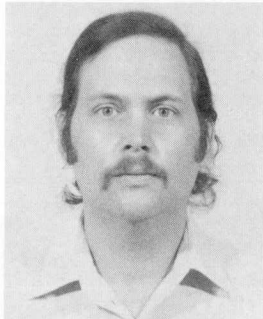


New Conservation Committee Chairman Announced



Jack Clinton-Eitniew

The Conservation Committee was established in 1984 under the chairmanship of Robert J. Berry, Curator of Birds, Houston Zoo. Mr. Berry remained chairman until July of 1986 when Guy Farnell, Curator of Birds, Atlanta Zoo, became chairman. Due to personal reasons Mr. Farnell resigned the position in early 1987. Jack Clinton-Eitniew, Director, Center for the Study of Tropical Birds, is the current chairman. Jack is known to most A.F.A. members through his *From the Field* articles. In addition to his *Watchbird* contributions he is editor of the *Honeycreeper*, a bulletin of the International Softbill Society, Latin American regional editor for the EYAS, bulletin of the National Wildlife Federation's Raptor Information Center and America's Correspondent for *Vulture News*, journal of the Endangered Wildlife Trust's Vulture Study Group.

Since 1984 a number of important avian conservation issues have been addressed by the committee. These include placement of Bali mynahs into the private sector, the possible reintroduction of Grayson's dove, development of a number of much needed avian studbooks and the plight of the endangered red siskin. In addition to dealing with these tough issues a working fund was raised from a variety of sources. The future plans of the committee include funding much needed conservation programs on species of concern to aviculturists, continuing fund-raising efforts and addressing critical avian conservation issues as they occur. The committee certainly would not have the "life" that it currently possesses if it were not for the countless hours volunteered by the previous two chairmen. They deserve our appreciation for a job well done. ●

CONSERVATION

Excerpts from *Ornithological Newsletter* — June 1987

The last remaining wild California condor was captured at 10:15 PDT on 19 Apr. 1987 on Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge. It has joined the other 26 members of the species in two zoos (Los Angeles and San Diego) that are engaged in a captive breeding program in an attempt to save the species from extinction.

There are more than 130 whooping cranes in the wild this year, according to biologists. They are in two flocks, the original group that breeds in Canada and winters along the Texas coast, and a man-established flock that moves between Idaho and New Mexico. The latter did not have a good nesting season, but is expected to survive. Twenty-six eggs hatched and 20 chicks survived from Canadian nesting birds.

Reprint from *The Tampa Tribune*, June 17, 1987

Dusky seaside sparrow succumbs to extinction (*Ammodramus maritimus nigriscens*). Lake Buena Vista (AP) — The last of the pure dusky seaside sparrows died Tuesday to complete the long-inevitable extinction of the stubborn little bird that refused to flee the intrusion of man.

The dusky, a six-inch, brown bird known for its small habitat, is the first species to become extinct in Florida, according to the Florida Conservation Foundation.

"It's a very, very sad thing to think about," said foundation spokesman Bill Partington. "The lesson that people need to learn is that we must not destroy habitat."

Actually, the extinction was guaranteed in 1980 when all that remained of the species were five male birds. Orange Band, named for the colored band used to tell the five males apart, was the last of those.

Charles Cook, director of the program to perpetuate as pure a species as possible, said Orange Band died apparently of old age, sometime shortly before its first daily inspection. He was about 12 years old.

"This is the first bird put on the endangered species list in Florida to come off it because it was extinct."

At the program run by Cook on Discovery Island at Walt Disney World, the five males were mated with females from a nearly identical subspecies, Scott's seaside sparrow. Orange Band hadn't been able to fertilize an egg for about two years, and the next-to-last pure male had died in March 1986.

The five surviving offspring at Discovery Island include one male, which is 75 percent dusky, and four females, which range in dusky purity from 25 percent to 87.5 percent.

"The offspring look identical to the dusky," Cook said. "A relative like that would be an acceptable surrogate species to populate the wild. The progeny are fertile and we are hoping to breed a new population."

Another less promising but more intriguing method of continuing the species is genetic engineering. Cook said Orange Band's heart and liver were removed and sent to the University of Atlanta, where genetic engineering researchers will keep them frozen for possible future use.

The dusky never wandered from its tiny habitat, a 10-mile stretch along Florida's eastern coastal marshes near Titusville.

The U.S. space program's decision to base its operation on nearby Cape Canaveral was one of the major factors in the disappearance of the habitat because it led to a population explosion. ●

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