

our environment

Bald Eagle Population Survey

Stable populations of the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) were reported in six regions of continental United States outside of Alaska during 1973, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service. These areas included the northern interior regions of Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin, the Chesapeake Bay area, and sections of Florida and the Pacific Northwest.

The number of active nests actually observed outside of Alaska was 627, with more than 500 young produced. The total number of nests estimated for the area was about 1,000. The bald eagle population in Alaska during 1973 was estimated between 30,000 and 55,000.

In Minnesota 104 active nests were observed, with 113 young produced; Wisconsin had 108 active nests, with 107 young produced; Michigan had 83 nests and 66 young; Ohio had 7 nests and 2 young. The Minnesota population appeared to have posted a gain during the year.

Areas of population decline included the Northeast, the Great Lakes shores, the Southeast (except for parts of Louisiana and Florida), Iowa, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri.

"Coughing" Fish Aid Pollution Studies

A natural response of various fish including trout, salmon, bluegills, and sunfish to certain chemical substances is being utilized to monitor water pollution. As the amount of mercury, copper, and other substances increases in the water, the frequency of a

normal gill-clearing process in these fishes also increases. Biologists at the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Water Quality Laboratory in Duluth, Minn., are monitoring the levels of these and other pollutants by means of a polygraph-like device which records "cough" frequency.

Robert A. Drummond, aquatic biologist in charge of the project, believes that the ultimate result of these observations "could be a system for keeping tabs on concentrations of complex industrial wastes entering lakes and streams from waste treatment plants and industry. A sudden increase in fish coughs within a given body of water could trigger an alarm to warn plant personnel that potentially damaging effluent is leaving the plant.

"We're currently looking at the short-term effects of 10 heavy metals and pesticides, and will be comparing the results with the already computed long-term effects. If the comparisons are favorable for this group, we feel the cough frequency test may be valid for other chemicals."

Eight Added to Threatened List

Three mammals, three birds, one amphibian, and one fish have joined the list of Threatened Wildlife of the United States — bringing the total to 109 species. The list, determined by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, includes 53 bird species, 31 fish, 17 mammals, and 8 reptiles and amphibians.

The new members of this exclusive "club" are the northern Rocky Mountain wolf, the eastern cougar, the Utah prairie dog, the Santa Barbara song sparrow, the Puerto Rican whippoorwill, the Mississippi sandhill

crane, the Okaloosa darter, and the desert slender salamander.

Some species on the list have been "threatened" by the encroachment of man, some by pesticides, and others by eradication of their natural prey.

Parks Planned for Breeding Shy Animals

A number of scarce animal species simply will not breed in captivity, at least not in conventional zoos. The Père David's deer, native to China, breeds most successfully when it is able to interrelate in groups with normal age and sex ratios. Male antelopes need ritual fighting over a female as a preliminary to pursuing her.

In response to such idiosyncracies, a federally funded farm, divided into 35-acre sections, is being developed at Front Royal, Va. Under conditions as near normal as possible, it is hoped that species such as Père David's deer and the scimitar-horned oryx, native to the Sudan, will do what comes naturally — and incidentally, provide new generations for conventional zoos.

Buffalo Meat Marketed in Chicago

Almost simultaneous with publication of the May issue of the Field Museum *Bulletin* — which featured an article on the "Return of the Buffalo" — one of the nation's largest retail grocery chains began marketing buffalo meat in the Chicago area. National Tea Company placed 100,000 pounds of the meat on sale at its retail outlets in and near Chicago. It was the first time since the turn of the century, reported company spokesmen, that the commodity had been available in Chicago stores.



1974. "'Coughing" Fish Aid Pollution Studies." *Field Museum of Natural History bulletin* 45(6), 14–14.

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