REHABILITATION WILDLIFE COUNCIL

WILDLIFE JOURNAL

Vol. 4 No. 1 SPRING 1981



CONDOR CONFERENCE

On January 24, 1981 the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society sponsored the Condor Conference. This conference was the first meeting of organizations that represent all sides concerning the direction of the condor research. Since the death of the chick that occurred in June, 1980 the controversy hinges on whether or not to proceed with "hands on" research techniques. The following attempts to present the views of all the concerned organizations fairly and clearly.

Dr. Richard Mewaldt of the Avian Biology Laboratory at San Jose State University presented the positions of the American Ornithologists' Union, The Cooper Ornithological Society and the U.S. Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation. All three organizations reaffirm their views to proceed with an intensified research program that would include tagging, placement of radio telemetry equipment on the birds and the initiation of captive breeding programs. The American Ornithologists' Union urges the reissue of the permits needed for this work.

The Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group (S.C.P.B.R.G.) was represented by Brian Walton. The S.C.P.B.R.G. has offered to conduct captive breeding of California condors as they are currently successfully doing with Peregrine Falcons and Harris' Hawks.

Mr. Walton feels that now is the time for an aggressive hands-on management program for condors, including captive breeding. He sees the most significant threat to the condor as the conflict within the conservation community which has led to an impasse in the recovery plan at the birds' time of greatest need.

The Sierra Club was represented by their Executive Director, Mr. Michael McCloskey. Mr. McCloskey feels that the decision of when to start the captive breeding program should be based on the population dynamics of the condor. The

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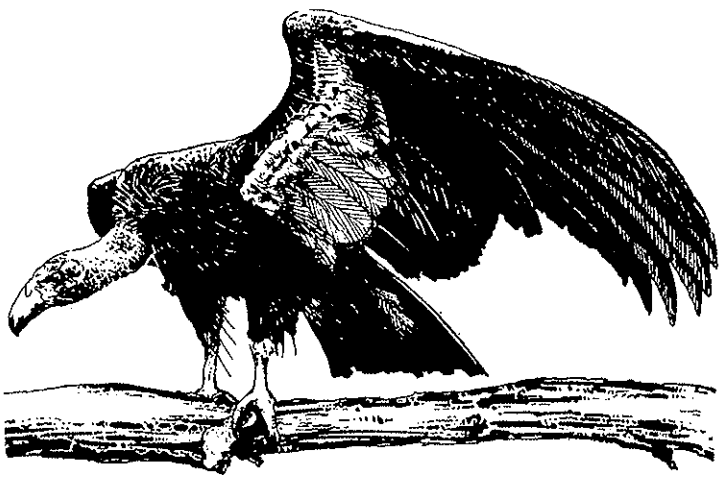
Sierra Club feels that no one really knows whether the population is on the decline or whether it is stable.

To obtain this information conventional field techniques should be continued until radio tagging begins. All techniques including radio tagging should be tested on other species, in this case black vultures, turkey vultures and Andean condors. After a favorable evaluation one pair of condors should be tagged. If the tags do not interfere with the birds' normal behavior, more may be tagged. Eventually conclusive population dynamics will be demonstrated. If the population shows a decline, the Sierra Club will support a captive breeding program.

Continuation of "hands off" techniques was supported in presentations by Mr. Eben McMillan, a rancher in San Luis Obispo County, Mr. Jerry Emory of the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Mr. David Phillips of Friends of the Earth and Mr. Fred Eissler of the Scenic Shoreline Preservation Conference. The emphasis of these organizations focuses on condor habitat.

The habitat should be analyzed and acquired. Protection of the habitat can be done by reclassification of Federal land, purchase by the State and/or Federal authorities or by land use initiatives through the counties' master plans.

The Condor Research Center presented their findings from their observations of California Condors during the past year and information from the trips to South Africa and Peru last fall. The Center was represented by Mr. John Borneman, Mr. Noel Snyder and Mr. John Ogden.



Observations in 1980 lead them to believe that there are a minimum of twenty-two California Condors with approximately five pairs of adults. Intensive observations at nest sites showed that the surviving chick fledged at the age of one hundred seventy-eight days. Through observations, the Center has gained more information concerning condor feeding ecology.

Findings from the trip to South Africa has yielded much needed information and experience in capturing and handling adults and young of several large species of African vultures. The African Vulture Study Group has conducted a series of studies for several years and have cannon-netted and handled over a thousand birds. During the early stages fourteen were killed, two were hit by projectiles and the rest by heat stress. By making changes in their technique, the injury problem has been eliminated.

The Andean Condor was picked for use as a surrogate species for the California Condor. Research in Peru has been concentrating on testing techniques that will eventually be applied to the California Condor, if approved by the California Fish and Game Commission. Perfection of rocket-netting and radio telemetry are being concentrated on. The third phase is the fitting of radio tags on captive-bred Andean Condors. So far six captive-bred condors have been released. To date the research in Peru appears promising to the Condor Research Center.

In conclusion, all parties share the same goal: a viable California Condor population that will not be on the threshold of extinction. The paths to reach this goal are varied. Resolution of the differences will be decided by the California Fish and Game Commission through the permit process.

Carter Schleicher
Coyote Point Museum
San Mateo, CA

Cover illustration by Ali Pearson.

SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT OF OILED SEABIRDS: A CASE STUDY

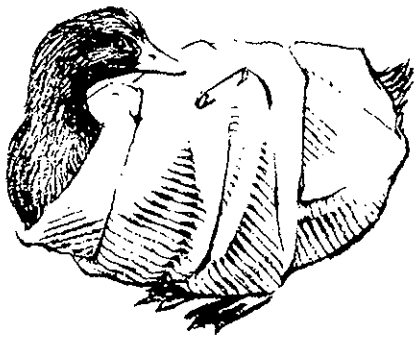
On January sixth of this year diesel oil began leaking from a floating bilge container at the Naval Air Station in Alameda, California. Many oiled birds, living and dead, were retrieved from beaches in Alameda, and estimates of total mortality from the spill give about two hundred birds lost, mostly Ruddy Ducks. Thirty-eight of the birds were cared for by the Alexander Lindsay Junior Museum wildlife rescue team. Thirty-six survived and were released within a week. A day by day account of the treatment procedures follows.

JANUARY 7th

East Bay Regional Park District employees at Crown Beach in Alameda began finding oiled birds washed up on the shore. A Park District employee called a Museum volunteer, who he knew had had experience with oiled birds. The volunteer suggested wrapping the birds in old bits of cloth to prevent preening, and then called the Museum to inform the staff of the spill, before proceeding to the beach. There she found nineteen Ruddy Ducks coated with diesel oil, wrapped in nylon stockings. Due to the lateness of the hour she took the birds home to keep them warm overnight. There they were all tubed liquids and had their temperatures checked. Three of the birds were washed that evening, and three were pretreated with vegetable oil. One of the birds died that evening, after displaying a very low temperature and undergoing spasms. The other birds were in relatively good shape, in part due to the use of the nylon stockings, which very effectively prevented preening.

JANUARY 8th

The Ruddy Ducks were tubed hydrating solution at 8:00 a.m. and brought into the museum at 10:00 a.m. There they were tubed with Gerber High Protein Baby Cereal reconstituted with warm water and with a small amount of Nutrical added.



Gerber's cereal was used throughout the time we cared for the birds, although after several days brine shrimp replaced the Nutrical.

Washing started at 10:30 a.m. It was done at a temperature of 105°-106°F, with a 0.25% solution of Dawn Detergent (approximately 2 teaspoons of Dawn per gallon of water). This strength is considerably lower than that generally recommended. In part this was because diesel oil is light and comparatively easy to remove, but we have found that even with thicker oils, fairly low percentages of detergent will work. This is an area requiring further research.

Cleaning involved two people using a modified version of techniques recommended in Saving Oiled Seabirds. The bird was placed in a washbasin partially filled with Dawn solution. One worker held the bird's body and performed the washing while the helper held the bird's beak above the detergent solution. The solution was gently worked up into the feathers using a combing motion, and going with the lie of the feathers. After a few minutes the cleaning solution would become soiled and the bird would be removed, quickly rinsed using a shower nozzle on a flexible hose, and then the process repeated with fresh detergent solution.

The head and neck area was then cleaned using a waterpick and the same Dawn solution. The waterpick jet was directed upward into the base of the feathers, the nozzle being held ¼" from the feather surface. We were careful to hold the head at an upward angle so that soap

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would not drain into the nostrils. The small amount of soap that came in contact with the eyes did not appear to cause irritation. After cleaning, the bird was thoroughly rinsed with the shower nozzle spray to remove all traces of detergent. A small amount of opthalmic ointment was used to protect the eyes before the bird was placed in a cardboard moving box with a pet dryer three feet above sending down hot air.

The entire washing process took 20-25 minutes per bird, and drying time was about half an hour. Although all persons involved in the cleaning had experience in handling birds, few had actually washed oiled birds. Treatment thus became in part a training session, with experienced cleaners working with, and instructing, less experienced volunteers. By the end of the spill our number of people competent in washing increased from 3 or 4 to over 10 people.

Cleaning finished at 9:00 p.m. that evening, with twenty birds washed. Although standard cleaning criteria has included not cleaning birds whose temperature is below 103°F, it was decided, in view of the extreme toxicity of the oil, to clean all birds not showing obvious signs of shock. There appeared to be no significant difference in the recovery rate of birds cleaned while at low temperatures than of those nearer physiological norm.

While this was happening, Regional Park employees continued to find oiled birds on the beach, and in the early afternoon nineteen more birds were brought to the Museum by Regional Park employees. These birds mostly consisted of Ruddy Ducks, but there were also two Horned Grebes and two Coots.

JANUARY 9th

At 8:00 a.m. tube feeding of the birds began. All of the birds were tube fed four times a day. Food was placed in the boxes (egg producer and brine shrimp with enough water to make a slurry). Although some of the birds began eating on their own this day, tubing was continued throughout the time we held the birds. Cleaning began at 10:00 a.m. and finished at 5:00 p.m. when the last bird had been cleaned.

In the morning we began preparing pools for swimming the birds. As the Museum had not handled this many oiled birds before, facilities had to be improvised. Adjacent to the building where washing was taking place is an enclosed animal exercise pen, with a small cement pool. Two small children's wading pools (4 foot diameter) provided additional swimming areas. The pools were surrounded by sheets of rigid plastic so that the birds could not be disturbed by handlers moving in the vicinity. A continuous flow of water was maintained through the pools. A surface drain prevented the accumulation of a layer of oil from the birds' droppings, which would have otherwise contaminated the clean feathers.

All birds washed the day before were swum for short periods, then removed and checked for waterproofing. Birds were divided into grades 1-2-3-4 depending on their quality of waterproofing, ranging from "ready to go" to those needing substantial re-washing. Birds in the same grades were kept in boxes together. Great attention was given to bedding to ensure that clean birds stayed clean. The towels under the birds were changed four times a day at the times of tubing.

arge cardboard moving boxes housed the birds, with three to four birds per box. During the first few days when some birds were showing depressed temperatures the room was kept at 80°F.

JANUARY 10th

Both Grebes were released in the morning, after an afternoon of swimming the previous day had shown them to be waterproof. Four Ruddy Ducks were re-washed, as swimming had shown patches where they were not waterproof. Since the entire bird did not have to be re-washed the cleaning process was much shorter and less stressful for the bird. Swimming of all birds continued.

JANUARY 11th

The Coots were released at 8:00 a.m. and eight Ruddy Ducks at 12:30 p.m. Two releases were done to ensure that birds got out at the earliest possible chance. Birds judged ready from the afternoon before went out on the early release, while birds judged ready during the morning swimming went out at noon. No birds went out in late afternoon, as we wanted all birds to have a full afternoon of swimming and preening before dark. We continued swimming the other birds.

JANUARY 12th

There were two more releases, with a total of eight Ruddy Ducks going out. The only death at the Museum occurred in the late afternoon when a Ruddy died after appearing listless and exhibiting low body temperature.

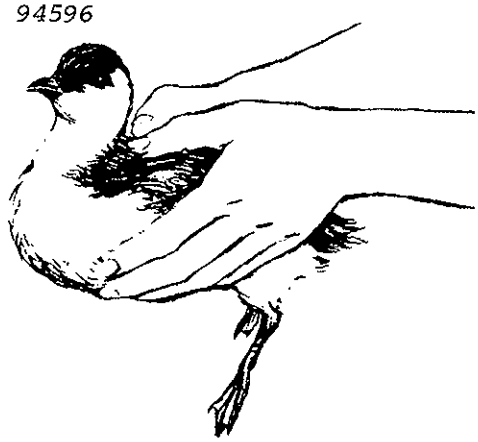
Over the next two days the remaining ducks were released. Of the thirty-eight birds that were picked up, two were lost and thirty-six released in good shape. This excellent success rate was due we believe to the following factors:

1. The birds were delivered to people experienced in their care a short time after being picked up.
2. Because we had a core of experienced washers, and many more people used to working with birds, cleaning could begin immediately, and finish within two days. This was particularly important with a highly toxic oil such as diesel.
3. The birds were tube fed four times a day, ensuring sufficient food. We were fortunate in having many volunteers familiar with tubing birds and willing to put in long hours.
4. A systematic program of swimming, with analysis and division into groups based upon degree of waterproofing, and appropriate treatment.
5. Early release. A lot of effort was put into getting the birds out as soon as possible, with releases two times a day so that birds were not kept back even an extra four hours beyond the time they were judged releasable.

Our experience shows that despite a lack of prepared facilities, a rehabilitation group can handle moderate numbers of oiled birds with success, as long as the knowledge of washing and handling oiled birds exists. With appropriate training and preparation, rehabilitation groups working together have the potential to handle large numbers of birds from a major oil spill.

Persons interested in further details of this spill, or potential training sessions, should contact the authors.

Gordon Lane, John Anderson, and
Cheryl Reynolds
Alexander Lindsay Jr. Museum
1901 First Ave.
Walnut Creek, CA 94596



Illustrations taken from Saving Oiled Seabirds.

TO THE EDITOR:

Editor,

After reading the WRC Wildlife Journal, Volume 3, No. 4, which contained a handout entitled "Immobilization of Simple and Compound Fractures In Songbirds and Raptors", I have one comment.

I feel it is necessary to include with any work about raptors specific information regarding the special permits required for their possession. Printing a handout such as this one in the WRC Journal is a great idea. But, are you sure that all the people receiving your publication are aware of the federal and state permits required for work with any raptor in addition to any general mammal rehabilitation permits already held?

Unfortunately, it has been my observation that many general rehabilitators are unaware of this requirement and may elect to attempt repairs in an area requiring specialized facilities and knowledge.

Sincerely,

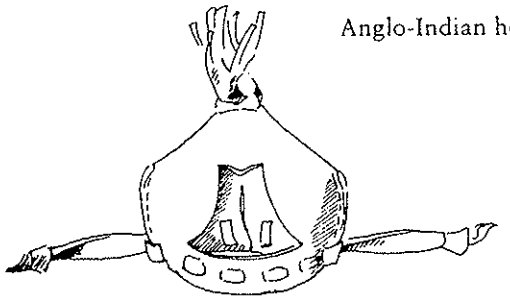
John F. Gumbs, Director
North Jersey Raptor Care Center

Thank you for your comments in reference to permits in Victoria Welsh's article. It was assumed by the author and the editorial staff of the Wildlife Journal that anyone handling raptors (or songbirds for that matter) would have the appropriate state and federal permits. In the next printing of "Immobilization of Simple and Compound Fractures in Songbirds and Raptors", we will include a statement on the necessity for proper permits.



HOODS FOR RAPTORS

Several WRC members have reported good results with hooding raptors brought to their centers when it's necessary to handle them. Others use hoods when transporting non-releasable education birds, so we thought it would be helpful to provide members with information on obtaining hoods.



Anglo-Indian hood

George Patricola of Santa Cruz, CA makes hoods in three price ranges. He has an Anglo-Arabian hood, which is made from one piece of leather and glued. He says it's a good utility hood and is fine for rehabilitation groups that won't be hooding the same bird for long periods of time. It ranges in price from $17 to $25 depending on the size.

The next model up is an Anglo-Indian hood, which is blocked and sewn. George says it is more comfortable for long term wear. It costs from $30 to $35.

His "Cadillac" of hoods costs $50, is made from three pieces of leather and hand sewn on the inside with special soft leather padding for the eyes.

He has patterns for all sizes from Turkey Vultures to male Sharp-shinned Hawks. He also does custom fitting. For such a fitting he needs a measurement from the top of the eye on one side over the head to the top of the eye on the other side. This should be done with outside calipers (not a measuring tape!) and measured in 1/16" units. He also needs the sex, weight and species of the bird.

You may write or phone:

George Patricola
P.O. Box 2394
Santa Cruz, CA 95063
(408) 427-3630

New Members

Lucy Adams, California
Wendy Bents, California
Barbara Berg, Nebraska
Andrew Biederman, DVM, New York
Cynthia Boyer, California
Patricia Cameron, California
Tooky Campione, California
Linda Chandler, British Columbia, Canada
Regina Conroy, New Jersey
Debbie Darr, California
Roderick K. Eck, California
Marcia Fortney, AHT, California
Barbara Gegan, California
M.B. Goodier, California
Donna Heiman, California
Deboran Sapp-Johnson, Kansas
Alice Katzung, California
Marsha Kaylor, Arkansas
Anna Kircher, Oregon

California Marine Mammal Center
GGNRA, Marin Headlands
Fort Cronkhite
Sausalito, CA 94965

Colorado Wildlife Rescue, Inc.
P.O. Box 105
Sedalia, CO 80135

Greenburgh Nature Center
Promore Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583

Diane Laborde, Louisiana
Joni Lacy, California
Bret Lamoreaux, Oregon
Bruce S. Levine, DVM, California
Steve Longenecker, North Carolina
G.D. Manley, DVM, Florida
Ruth Melichar, Idaho
Don Muller, Alaska
Charles T. Robbins, Washington
Allison Rodman, California
Mark Russo, California
Alan E. Schwarte, DVM, New York
Thomas Schwarzmann, DVM, California
Kathleen Sohner, DVM, Texas
Susan L. Sundby, California
Sharon Svenson, California
Tim Thorne, California
Linda Mentges Weatherford, California
Jane Zuke, Maryland

Lower Mainland Wildlife Rescue Assoc.
4519 Piper Ave.
Burnaby, British Columbia
Canada V5A 3B5

Peninsula Nature and Science Center
524 J.Clyde Morris Blvd.
Newport News, VA 23601

Tookie Manor Aviary
RTE.1, Box 60
La Honda, CA 94020

☆☆☆☆☆ WRC'S NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS ☆☆☆☆☆

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San Joaquin Raptor Rescue Center
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Wildlife Rehabilitation Services, Inc.

Congratulations are extended to the new Board of Directors and Officers.

WILDLIFE REHAB. COUNCIL
P. O. Box 3007
Walnut Creek, CA 94598

WRC QUARTERLY MEETING

Date: April 11, 1981

Place: Coyote Point Museum
Coyote Point Drive
San Mateo, CA

Time: 10:00 a.m. Business Meeting
11:00 a.m. General Meeting

Speaker: Lar Cauglin

Topic: A film entitled "Silver: An American Bald Eagle"

WILDLIFE JOURNAL Editorial Staff:

Gary Bogue
Wildlife Systems
Ann Brice
WRC
Susan Kelly
Peninsula Humane Society
Tina Papenhause
WRC
Carter Schleicher
Coyote Point Museum

Informational Literature

Copies may be ordered at a cost of 50¢ each unless otherwise noted. There is also a postage and handling fee of 50¢ for 1-5 papers, 75¢ for 6-10 papers, and $1.00 for more than 10 papers. Please note some publications require additional postage.

"Care and Feeding of Orphaned Birds"
"Emergency Care of Birds and Squirrels"
"Vector Borne Disease Potential in California Mammals"
"Care of Sick and Injured Birds"
"Gardening to Discourage Deer Damage"
"Care and Feeding of Bushtit Babies"
"Necropsy Precautions and Procedures"
"Cliff Swallows"
"Substitute Diets for Orphaned Birds"
"Substitute Diets for Orphaned Mammals"
"Care and Feeding of Orphaned or Abandoned Tree Squirrels"
"Fluid Therapy in Birds"
"Raptor Care"
"Water Turtle Care Sheet"
"Initial Care of Injured or Oiled Water Birds" Revised 1981. ($1.50)
"Raptor Care and Rehabilitation" Unbound ($7.50 + $2.00 postage)
"Avian Drugs and Dosages" ($3.50)
"Opossum Rehabilitation" ($2.00)
"Raccoon Rehabilitation" ($3.00)
"Goldfinches" ($2.00)
"Immobilization of Simple and Compound Fractures in Songbirds and Raptors" ($1.50)

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION COUNCIL APPLICATION (please print): Date:_____

Name:_____ Occupation:_____ Phone (with area code)
Home:_____
Work:_____

Address:_____ City:_____ State:_____ Zip:_____

Organization:_____ Your Position:_____

Membership: Associate ($7.50)___ Professional ($15)___ Organization ($20)___ Renewal_____

I have ordered informational literature (see reverse side)___Yes___No

I suggest the following individuals as potential WRC members:

Name:_____ Address:_____

Name:_____ Address:_____