitat, the Department of Defense (DOD) is in a unique position to effect positive change in declining bird populations. The DOD has been actively involved with Partners in Flight (PIF) since its inception in 1991 and is now working to incorporate its installations into the national PIF Flight Plan. All military installations are now required to complete and implement an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP), which has several requirements that dovetail neatly with the PIF Flight Plan. INRMPs must be integrated through ecosystem-management practices, include large-scale ecosystem goals at a landscape level, and specifically address non-consumptive uses of natural resources, such as birdwatching. The first such management plan—for Alaska's Ft. Wainwright—is currently being developed. The status of the plans, as well as other information about the DOD PIF program, will be available later this fall at <www.dodpif.org>. The DOD PIF program hopes to leverage local bird clubs to assist with survey and monitoring efforts where appropriate. Contact: Chris Eberly, DOD Partners in Flight, 540-253-5675 or <ceberly@dodpif.org>.

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ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON-LINE

The National Library for the Environment <www.cnie.org> now includes: daily environmental news; over 300 environmental journals (from full text to tables of content); state-of-the-environment reports; an environmental "yellow pages;" and information on jobs, careers and meetings. Additional resources include more than 400 full-text reports on environment and natural resource issues from the Congressional Research Service; a directory of more than 200 higher-education environmental programs; virtual libraries on population, the environment, ecology, biodiversity and links to more than 2,000 sites. Contact: David Blockstein, The Ornithological Council, 202-530-5810 or <oc@cnie.org>.

FIRST PAN AMERICAN ROUNDTABLE

You are invited to attend the PARTNERS IN FLIGHT/PAN AMERICAN ROUNDTABLE sponsored by PIF and American Bird Conservancy on 4 December, 1998 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM at World Wildlife Fund offices in Washington, DC. (1250 24th Street NW - close to M Street intersection - Conference Room 5a/b - 5th Floor).

This first Roundtable will bring together conservationists and Latin American and Caribbean experts including panels on Conservation of the Sierra Madre Occidental, Collaborative Conservation in Latin America and the Caribbean, and Models of North/South Cooperation in Bird Conservation. There will also be updates on a range of Latin and Caribbean bird conservation issues including the new Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, Dickcissels and Pesticides in Venezuela, the Tapaculo and the Curitiba (Brazil) Dam, and the Parrot Action Plan. Among the panelists and speakers are Herb Raffaele, Gian Basili, Alejandro Grajal, Byron Swift, Patricia Escalante, Randall Gingrich, Ernesto Enkerlin, Roberto Phillips, Roger Stone, Roberto Roca, Peter Stangel, Mary Pearl, Cynthia Lenhart, Chan Robbins, David Lee, and Peter Hazlewood. For those traveling from outside the Washington, DC Beltway, the Roundtable is scheduled for the day following the ABC Winter Policy Council meeting. For further information or to RSVP, please contact Mike Parr at 202/778-9705 or e-mail <mparr@abcbirds.org>.

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