

REVIEW

Raptor conservation today. Proceedings of the 4th World Conference on Birds of Prey and Owls, Berlin, Germany, 101-7 May 1992. - Edited by B.U. Meyberg and R.D.Chancellor. Helm Information Ltd., The Banks, Mountfield near Robertsbridge, East Sussex TN32 5JY, U.K. 799 pp. ISBN 1-873403-33-X.

One hundred papers from over 200 presentations at this conference of the World Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls are included in this book. Contents are divided into ten parts: 1. Population studies; 2. Rare and declining raptors; 3. Tropical rainforests and raptors; 4. Trapping, marking and radiotagging; 5. Biology and conservation of large falcons; 6. Reintroductions; 7 Population ecology of owls; 8. Extirpated, rare or lesser known owls; 9. Systematics and taxonomy; 10. Environmental contaminants and raptors.

An appendix of resolutions passed at the conference is included at the back of the book. A collection of high quality line drawings by Friedhelm Wieck provide the illustrations. Tables, graphs and illustrations are of a *uniformly high standard and the papers are generally well written*.

The papers published here provide an up-to-date record of raptor research throughout the world in a wide variety of areas. New Zealand was represented by Richard Holdaway of the University of Canterbury who presented a significant paper entitled 'An exploratory phylogenetic analysis of the genera of the Accipitridae, with notes on the biogeography of the family'.

One paper I found particularly interesting and which presented new information was a study of the Peregrine Falcon in Siberia by Eugene R. Potapov, where the relationship between the duration of male and female hunts, organochlorines and productivity was examined. Results indicated that egg shell thinning was not the only reason for low productivity; duration of hunts by males dramatically decreased in nests with higher reproductive success. Also the most important causes of egg and chick mortality beyond infertility were cannibalism and egg eating by parents, especially where parents spent long periods hunting.

Some of these areas of research have particular relevance to New Zealand and serve to highlight the paucity of knowledge and lack of appreciation of the importance of raptors in this country by conservation authorities. There is much of interest for those readers with a particular interest in raptor research or a more general interest in ornithological studies.

Steve Lawrence