

NOVEMBER, 2000

41 Organizations Call for Action on Seabird Longline Mortality

On October 6, 2000, ABC and 40 other conservation and scientific organizations sent a joint letter to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce urging action on the continued killing of thousands of albatrosses and other seabirds in Alaskan and Hawaiian longline fisheries. Among the signatories were the country's largest professional ornithological groups and conservation organizations.

The letter requested: 1) better regulations for Hawaiian waters, requiring meaningful avoidance measures as opposed to the highly inadequate regulations currently pending, 2) effective new regulations for seabird avoidance measures in Alaskan



Black-footed Albatross Photo: USFWS

waters for the 2001 longline fishing season based on a National Marine Fisheries Service and FWS funded two-year study now being completed, and 3) a strong National Plan of Action for Seabirds as requested under UN agreement. More

than 20,000 seabirds are killed annually in Alaskan and Hawaiian waters on longline hooks (see article on p. 11), including the endangered Short-tailed Albatross (world population 1,200), Black-footed Albatross and Laysan Albatross. The Black-footed Albatross was recently added to the IUCN list of threatened species (see article on p. 5) with breeding pairs declining by 23%, and Laysan Albatrosses have declined significantly on key Hawaiian Island breeding grounds. Data did suggest that the Laysan might qualify as Near Threatened in the new listing but this information came too late to be included. To view the letter, see the ABC web site, www.abcbirds.org. Contact: Gerald Winegrad, ABC, (202) 778-9666, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

West Nile Virus; Birds Further Threatened by Spraying

This year's East Coast outbreak of West Nile Virus has had a far greater impact on birds than humans. Sixty bird species, including Merlins, Great Horned Owls, Catbirds, warblers, gulls, swans and at least one Bald Eagle, amounting to thousands of individual birds, have tested positive to date. By contrast, there have been eight human deaths from West Nile in the U.S. in two years. Spraying pesticides in urban and suburban areas does little to reduce the spread of West Nile Virus, is extremely harmful to birds and

may also harm the humans it is intended to protect. Some of the chemicals being used to combat West Nile have direct, toxic effects on birds, other wildlife and potentially humans, while others are highly toxic to non-target insects, greatly reducing the food supply for resident birds and the millions of migratory warblers, thrushes and shorebirds that stop in areas that have been sprayed. Run-off and aerial drift of sprayed pesticides contaminates ecosystems distant from the original site of pesticide application making dangers less predictable and controllable. Scientific evidence suggests that mosquito spraying actually enhances infection rates in the birds that act

as a reservoir for the virus by directly compromising the avian immune response, making them more susceptible to infection. ABC suggests measures for containing West Nile should mirror preventive measures currently taken for St. Louis Encephalitis - a similar virus, as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control. These measures generally do not entail the spraying of adult mosquitoes in residential or suburban areas. Instead, controlling mosquitoes at the larval stage using less toxic methods remains the most effective and least environmentally harmful methodology available. Contact: Linda Farley, ABC, (202) 778-9666, <lfarley@abcbirds.org>.

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Abbreviations

ABC:	American Bird Conservancy
FWS:	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
EPA:	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EIS:	Environmental Impact Statement

**Bird Calls is the Newsletter of
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**The next meeting of the
ABC Policy Council is: December 12**
1250 24th Street, Washington.

List of ABC Policy Council Officers
available on ABC's web site:
www.abcbirds.org

Cerulean Warbler, California Gnatcatcher, Piping Plover : Latest Developments

A comprehensive status assessment for the Cerulean Warbler was released by FWS this April to enable biologists to ascertain whether the Warbler should be considered a candidate for inclusion on the list of threatened and endangered species. The report cites an average population decline of 3.6% per year between 1966 and 1998 as evidenced by Breeding Bird Survey data. The decline was higher prior to 1980, indicating a slightly improved, but still negative trend over the past two decades. On October 31, National Audubon, with 27 other groups, filed a petition to FWS requesting that the warbler should be listed as threatened. A recommendation from FWS on whether to consider the species as a candidate for the list is expected by the year-end. The report can be downloaded from the web at: http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/eco_serv/endangrd/.

On October 24, FWS issued a final rule to designate more than 500,000 acres of Critical Habitat for the coastal population of the federally threatened California Gnatcatcher. The Critical Habitat is in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties. The decision was taken despite fears of a repeat of some deliberate acts of habitat destruction which occurred during the original listing process. Evidence did not indicate a likely escalation of these incidents (the species was originally listed in 1993). Several additional areas have Habitat Conservation Plans in place for which incidental take per-

mits have been issued, and these were not considered for Critical Habitat designation. Two areas on Department of Defense lands initially proposed as Critical Habitat: 12,000 acres on Miramar Air Station, and 51,000 acres on Camp Pendleton, have been excluded for DOD operational reasons. Miramar already has an Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP) in place for Gnatcatcher habitat there. Pendleton has until November 17, 2001 to complete its INRMP.



Juvenile Piping Plover
Photo: Richard Kuzminski

On July 6, FWS issued a proposal to designate Critical Habitat for the endangered Great Lakes population of the Piping Plover. The proposed Critical Habitat would be in 37 units along the Great Lakes shoreline of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. The total area of coastline will not exceed 189 miles in 27 counties. The initial public comment period closed on September 5, but has been reopened until November 20, based on the recent completion of an economic analysis of the proposal which can be viewed at: http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/eco_serv/endangrd/birds/pipl_ch.html. Comments can be submitted to: PIPINGPLOVERCOMMENT@FWS.GOV.

President Signs Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act

On July 20, 2000, President Clinton signed the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (S. 148) into law. ABC and other Policy Council members had testified in support of the legislation and worked to gain passage of the bill, which authorizes \$5 million annually for grants to promote the conservation of neotropical migratory birds. However, there is no money for this program in the FY 2001 budget that begins on October 1, 2000, so no money is yet available for grants under the act. The program will be established by the Secretary of Interior, for public or private projects in the U.S. and Latin America and Caribbean nations. At least 75% of the grants must be made for projects outside the U.S. The funds would be used for projects that bring a species of neo-tropical migratory bird to the point at which there are sufficient numbers in the wild to ensure the species' long-term viability, including protection and management of populations, maintenance, management, protection, and restoration of migratory bird habitat, research and monitoring, law enforcement, and community outreach and education. The grants would be 25% federal monies with a match of 75%. The full text of the law and related documents can be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>. Contact: Gerald Winegrad, ABC, (202) 778-9666, gwww@abcbirds.org.

ABC Membership Now Available On-line
www.abcbirds.org

Spotted Owl Protection Advances

On July 21, following a court order obtained by the Arizona-based environmental group, Center for Biological Diversity, FWS issued a proposal to designate 13.5 million acres as 'Critical Habitat' for the Mexican race of the Spotted Owl. The proposal includes 5 million acres in Arizona, 4.6 million acres in New Mexico, 3.3 million acres in Utah, and 570,000 acres in Colorado, all on federal or tribal lands. The public comment period closed on September 21 and a final designation is expected by 15 January. The designation controls logging on federal lands, but does not place restrictions on recreational land uses, personal fuel-wood gathering and grazing. On October 30 a lawsuit was filed against the Forest Service by Earth Justice representing a group of environmental organizations including Forest Guardians, the lead plaintiff, for failing to enforce grazing controls or to monitor grazing on 13 million acres of national forest grazing allotments in the southwest and to protect habitat for Mexican Spotted Owls and other endangered species there. The species' Recovery Plan published in 1996 specifically cites overgrazing as a major threat to the Owl because cattle can eat tree saplings which slows habitat regeneration, and because grazed lands have less grass cover and support fewer voles, a primary prey species for the Owl. Approximately 2,100 Mexican Spotted Owls now remain in the U.S., and the subspecies has already been extirpated from low elevation riparian forests in Arizona and New Mexico. The Owls

nest in trees, but also frequently use rocky ledges in canyons which provide substantial protection to nest sites. There are three subspecies of Spotted Owl, only two of which, the Mexican and Northern, are currently covered by the Endangered Species Act. A petition to list the Californian



Spotted Owl Photo: USFWS

race was filed by a coalition of environmental groups on April 4 this year. On October 12, FWS acknowledged that the petition offered substantial evidence that listing for the Californian race may be warranted. A status review has been initiated and the public comment period is open until December 11. Contact: Joy Nicholopoulos, Field Supervisor, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, (505) 346-2525 (Mexican Spotted Owl), or Catherine Hibbard/Maria Boroja, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, (916) 414-6600 (California Spotted Owl).

First Maui Parrotbill is Bred in Captivity

On July 21 2000, a Maui Parrotbill chick hatched at the Keauhou Bird Conservation Center on the island of Hawaii; the first time the species has been bred in captivity. In the wild, the Maui Parrotbill is restricted to the rugged montane forests that cloak the slopes of Haleakala volcano, and is one of five bird species that are entirely restricted to the island of Maui. Its world population is probably no more than 500 individuals. Although the hatching is a major step forward for the captive-breeding program, the species' survival ultimately depends on the control of a range of persistent problems facing



Photo: Alan Lieberman, Keauhou Bird Conservation Center

the wild population. One of the most insidious of these is the spread of avian malaria borne by introduced mosquitoes. Feral pigs which root for food on the forest floor also damage habitat, and introduced cats and rats predate nests

and can transmit disease. Two other native Hawaiian songbirds also bred in captivity for the first time this year the Palila and the Hawaii Creeper. The parents of the new clutches were themselves born in captivity from eggs taken from wild nests (the wild parents lay a second clutch to replace the removed eggs, ensuring that the wild population is not affected). The program, which is managed by the Zoological Society of San Diego, may provide a safety net for some of the rarest bird species on earth, but conservationists agree that enhanced habitat restoration programs are essential if Hawaii's endangered species are to survive in the future. *Contact:* Alan Lieberman, Zoological Society of San Diego, <LiebermanA@prodigy.net>.

Double-Crested Cormorant Under Congressional Attack

The House Resources Committee has passed legislation by voice vote to require the Secretary of the Interior to allow all states to establish hunting seasons for the Double-crested Cormorant. This non-game, colonial-nesting waterbird has been protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) since 1972 but has been under attack by commercial and sport fishermen who blame the birds for a decline in the fisheries. The bill would mandate a ten-bird daily bag limit with a season roughly equivalent to the waterfowl seasons. ABC and partners on the Policy Council joined in a letter to the Committee urging defeat of this legislation co-sponsored by Reps. Mc Hugh of

New York and Peterson of Minnesota. Six members of the Committee filed a Minority Report, noting "H.R. 3118 is a flawed remedy not grounded in biological science, but based primarily on the speculation of sport anglers and outfitters. A broad-based hunt for Double-crested Cormorants would likely be both wasteful and ineffective, and we are deeply concerned that H.R. 3118 would purposely undermine the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process as it applies to the protection and management of other non-game bird species listed under the MBTA." ABC and its partners cited a thorough review by scientists which concluded: "On the basis of literature review and the survey responses, it does not appear that a strategy of reducing double-crested cormorant populations to benefit sport fish is biologically warranted at this time." Also noted

was an EIS on a nationwide management plan for the cormorants, currently in preparation by FWS, making the legislation premature. The legislation is not expected to pass with so little time left in the Congress. The Congress did approve a provision in the Agriculture Department's appropriations bill signed by President Clinton on October 28, directing the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to 'intensify' its efforts to control migratory fish-eating birds, "which are causing serious problems to the southeastern aquaculture industry". Under the MBTA, the FWS would have to approve any increased take of cormorants and other fish-eating birds. The full text of H.R.3118 and related documents can be found at <<http://thomas.loc.gov>>. *Contact:* Gerald Winegrad, ABC, (202) 778-9666, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

New Barbet Discovered in Peru

The July 2000 issue of 'The Auk' describes, for the first time, a strikingly marked and highly colorful barbet species that was discovered in cloud forest in the eastern Andes of Peru in July 1996. The bird has been named the Scarlet-banded Barbet, *Capito wallacei*, and was discovered by a joint team from the Louisiana State University Museum

of Natural Science and the Museo de Historia Natural de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos. The species occurs in a remote area of the Cushabatay watershed above 1,250m in the Cordillera Azul, and because there is little human habitation in the area, the forest is still relatively intact there. The members of the expedition to this remote area have a number of other 'mystery species' documented in their field notes, and the region may be one to watch for more new

discoveries. The headwater region of the Rio Cushabatay, Rio Pisqui and Rio Biabo forms one of the most pristine and biologically unknown areas of Peru and recently was declared a 'zona reservada.' Peruvian non-governmental organizations and international partners are working to secure permanent protected status for a large portion of this region. *Contact:* Mike Parr, ABC, (202) 778-9666, <mparr@abcbirds.org>.

Threatened List Now More Than 12% Of All Bird Species

A statement released by IUCN-World Conservation Union at their World Congress held in Amman, Jordan this October, reveals that the organization now considers 11,000 of the world's species to be threatened with extinction; 1,186 of these are birds, amounting to just over 12% of all bird species. The threatened bird analysis was conducted by BirdLife International, and will be published this November in a new book 'Threatened Birds of the World'. The number of birds listed as threatened has increased slightly from the 1994 figure of 1,111 species. Some species have recovered



Short-tailed Albatross
Photo: USFWS

sufficiently during that period to be de-listed, but others have declined to the point where they merit threatened status for the first time. In the new analysis, 182 species are listed

as critically endangered, which means they are believed to have a 50% chance of extinction within just ten years, and if nothing is done to protect these species, we could be facing a virtual extinction landslide in the next decade. The albatrosses are the group currently causing the most concern, with sixteen albatross species listed in the new analysis, compared to just three in 1994. The reason: birds being hooked and drowned by longline vessels on the high seas (see articles pages 1 and 11). ABC supports numerous projects to protect the most threatened birds in the Americas (see www.abcbirds.org and select *Conservation Counterparts* for more information). See also <http://www.hbw.com/> for information on Threatened Birds of the World.

Rocket Launching on Sombrero & Guyana Shelved

Beal Aerospace's proposal to construct a major commercial rocket launching facility on Sombrero Island in the Caribbean has been shelved. Earlier this year, after protests by conservationists in the Car-

ibbean, U.S., and U.K. (which has jurisdiction over the island) Beal temporarily postponed its plans for the facility on the 95 acre Sombrero, which would have destroyed much of the island's ability to support seabird breeding. Beal then switched its plans to Guyana but has just recently withdrawn all consideration for such a facility. Beal attributes withdrawal of its inten-

tion to construct the facility for the launching of commercial satellites into space to U.S. subsidies for commercial NASA launches. The cancellation is good news for wildlife and especially for nesting seabirds such as Masked Boobies, Brown Noddies, Sooty Terns, and Least Terns. *Contact:* Gerald Winegrad, ABC, (202) 778-9666, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

The Future for CARA?

Despite gaining remarkable support in both the House and Senate, the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) failed to become law in the 106th Congress. The bill would have provided \$2.9 billion dollars yearly for conservation programs funded from offshore oil and gas revenue. Bird and environmental advocates anticipated that the \$350 million assigned yearly to state-based wildlife programs would have significantly boosted non-game bird activities. However, an alliance of Congressional appropriators and the White House got an alternative passed and signed into law in early October, through Interior Appropriations. While this was

designed to address some CARA issues, the alternative provides much less funding. Not surprisingly, it is being hailed as a victory by some and criticized as insufficient by others. The bill provides \$50 million for wildlife programs (less than 15 percent of the \$350 million CARA would have provided) and has set the funding up in a system of competitive grants rather than stable, multi-year guarantees for state wildlife agencies. Funding planned for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was also reduced. The appropriators' alternative provided \$540 million (down from CARA's \$900 million), with only \$90 million for stateside land acquisition (instead of CARA's \$450 million). Future

funding will also be controlled by appropriators. An additional last-minute funding package of \$50 million for wildlife funding for the states may also be made available in 2001 thanks to CARA champions as Congress approaches adjournment. The unresolved funding is, however, part of a catch-all Commerce-Justice-State appropriations package facing a veto by the President, who opposes other elements in the bundle. In any case, when the 107th Congress convenes next year, bird and wildlife supporters will have the chance to come back to the drawing board and build a dialogue with another President and Congress. *Contact:* Paul J. Baicich, American Birding Association, <baicich@aba.org>.

Mute Swan Population Explosion Threatens Native Species

There is renewed concern over the explosive growth in the exotic Mute Swan populations in the Chesapeake Bay region. In 1962, five swans escaped into the Bay and this introduced population has now grown to approximately 4,500 birds (30% of the total Atlantic Flyway population). Unlike native Tundra Swans that migrate to the Bay for the winter, the Mute Swan is a year-round resident. Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) biologists have found that populations of Black Skimmers and Least Terns nesting on beaches and oyster shell bars have been eliminated by aggressive Mute Swans and a Patuxent Wildlife Research Center study also found that submerged aquatic vegetation, a valuable food source for migratory birds such as



Mute Swan in aggressive posture
Photo: Gavin G. Shire

Tundra Swans and Black Ducks, is being locally depleted by year-round consumption by Mutes. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916 does not protect mute swans, but Maryland's anti-hunting laws do not differentiate between exotic and native swans, giving Mutes a measure of protection. The Bay area's largest environmental organization, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation,

has called for a more aggressive approach to controlling Mute Swan numbers to include lethal methods. Maryland had a program to control swan numbers by the adding of eggs and the killing of adult swans, but when some residents of the Bay area raised objections, the policy was shelved. The Governor of Maryland appointed an Advisory Task Force to develop an alternate management plan that would look for alternatives to killing the birds. The Advisory group is to report in December with recommendations for the DNR. Scientists have advised preventing any further increase in the Mute Swan population and an eventual reduction to prevent habitat destruction and direct impacts on other bird species. Among their control recommendations is the humane euthanasia of Mute Swans in problem areas on federal and state lands. *Contact:* Dr. Matthew Perry, <matt_perry@usgs.gov>.

Success on Horseshoe Crabs, Victory for Shorebirds

This August, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Norman Mineta was joined by Delaware Governor Thomas Carper at Cape Henlopen, Delaware, to announce the establishment of a 1,500 square mile horseshoe crab sanctuary at the mouth of Delaware Bay, and the closure of the horseshoe crab fishery in Virginia. Action to finalize the sanctuary is expected in November. The Commerce Department issued a Federal Register Notice to close all horseshoe crab landings in Virginia, effective October 23, following Virginia's refusal to meet landing quotas set by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). Facing this closure, and a ban on possession of



Horseshoe crabs in Delaware Bay
Photo: J. P. Myers, World Wildlife Fund

horseshoe crabs by anyone in Virginia waters that would have stopped conch fishing (horseshoe crabs are used as conch bait), Virginia capitulated. At an emergency meeting on October 20, Virginia finally adopted regulations to cap its fishery at the required quota of 152,495 horseshoe crabs. The Virginia Crab fishery is now closed for the rest of the year since this quota has already been met (and probably exceeded). Virginia did convince

the ASMFC to allow for the possibility of the transfer of quotas from other states, and it is anticipated that the State will attempt to gain transfer of these quotas prior to the start of 2001. The freezers of Virginia's commercial dealers currently contain more than 200,000 horseshoe crabs taken from federal waters by ocean trawlers, providing sufficient bait for the conch fishery to continue this fall. In early September, ABC and National Audubon sent a letter to the Secretary of Commerce, signed by 29 other organizations, urging prompt action on the Virginia closure and on the establishment of the sanctuary. Thanks to the efforts of many Policy Council members and other allies, the future for the crab and the shorebirds that depend on its eggs now looks brighter. *Contact:* Gerald Winegrad, ABC, (202) 778-9666, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

ABC Leads Cancellation of Most Toxic Pesticide

After an unprecedented public reaction, chemical manufacturer Cheminova decided in mid-October to voluntarily cancel all uses of its insecticide ethyl parathion (trade names: Parathion, Folidol). The announcement came after a concerted campaign led by American Bird Conservancy, in partnership with Defenders of Wildlife, Pesticide Action Network of North America and World Wildlife Fund, to pressure the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Cheminova to end all U.S. uses of this highly toxic insecticide. Ethyl parathion is generally considered to be one of the most toxic pesticides currently in use worldwide and has been documented as responsible for thousands of bird deaths including ducks,

geese, raptors, gulls, martins and songbirds, as well as domestic mammals and even humans where applicators have mishandled the treatment. Its toxicity prompted the EPA to restrict ethyl parathion usage in 1991 to nine crops in the U.S. (alfalfa, barley, corn, cotton, canola, sorghum, soybean, sunflower, and wheat) but even this measure was insufficient. Much of the spraying still occurred in the Great Plains and Prairie Pothole regions of North and South Dakota and adjacent Minnesota, where 50% of North American waterfowl breeding takes place. The campaign centered around ABC's April 2000 'Action Advisory' and resulted in over 1,000 letters of concern being sent to the EPA under its Public Comment Period, and prompted EPA to respond directly to concerns voiced by ABC. The withdrawal,

effective immediately, will still permit use of the chemical on eight of the nine crops until stocks are used up because of the hazards of disposing large volumes of the chemical. However, no new chemical will be manufactured and all U.S. application must cease by October 31, 2003. The agreement also halts the use of ethyl parathion as a component in other pesticides, effective December 31, 2000. *Contact:* Kelley R. Tucker, ABC, (202) 778-9773, <ktucker@abcbirds.org>.

The Next Partners in Flight Pan American Roundtable is December 11 at ABC's Washington, D.C. Office.
Call (202) 778-9666 or
E-mail abc@abcbirds.org

ABC Launches Campaign Against Florida Pesticide

Fenthion, an organophosphate pesticide once formulated to kill birds, is being used in Florida to control mosquitoes. ABC and Audubon of Florida have alerted the EPA to the severe risks faced by resident and migratory birds from this chemical, and are urging them to cancel all fenthion use. Like many toxic pesticides, birds can succumb to fenthion poisoning after consuming residues that have settled on their food and drinking water, but additionally fenthion is highly toxic to birds when absorbed through their skin or inhaled. Fenthion, like DDT, accumulates in the fat tissue of animals and can be passed on through the food chain to concentrate in top-level consumers such as

birds of prey. Thousands of birds, including Sanderlings, Dunlin, endangered Piping Plovers, Black Skimmers and other species have been documented as killed by fenthion sprayed for mosquito control.



Dunlin killed after exposure to fenthion
Photo: Ted Below

Florida is the only state still using fenthion, spraying over two million acres each year, some of which are dosed every few days from May until October. Other states employ less hazardous methods of control with equal effectiveness.

ABC urges the public to support this effort by writing to the EPA prior to their decision on fenthion re-registration and asking them to cancel all uses of this dangerous chemical. Letters from the public should be addressed to: Public Information and Records Integrity Branch, Information Resources and Services Division (7502C), Office of Pesticide Programs, EPA, 401 M Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460. Or a response can be emailed to EPA at: <opp-docket@epa.gov>. Letters and e-mail must be identified with the Docket # OPP34145A, Fenthion. More information, including a sample letter which may be down-loaded and copied, can be found on ABC's web site: http://www.abcbirds.org/fenthion_flyer.htm. Contact: Linda Farley, ABC, (202) 778-9666, <lfarley@abcbirds.org>.

New Guidelines Issued for Towers

On September 14, 2000, FWS issued guidelines to all its regional directors on the siting, construction, and operation of communications towers. FWS Director Jamie Clark noted that the construction of towers creates a potentially significant impact on migratory birds, especially some 350 species of night-migrating birds and said, "Communications towers are estimated to kill 4-5 million birds per year, which violates the spirit and the intent of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act". The Guidelines are for use by all Service personnel involved in the review of proposed tower sitings and/or the evaluation of the impacts of towers on migratory birds, and will remain in effect until

research efforts uncover significant new mitigation measures. However, implementation of these recommendations by the communications industry is voluntary. The Guidelines emphasize co-location, keeping towers under 200 ft. in height and unlit, locating towers in existing 'antenna farms' and away from any wetlands or other areas of bird concentration such as flyways or rookeries, and keeping towers out of fog or mist prone areas. The guidelines also make recommendations on lighting, suggesting that solid or pulsating red lights not be used, and advocated use of only white strobe lights of the minimum number, minimum intensity, and minimum flash rate (longest duration between flashes) allowable by the FAA. Tower designs using guy wires for support, which are pro-

posed to be located in known bird concentration areas should have additional daytime, visual markers on the wires to prevent collisions. All newly sited towers should allow access to FWS personnel or researchers, and obsolete towers should be removed within 12 months. Questions on the Guidelines may be directed to Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, Chief, Division of Habitat Conservation, (703) 358-2161. ABC and others continue to work through the Communication Towers Working Group to assure that necessary research is conducted to arrive at science based mitigation measures that will ensure a long-term solution to the problem. Visit ABC's web site to view a comprehensive report on the tower kills. Contact: Gerald Winegrad, ABC, (202) 778-9666, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

Cat Problems at the Cape

The spread of stray cat colonies, some of which are encouraged by people who regularly leave food out for cats, are a continuing problem for both cats and birds. The cats lead short unhealthy lives, and even well fed cats in these colonies kill birds and other wildlife. The problem is particularly severe in Florida, California, and Hawaii, where cats can kill endangered species such as Florida Scrub Jay, Western Snowy Plover, and Palila. However, there are also significant problems along the eastern seaboard where endangered Piping Plovers and many migrants are threatened by cat predation. For example, even one of the eastern seaboard's birding meccas, Cape May, has a stray and feral cat problem. The sign at the Lower Township Rotary Club Park, which greets birders arriving in Cape May by way of the Cape May/Lewes Ferry, reads 'Welcome to New Jer-



Stray cats greet visitors to Cape May
Photo: Michael Parr

sey'. Directly underneath the sign, on top of and under the picnic tables and cars, visitors are also greeted by a colony of stray cats - fed there every night by local people. The Park also provides valuable habitat for migrants, and was literally alive with Yellow-rumped Warblers and Song Sparrows during a recent visit by ABC staff. Stray and feral domestic cats are a problem elsewhere in the Cape May area, largely because some people fail to get their

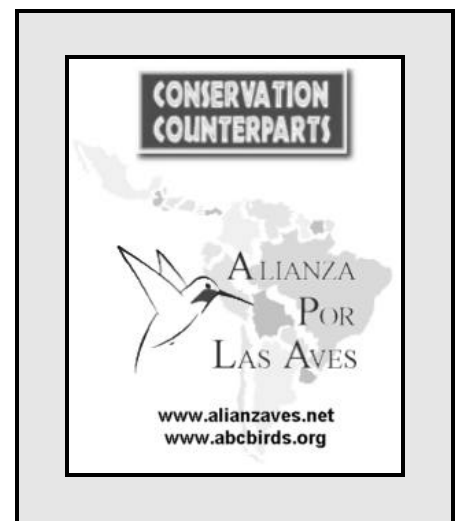
cats spayed or neutered, do not keep their cats indoors, or abandon their unwanted cats and kittens at the area's local parks and restaurants when they leave at the end of the summer season. Residents, as well as tourists, are to blame. Cats pose a particular threat to nesting Piping Plovers and Least Terns along the beach at the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center. According to the New Jersey Draft Piping Plover Recovery Framework, "If current population and productivity trends continue, extirpation of the Piping Plover from New Jersey is likely in the current generation". Cats were also a problem at Cape May Point State Park, where the hawk-watching platform is located, until the garbage cans were removed. ABC is developing a campaign against cat abandonment in the Cape May area with New Jersey Audubon, City of Cape May Animal Control, U.S. Coast Guard, and others. Contact: Linda Winter at 202-778-9619 <lwinter@abcbirds.org>.

New ABC Web Site: Latin American Birding Resources with One Click

ABC officially launched its new web site for Latin American and Caribbean bird conservation in October. The site, *Alianza por las Aves* (the Alliance for Birds) is a new initiative for ABC's *International Program* and provides conservationists and birders with links, information and resources on every country in the region. From the best birding locations in Venezuela, to a list of the endemic birds of Cuba, to the best field guides for Argentina, visitors to the site can surf in either English or Spanish

and obtain some of the most detailed information available on birds in the region. The site goes beyond the interest of the casual birder by providing links to NGOs working for conservation in each country and gives detailed accounts of specific projects being carried out in the field. The site also provides a means for individuals and bird clubs or other groups to support these conservation efforts by donating on-line and a way for everyone visiting the site to interact by the use of a bulletin board. The whole site is accessible either by geographic region, beginning with a clickable map of the Americas, or alphabetically by a comprehensive index of countries and projects. Visit the new site by clicking on the

Conservation Counterparts logo on the ABC home page (www.abcbirds.org) or typing www.alianzaves.net in your browser for the Spanish version.



Caspian Tern Update

This spring, ABC, National Audubon, Defenders of Wildlife, and Seattle Audubon, filed a suit to require the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a full EIS before attempting to remove the largest breeding colony of Caspian Terns in North America from Rice Island in the Columbia River estuary on the Washington-Oregon border. The Federal District Court in Seattle found that the suit may have sufficient merit to warrant an EIS being required, and issued an injunction on any action by the Corps to remove terns. Two appeals from the Corps have now been denied, the latest, a petition for a complete dis-

missal of the case by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, and the original suit is still being considered by the Federal District Court. ABC and its partners fully expect the court to find in favor of the EIS. In September, research scientists from Oregon State University and the private research company that has been retained by the Corps, issued a joint statement urging completion of an EIS to the Caspian Tern Working Group (CTWG), which has been established to provide a forum for stakeholder's input. This further buttresses conservation groups' arguments. Efforts commenced in 1999 to relocate most terns from Rice Island, to East Sand Island have been relatively successful.

Research shows the Terns eat less salmon smolt on East Sand Island as it is nearer the ocean. This year, 580 pairs attempted nesting on Rice Island, but more than 9,000 attempted to nest on East Sand Island. Despite a total 14% increase in the tern population over 1999, Chinook Salmon returns to the estuary are at a 20-year high. There is still no scientific data that shows a correlation between the consumption of salmon smolt by terns and any population-level impact. Adult mortality caused by dams, pollution, and other human induced factors are the principal reasons for salmon declines. *Contact:* Gerald Winegrad, ABC, (202) 778-9666, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's *Cats Indoors!* Campaign

Recognizing that impacts of free-roaming cats on native wildlife are a growing concern, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has embarked on a statewide *Cats Indoors!* education campaign. Over 20,000 copies of ABC's 'Keeping Cats Indoors Isn't Just For The Birds' brochures and 2,000 posters are being distributed to veterinary hospitals, county commissioners and animal control officers throughout the state. The Commission's web site, http://wld.fwc.state.fl.us/critters/domestic_cat.htm features a page on domestic cats and a link to ABC's *Cats Indoors!* web page. The Commission also issued a statewide press release on 'National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day', and has committed to do so each year. Brevard and Palm

Beach counties have passed ordinances that make feeding stray cats legal if the cats are spayed or neutered and the feeders register with the county. Efforts to enact similar legislation in Alachua County were defeated by Alachua Audubon Society and others late last year, and a humane society in Martin County was recently planning their own trap-neuter-release program. However, according to education specialist Joni Ellis, "One of the most important aspects of this campaign is to make clear to the counties that it is a violation of state law to release any animal species not indigenous to Florida without a permit from the Commission. We are encouraging counties to find other solutions to their free-roaming cat overpopulation problems, such as passing mandatory spay/neuter and cat leash laws". The Commission's education campaign is a substantial boost for ABC's campaign in Florida. We encourage other state wildlife agencies, especially in Califor-



Stray and feral cats pose a severe risk to many rare birds including the endangered Florida Scrub Jay. Photo: FL Game & Fish Commission

nia and Hawaii, where endangered species and domestic cat conflicts are also high, to do the same. *Contact:* Joni Ellis, (352) 955-6588, <joni@wild-florida.com> or Linda Winter, ABC, (202) 778-9619, <lwinter@abcbirds.org>.

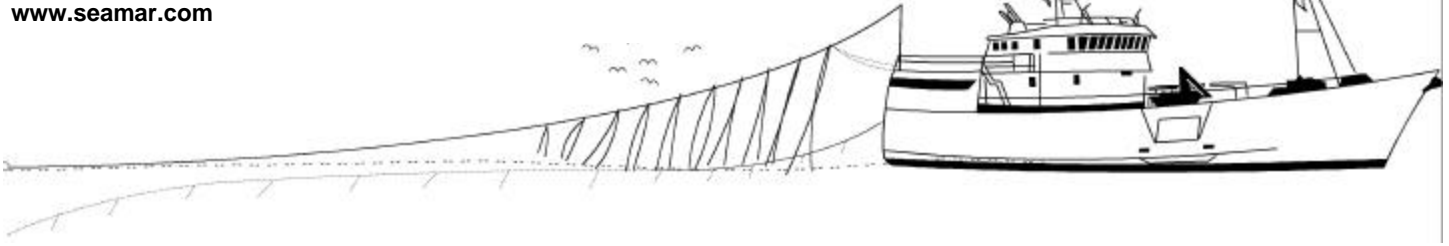
Government Funds Bird Scaring Lines to Protect Seabirds

Under a project funded by FWS, 450 Alaskan fishing vessels have applied for free bird-scaring lines to prevent seabird mortality caused by longlines. The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission administers the purchase, assemblage, and distribution of the 300 ft. blue steel polyester lines with streamers, at a cost of \$260 per pair. The erratic flapping made by the streamers on the lines, positioned either side of the longline, scares albatrosses and other seabirds from the baited

hooks. Such lines have been shown to reduce seabird mortality by 92% in preliminary research on Alaskan sablefish longliners in 1999. FWS provided \$400,000 this year and another \$450,000 is being provided for the second year, mainly for davits to be welded onto the sterns of the larger longline vessels to hold the 'tori poles' that in-turn hold the bird scaring lines (covering up to 50 percent of the cost with a \$5,000 ceiling per boat). There are over 2,000 longline vessels eligible for the program, of which 250 have already received their free lines, with another 200 due to receive them over the next few weeks. The reimbursement offer is currently being

extended to vessels greater than 100 ft. long. Five vessels of this type have used these matching grants so far (at an average total cost of about \$7,700), and letters of intent have been filed by three more. The project, begun in April 2000, will continue next year with a goal of giving the bird scaring lines to all longline vessels and ensuring that most of the largest longline vessels have an effective means of deploying those lines. *Contact:* Al Didier at <al_didier@psmfc.org>. For a description of these lines and the research on mitigation measures in Alaska, see: <http://www.wsg.washington.edu/outreach/mas/fisheries/fisheries.html>.

Drawing courtesy of Seattle Marine Fishing & Supply Co., www.seamar.com



Outbreak of Avian Botulism Causes Pelican Die Off

The most recent outbreak of avian botulism has killed over 300 pelicans at the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge and caused a further 1,100 sick birds to be taken for rehabilitation. The outbreak, classified as 'very serious' by refuge managers, was precipitated by a warmer than usual spring and an early summer. At the height of the outbreak, up to 20 birds a day were picked up for 100 days in a row. The daily, systematic searches of the 525 sq. mile body of water to retrieve sick and dead birds were designed to limit the spread of the

bacterium that causes botulism. The source of the problem is thought to be large-scale die-offs of tilapia, the sea's most abundant fish but the reason for the fish kills has not been determined. Eutrophication from farm run-off and pesticides are being considered as possible alternatives. Although the birds have so far been predominantly Brown Pelicans, numbers of White Pelicans are expected to increase as they migrate into the area for the winter. The Endangered Brown Pelican had not nested in the Salton Sea prior to 1996 and the botulism outbreak is not expected to influence overall population numbers. However, the effects on the White Pelicans is less certain because such a large percentage of the population

passes through the Salton Sea each year (in 1996 over 8,500 White Pelicans died in the worst botulism outbreak to date). Scientists are concerned that the scenario could worsen in succeeding years as salinity slowly increases in the Sea. *Contact:* Larry McGowan, Refuge Manager, Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge, (760) 348-5278.



Brown Pelican. Photo: Microsoft

Wild Parrots Could Soon be Sold Legally in U.S.

Wild-caught parrots could return to U.S. pet stores for the first time since the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992, if FWS approves a proposal for a sustainable parrot-harvesting program in Argentina. The scheme, which captures Blue-fronted Amazons (a widespread species) for European markets, is said to be sustainable because a maximum of one nestling per nest and a limited number of juvenile birds are taken from the wild.

Funds generated from export taxes are then used to pay for habitat conservation. The public comment period closed on October 12th and FWS has received input from a range of groups including ABC and



Blue-fronted Amazons
Drawing: Robin Restall

the Association for Parrot Conservation. Proponents of the program believe that a controlled harvest is better than an unregulated one, and that the project will provide habitat conservation benefits for the species that balance the removal of a few

birds from the wild. Other groups, including ABC, contend that biological data to show that nesting success and population growth rates can support the proposed harvest quotas are lacking, and are concerned that the program will set a precedent for other potential sustainable harvest programs. Prior to 1992, between 9% and 19% of wild-caught Blue-fronted Amazons imported into the U.S. each year died in transit or in quarantine, leading to further concerns about the scheme. The FWS Division of Scientific Authority hopes to offer a response to comments by early December. Any scientific studies that shed additional light on the proposal can be sent to Anne St. John, Division of Scientific Authority, FWS, <Anne_StJohn@fws.gov>.

Light Goose Harvest Increase Benefits Habitat

FWS announced that preliminary harvest data for mid-continent light geese ("Lesser" Snow and Ross' Goose) indicate that U.S. hunters harvested more than 1.3 million birds during the 1999-2000 hunting season and during a special conservation order that allowed additional harvest after the traditional close of the season. Combined with the ex-



Snow Goose flock
Photo: Gavin G. Shire

pected harvest by Canadian hunters, the total harvest of mid-continent light geese may exceed the 1.4 million birds researchers believe is needed to reduce overabundant mid-continent light goose populations and begin to halt destruction of the birds' over-grazed arctic breeding grounds on the Arctic tundra around Hudson Bay. FWS noted that: "These increasing harvest levels are good news for the long-term health of the mid-continent light goose populations, as well as dozens of other migratory bird species that depend on the arctic breeding grounds and migrate through or winter in the U.S." Agricultural practices and refuges along the flyway provide light geese with ample forage and have triggered explosive population growth which far exceeds historic levels. The annual winter population index of mid-continent light geese has tripled in the past 30

years, from just over 800,000 birds in 1969 to approximately 2.6 million birds last winter. The total number of birds in known breeding colonies likely exceeds 5 million birds in spring. The FWS is completing a draft EIS for a long-term management strategy for these geese, as well as the rapidly increasing "Greater" Snow Goose population. A completed draft EIS is expected by the end of the year, with a final EIS anticipated in 2001. *Contact:* Chris Tollefson, FWS, (202) 208-5634.

The Next Policy Council Meeting is December 12 at ABC's Washington, D.C. Office. For information Call: (202) 778-9666 or E-mail abc@abcbirds.org

Interior May Approve Hopi Take of Eagles

A draft proposal, which would allow members of the Hopi tribe to take juvenile Golden eagles for traditional ceremonies from the Wupatki National Monument in Arizona, looks likely to be published as a proposed rule during November. The draft rule contains the following language: that it is possible that the National Park Service will "receive requests from

other tribes to address religious practices" and that "such requests will be addressed on their merits, and any rule changes would follow the same process as is being followed here". It adds, "It is also possible at some point that the National Park Service may consider doing a more generic rule-making on the subject". Hunting and trapping is currently banned in National Parks and National Monuments. One watchdog group, Public Employees for Environmental

Responsibility, said that a survey of 42 large parks found that 16 had received requests from tribes for hunting rights including requests for take of Golden Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks from three National Monuments. The Park Service proposes to conduct an Environmental Assessment on the proposed rule after its release. In March, FWS will begin a nationwide survey to determine how many Golden Eagles there are in the U.S. and what the population status is.

Hunting Season on Historic Trumpeter Swan Population Challenged

A law suit was filed in Washington D.C. on October 25, 2000 by the Fund for Animals and the Biodiversity Legal Foundation to have the 'Tri-state breeding population' of Trumpeter Swan listed under the Endangered Species Act. The suit came in response to the FWS decision to allow the hunting of Trumpeters in Utah, Nevada and Montana. The declining Tri-state population is the only original breeding population of Trumpeters remaining in the lower 48 states after the species was nearly wiped out by overharvest in the 19th century, and consists of approximately 80 breeding pairs. Since 1992, efforts have been made - including implementation of a hazing program - to encourage southerly movement of the birds to more sustainable wintering grounds. However, Trumpeters that attempted to migrate south from Idaho each year have been at risk of being illegally shot when they enter the Tundra Swan hunt zone in northern Utah. To protect hunters from potential prosecution,



Female Trumpeter with cygnets
Photo: Gavin G. Shire

FWS has proposed to legalize Trumpeter Swan harvest, with a quota of ten birds for Utah, five for Nevada and no quota for Montana. Critics contend that methods are inadequate for accurately documenting Trumpeter mortality and these quotas cannot be enforced. The core of the hunt is on the Bear Creek Migratory Bird Refuge in northern Utah, historic habitat for Trumpeters and preferred by migrating swans because of its milder weather and man-made impoundments, replete with submerged aquatic vegetation. At the heart of the dispute lies FWS's decision to lump all western Trumpeters, including the growing Canadian population numbering over 3,000 individuals, together into a single

'management' population. "By ... [this practice] ...the vulnerability of the historically important Tri-state population is not being adequately addressed," said Ruth Shea, Executive Director of The Trumpeter Swan Society. "So called 'management' populations may be useful for some administrative processes, but it is crucial to also recognize the biological populations, and address their unique problems". According to the FWS Migratory Bird Management Office (MBMO), there is no evidence that the Rocky Mountain population is genetically distinct from the Canadian birds, and there is mixing between the groups during the winter. "We feel we have addressed the main concerns by reducing the Utah quota from 15 to 10, closing an area north of the refuge frequented by the swans and expanding our conservation efforts at the breeding grounds," said Jon Andrews of the MBMO. "The population can withstand this minimal hunting impact." *Contact:* Ruth Shea, Trumpeter Swan Society, (208) 754-8756, <ruthshea@srv.net>, or D. J. Schubert, consultant to Fund for Animals, (602) 547-8537, <schubertaz@aol.com>.

San Clemente Shrike Progress Report

The 2000 nesting season for the San Clemente race of the Loggerhead Shrike has concluded with 63 birds now in the wild and 63 in captivity. Four wild pairs produced 19 fledglings, five of which were reared in captivity, while 14 fledged in the wild. Forty-four captive bred shrikes were released into the wild in 2000. Despite the current high numbers, over-winter mortality can be significant and overall growth is currently negative. For the first time, two captive-reared released females bred in the wild. Five pairs of shrikes nested within the area the Navy uses for ship-to-shore bombardment, which it intends to intensify. Now that the

breeding season has ended, the recovery efforts revolve around supplemental feeding of released birds, population monitoring, continued predator control, and preparing for next year's breeding and release. The next all island Shrike survey is set for mid-November. Population modeling and predictions indicate that even if reintroduction efforts are maintained at present levels for 20 years, at a cost of approximately \$2.5 million annually, the shrike population in the wild will still be no more than approximately 60 birds in 2020. To reach a population level of 325 birds (approximately half the island's probable carrying capacity) in 20 years will take substantial efforts to increase survivorship in the wild and a doubling of reintroduction efforts from 44 birds to 88 birds per year.



San Clemente Loggerhead Shrike
Photo: P. A. Aigner

Habitat enhancements are targeted to begin in early 2001, with small projects tailored to enhance potential release sites for later in 2001. *Contact:* Gerald Winegrad, ABC, (202) 778-9666, <gww@abcbirds.org>.

Great Salt Lake Highway Scheme Imperils Unique Bird Habitat

Utah Governor Mike Leavitt's plan to construct a 120-mile highway through the Great Salt Lake wetlands has drawn sharp criticism from environmentalists. Five to ten million birds, including one third of the 10 million ducks of the Central and Pacific Flyways, utilize these wetlands each year, and it is feared that destruction of crucial habitat and nesting grounds will have a serious impact on some populations. In addition to the damage caused by the highway itself, it is predicted that the scheme will facilitate development of commercial and residential properties, further impacting bird populations, including the 500 Bald Eagles that winter at the lake.



500 Bald Eagles including one nesting pair use the Great Salt Lake each year
Photo: Microsoft

The Great Salt Lake - vital as a midpoint link in the migratory chain between Canada, Mexico, and Central and South America - has already undergone dramatic change following the building of a railroad causeway that created a salinity imbalance between the north and south extremes of the lake. Excessive commercial fishing of brine shrimp, a major food source for the migrating birds, has also affected populations.

Under United States Land Mitigation laws, "duplicate function must be provided" in construction schemes of this kind that impact habitat. Critics of the highway plan claim that this is impossible in this situation because of the Great Salt Lake's uniqueness in salinity, brine shrimp and brine fly food supply. For information on how to petition against the highway scheme, *contact* Jim Corven, Director, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, (508) 224-6521 ext. 227.

Submit stories or press releases for the next issue of *Bird Calls* by e-mail: abc@abcbirds.org or by fax: (202) 778-9778

Ban on Lead Shot Saves Millions of Waterfowl

A new study suggests that FWS's 1991 nationwide ban on the use of lead shot for waterfowl hunting has had remarkable success, preventing the premature deaths of millions of waterfowl from lead poisoning. The report by the Illinois Natural History Survey, published this summer in the *Journal of Wildlife Management*, examined thousands of ducks harvested in the Mississippi Flyway during the 1996 and 1997 waterfowl seasons, the fifth and sixth seasons after the 1991 ban on lead shot. It found only 1.1 percent of examined ducks showed evidence of being shot with lead, and concluded that by significantly reducing lead shot ingestion in water

fowl, the ban prevented the lead poisoning deaths of approximately 1.4 million ducks in the 1997 fall flight of 90 million ducks.



Gadwall are among the waterfowl benefiting from a ban on lead shot
Photo: Don Baccus

For decades, lead poisoning had been a serious problem for waterfowl as they picked up spent pellets, along with gravel used in the gizzard to aid digestion. A 1959 study estimated that 2 to 3 percent of the

North American waterfowl population was killed annually by lead poisoning between 1938 and 1954. FWS Director Jamie Rappaport Clark pointed out that the ban on lead shot has probably benefited dozens of bird species, including Bald Eagles, a species particularly vulnerable to lead poisoning because they often feed on the carcasses of hunter-crippled and lead-poisoned waterfowl. Efforts to phase out lead shot began in the 1970s, but a nationwide ban on lead shot for all waterfowl hunting was not implemented until 1991. Lead shot may still be used for certain upland game species. Canada instituted a complete ban on the use of lead shot in 1999, after initially banning its use near bodies of water and on national wildlife areas.

Migratory Birds Benefit From Budget Increase

The Department of the Interior Budget for 2001 was signed into law by the President on October 11. Funding for the FWS Migratory Bird Program has climbed to \$25.789 million, an increase of \$4,000,000. The increases are directed primarily to migratory bird conservation and monitoring projects and for the support of base operational needs for the Service's popular North American Waterfowl Management Plan Joint Ventures. Specific new conservation and monitoring projects will receive \$1,000,000 of the additional funding and will focus on the following priority projects: (1) a range-wide survey of the Golden Eagle population; (2) gathering of data for declining Alaskan sea ducks; (3) implementation of Regional Snow

Goose Action Plans in the Central and Mississippi Flyways; (4) expansion of sea duck surveys in the Atlantic Flyway and Great Lakes; (5) the investigation of the natural history of Sprague's Pipit and other species endemic to the mixed grass prairie; (6) the strengthening of migratory bird habitat and population evaluation teams, and (7) the integration of national objectives for migrants into Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plans. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan received an additional \$2,050,000 to expand the operational base for managing Joint Ventures, and \$575,000 was added to reduce seabird bycatch resulting from longline fishing and drift gillnets (these funds require a 100% match by commercial fishing operators). Additionally Congress showed its support for expanding Joint Ventures by directing the Ser-

vice to request an additional \$5 million over the next three years to bring Joint Venture funding to \$10.4 million by 2004. Another big winner in the Interior Budget was the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, which gets an additional appropriation of \$25,000,000 above last year's \$15,000,000 allocation. The funds are available to develop matching funding partnerships for Wetland Conservation projects in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. *Contact:* Julian DeLaughter, FWS, <Julian_DeLaughter@fws.gov>.

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U.S. May Recognize More Parrots as Endangered

FWS Division of Scientific Authority has begun a review of parrot species currently listed as Endangered by the U.S. The current list was prepared in the 1970s, and has not been revised since. Public comment is invited, with a deadline for submissions of December 11. The inclusion of additional species on the list will increase penalties for smugglers caught with listed species and greater control will be placed on the sale and movement of legally held listed species between states. The U.S. Endangered Species List currently includes just 27 parrot

species, whereas the World Conservation Union, of which the U.S. is a member, lists 95 species in its Parrot Action Plan (approximately half of which are in the Americas). Notable omissions from the current U.S. list include the Hyacinth Macaw and Yellow-headed Amazon, both of which are on the IUCN threatened list and have been smuggled into the U.S. in the past. Trapping for the wildlife trade remains a major threat to parrots throughout the Americas and it is hoped that this initiative will help to deter criminals from attempting to profit from sale of illegally caught endangered species. Comments may be submitted to Michael Kreger at the Division of Scientific Authority, FWS, <Michael_Kreger@fws.gov>.

In Brief

The following stories can be viewed in full in the 'What's New' section of ABC's web site, www.abcbirds.org:

Vulture 'Plague' Spreading

Two formerly abundant Indian vulture species are experiencing unprecedented population declines and may face extinction in the near future. ...

Windy City Gets Bird Friendly

Chicago became the second city to sign the Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds....

Resident Canada Geese Cause Catastrophic Loss of Wild Rice

New study reveals loss of wild rice along the tidal Patuxent river from grazing Canada Geese....

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