

**Talk Presented To
American Federation Of Aviculture
Las Vegas, Nevada,
August 22, 1980**

by C. Eugene Knoder
Colorado

Members of the American Federation of Aviculture, ladies and gentlemen, and guests. I am honored to be here today representing the National Audubon Society. Also, on a personal note, I am pleased to appear here among so many friends to accept from the AFA this handsome plaque you have awarded to the Audubon Society for "Creative Leadership in Preservation of Avian Species." I assure you that all of us at Audubon, from our president Russell Peterson, on down, are deeply appreciative of your recognition of Audubon's efforts over past decades in the preservation of wildlife. But just to show you we are not resting on our laurels, including this most recent one, let me tell you a little more about Audubon and some of our current conservation activities.

The National Audubon Society is a conservation organization founded at the turn of the century primarily in response to the slaughter of wading birds for the millinery trade. Now, in our 75th year, we include 447 chapters in 50 states and over 407,000 members. Our concerns continue to encompass many species of wildlife such as whooping cranes, condors, grizzly bears, whales and wolves. But as we have become increasingly aware of the interconnectedness of all life, we have become deeply involved with such additional subjects as environmental pollution, toxic chemicals, radiation, land use and energy production and use. Our emerging involvement in these fields does not mean we have slackened our efforts in wildlife conserva-

tion or, more specifically, our commitment to the preservation of endangered species and their habitats. Rather, these newer efforts are a logical extension of it. But work on species and habitat remains the core of our efforts, and I would like to acquaint you briefly with some of our work in that field. To carry out our work, the Society has developed a well-coordinated effort in three independent fields—research, education and action. let me describe first some of our educational efforts.

Much of our time and energy is directed to educating the public to the value of endangered and other species of wildlife. We support four Environmental Education Centers, all located near major population centers, which frequently feature programs on endangered animals. For example, our Western Education Center has conducted and published a series of four national symposia, on peregrine falcon populations, owls of the West, the California condor and, most recently, birds of Mexico.

The Society's magazine, *Audubon*, is sent to all members. It enjoys a reputation for journalistic excellence and reaches an audience far beyond the membership.

Our film department has recently produced "Time for Survival," a film discussing the conservation of endangered species. Audubon also produces TV and radio spots on such species as the bobcat, wolf, bald eagle and other birds of prey. We are now in the midst of making a major documentary film on the unique winter concentration of bald



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eagles in Alaska, the largest assembly in the world of America's national symbol. Since the early 1970s, Audubon's lobbying and science staff in Washington, D.C. has quadrupled. In addition to their lobbying work, much of their time is devoted to educating members of Congress and the executive branch on the topic of endangered species. For example, Audubon was instrumental in convincing congress to appropriate \$500,000 for a California Condor Recovery Program; this money was added to the Interior Department's budget last year. You may be interested to know that a part of the condor recovery program calls for captive propagation. This controversial provision was initiated and has been strongly defended by the National Audubon Society. We are convinced that the institution we have selected, the San Diego Zoological Park, under Dr. Art Risser's direction, will be successful in this last-ditch effort to save the California condor.

Audubon's top priority for land use and wildlife legislation at this time is enactment of an Alaska Lands bill. If this legislation passes this year, it will protect habitat for a number of endangered species—wolf, bald eagle, peregrine falcon and the bowhead whale. More importantly, it will prevent the addition of countless species of plants and animals to the endangered list as the Arctic and subarctic is opened to development.

The Society has long conducted a research program on endangered species. This produced classic studies on birds such as the flamingo, whooping crane, ivory-billed woodpecker and California condor. Recently our efforts have broadened. For example, in 1979, Audubon began a cooperative research effort with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, BLM and the State of Alaska to make a thorough study of the ecology of the bald eagle concentrations on the Chilkat River. An Audubon research biologist is on the recently-assembled team now studying the California condor. For many years Audubon has stationed a biologist at Rockport, Texas, to conduct research on the remnant whooping crane population that winters on the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge near there. These are but a few of our research projects on endangered species.

The Society also maintains a national system of sanctuaries, many of which provide habitat for endangered species. The Society has just acquired about 6,000 acres in central Florida, the Kissimmee Prairie, which contains wood storks, Florida panthers, alligators,

Florida sandhill cranes and bald eagles, among other species. A population of Atlantic puffins is being reestablished on our Allan D. Cruickshank Sanctuary on the coast of Maine by Audubon biologists.

The Society helped fund the initial efforts by Cornell's Peregrine Fund to breed peregrine falcons in captivity on a large scale. These many years of work by Tom Cade and his co-workers have finally resulted in captive-released peregrines raising young in the wild this year, a tremendous success.

On the international scene, the Society has for the last five years been a member of the US-Mexico Joint Committee on Wildlife Conservation. Through the Committee, we have contracted to fund research by Mexico's Department of Wildlife on the status of such endangered species as the Mexican wolf, the tapir, the grizzly bear, the thick-billed parrot and other species. In cooperation with the Direccion General de la Fauna Silvestre and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we jointly conduct surveys of wildlife habitats to locate potential refuges and wildlife preserves in Mexico. We hope to build more on this good beginning in the months and years ahead.

I have mentioned here only a scattering of Audubon's conservation activities, but you may have noted even in this brief catalogue our support for captive propagation of the California condor, the whooping crane, the peregrine falcon and the Mexican wolf. I am often asked the question, "What is Audubon's position on aviculture and captive propagation?" I don't have time to give a full answer to that fairly complicated question here today, but I think it is implicit in our organization's endorsement of aviculture as a conservation method with the preceding species that we are not opposed to captive propagation as a matter of policy and principle. We believe that captive propagation is a legitimate means—one tool among many—that may be appropriately used to preserve endangered species.

We will need aviculture and every other means available if we are to preserve wildlife on a global basis into the future. Perhaps most important for the future of wildlife is that we join our forces and work together.

Thank you. And again, let me express my appreciation for the award you have presented to Audubon and for the opportunity to personally share this occasion with fellow conservationists concerned for the welfare of wildlife populations around the globe.

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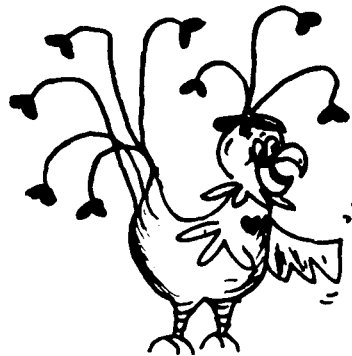
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