

About the canvasback, *American Birds* says: "Although far from being a rare bird, this species has suffered serious decline in recent years and should be watched carefully." As to the purple martin, it is noted that declines have been "especially marked" in the Pacific Northwest, the Appalachians, the Middle Pacific, and Southern Pacific regions.

Blue-listing a species does not necessarily mean it is declining throughout its range; trouble in part of its range may indicate more widespread trouble is on the way. The hairy woodpecker was included on the basis of three reporters in Florida and the Central Southern Region. The nighthawk was added on adverse reports from the Hudson-St. Lawrence and two areas in the Middle Atlantic region.

Largest category on the list is the birds of prey, of which 14 species are included: the sharp-shinned, Cooper's, red-shouldered, Swainson's, ferruginous, Harris', and marsh hawks; osprey, caracara, prairie falcon, merlin, kestrel, and the barn and burrowing owls.

## Pacific Walrus Hunting to Resume?

A proposal to waive the moratorium and implement regulations on the taking of Pacific walrus in the State of Alaska has been published in the *Federal Register* by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Under the provisions of the proposed waiver and regulations, management of walrus would be returned to the State of Alaska.

The principal effect of the proposal would be to allow once more the regulated sport hunting of walrus by all citizens, not just Alaska natives. This activity is expected to add fewer than 50 animals a year to the current average annual harvest of about 1,650 walrus, all now taken by Alaska natives for subsistence and their cottage industries. No return to commercial hunting will be allowed.

The primary biological factor behind the proposal is the fact that the Pacific walrus population in and near Alaska is approaching its optimum sustainable level, to maintain a balance with its environment.

Before large-scale exploitation by whalers of European descent which began in about 1868, the Pacific walrus was estimated to number about 200,000 animals. The population may have fallen to a low of 40,000 to 50,000 in the 1950 to 1956 period according to the best data available. Beginning in 1960, aerial surveys of walrus were taken and the total population was estimated to range from 73,000 to 117,000 that year. The 1972 surveys

provided a median estimate of 135,000 walrus, and a range of 93,000 to 178,000. More recent studies indicate that the population is still increasing and is approaching its optimum sustainable level.

## Federal Study of Endangered Butterflies

Forty-one species of possibly endangered or threatened butterflies are to be the subject of intensive studies by the federal government, twenty-six states, Cuba, Canada, and Mexico. Most of the butterflies under consideration in the study owe their reduced populations to two related problems—dependence on one primary food and land development. One of these insects is the Apache silverspot, a strikingly beautiful butterfly with a cinnamon brown top and silver spots underneath; it occurs in the Owens Valley and Mono Lake areas of California. It thrives on a type of violet which requires moist growing conditions. As the demand for water by nearby Los Angeles grows, drainage of water from Owens Valley will probably dry up the marsh areas where the delicate violet grows, thereby reducing the Apache silverspot population.

A Florida butterfly, the atala, which sports a velvety black and iridescent blue upper portion and orange and gold markings underneath, occurs only in the United States, even though it is a member of a group of tropical butterflies. In its caterpillar stage, the atala depends on the coontie, a primitive plant related to the sago palm. Current land development in Florida has destroyed several areas where coontie was available and now the atala appears only sporadically and unpredictably.

It is believed that butterfly collectors have not contributed to declining populations because collection usually takes place at a time of year after most females have laid their eggs and because males are most frequently the gender caught. Interestingly, the male butterfly is more frequently caught by amateur collectors because of its flamboyant tendency to flit about open meadows and marshes "looking for the action" while the female of the species maintains a somewhat more sedate posture nearer the ground.

This is the first attempt by the federal government to study butterflies that appear to be threatened or endangered. Several states have developed their own endangered species lists—some of which include butterflies—but the newly proposed study may result in the first national list of threatened and endangered butterflies.

## Airline Fined for Animal Deaths

A major international airline has been fined more than \$2,000 for inhumane transportation of wildlife, which resulted in the deaths of 151 animals in shipments totalling 168. Seizures were made at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport by federal agents under the authority of the Lacey Act, which provides for penalties for the importation of birds and animals into the United States under inhumane or unhealthful conditions. Chicago is one of the country's nine designated ports of entry.

The first offense involved 79 tree shrews, of which 67 died from lack of water. For inhumane treatment, the airline was fined \$920. In the second offense, lack of heat in a cargo plane caused 14 bushbabies (lemurs), 40 land crabs, and 30 skinks (lizards) to freeze to death. A fine of \$1,090 was assessed for inadequate shipping conditions.

## World Honeybee Population Drops

The world's honeybee population is dropping, and this could have an effect on man's food supply, says John Harbo, a U. S. Department of Agriculture entomologist.

"Man is at a point right now that anything that gets in his way ought to be sprayed and killed," said Harbo, research leader of the department's bee-breeding and stock center laboratory at Baton Rouge, La.

Harbo says that the bee shortage is not yet critical, even though the bees have been sorely affected by insecticides and herbicides and by physical intrusions into their habitat.

"This isn't something sudden. It's been happening for years," observed Harbo. "We're not going to run out of bees."

Some scientists are concerned about the effect that a drop in the world's bee population could have on food production. The successful growth of many fruits and other crops depends on cross-pollination by bees as they go from one flower to another.

One index of the reduction in bee numbers may be the recent, sharp increase in the price of bees. A queen bee today brings about \$5.50—about double the price of a few years ago.

Farmers with crops that need pollination often employ a beekeeper who brings in his own bees. The number of such tended colonies, according to one report, has recently dropped more than 10 percent. The same report estimates that a worldwide decrease of almost 200 million has occurred.





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