JOB PROGRESS REPORT

State: California		
Project Number: W-54-R-12	Project Title:	Nongame Wildlite Investigations
Job Number: <u>II-1</u>	Job	Title: Raptor Population Survey
Period Covered: July 1, 1979 - June 30,	1980	Job Type: Survey and Inventory

SUMMARY:

The 1980 Raptor Survey included 35 routes conducted during the winter survey resulting in sightings of 2,903 raptors of 17 species; 32 routes were conducted during the summer survey resulting in sightings of 1,302 raptors of 13 species.

During the winter survey, an average of 205 raptors were sighted per 100 miles. A total of 1,415.9 miles were covered during this period. During the summer survey, there was an average of 94 raptors per 100 miles. A total of 1,385.1 miles were surveyed during the summer. The Red-tailed Hawk, Turkey Vulture and American Kestrel were, as in previous years, the most frequently sighted raptors. More raptors were sighted per mile this winter than in any other year since 1971.

BACKGROUND:

Raptor surveys, initiated in December, 1970, involve reporting all raptor species and numbers observed along permanently established survey routes throughout the state.

During the first survey years, 54 routes were sampled four times a year. In 1975 the number of routes surveyed was reduced to 42 which were sampled twice a year. It was decided in 1976 to run a 42 route sample every third year and a 15 route sample in the intervening years. In 1977, it was recommended that the 15 route sample be discontinued entirely and the 42 route sample be conducted every four years. These changes were made in efforts to improve coverage of survey routes and produce more useable data. Logistical considerations also effected changes.

Following the 42 route sample conducted in 1979, it was decided that in order to more accurately determine trends in raptor populations, the 42 route sample would have to be conducted twice annually. The 1979 and 1980 surveys were the first large sample size surveys run in consecutive years since 1975. It is hoped this latest modification will ensure that adaquate samples of data will be produced even if work conflicts, bad weather, and other considerations prevent complete coverage of raptor survey routes during a particular period.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives are to determine the relative abundance and population trends of raptors wintering and breeding in California. The surveys are not intended to yield absolute population numbers, but rather to provide a comparative index indicative of population trends in diurnal birds of prey.

PROCEDURES:

Department personnel are requested to run 42 raptor routes (Table 1) in January and May. Surveys are run between the first and fifteenth of each month along routes that were first established in December, 1970. The routes are 30 to 50 miles long and are traveled at speeds of 20 miles per hour or less whenever possible. Surveys begin at 1100 hours and are completed by 1500. All raptors sighted are recorded and weather conditions are noted at the beginning and end of each survey.

FINDINGS:

During 1980, 35 of 42 raptor routes were completed in January and 32 of 42 routes were run in May. The average of 79.5% routes completed is considerably lower than the 94% completed in 1979.

The time period for running raptor routes was extended an additional 10-15 days each month to ensure that work conflicts and poor weather conditions would not result in unsurveyed routes.

A total of 1,415.9 miles were traveled in January and 1,385.1 miles were traveled in May yielding 2,903 and 1,302 raptor sightings respectively. This represents 205 raptors per 100 miles during the winter and 94 per 100 miles during the breeding season (Table 2).

Raptor sightings were tabulated by region (Tables 3 and 4) and geographical area (Tables 5 and 6). Most frequently reported raptors were Red-tailed Hawk (30.4% of all sightings), Turkey Vulture (25.0%), American Kestrel (24.0%), Marsh Hawk (5.2%), Rough-legged Hawk (2.3%), and Golden eagle (2.0%). Six percent of the raptors sighted could not be identified and the remaining 12 species constituted 4.9% of the total.

Both Goshawks and Peregrine Falcons were sighted this year for the first time since 1971 and 1977 respectively. Peregrine sightings were from Tulare and Inyo counties and a Goshawk was reported in Modoc County. The California Condor was not observed during this year's survey.

As in past years, the Sacramento Valley-Delta area was the principle raptor wintering ground, with 347 birds per 100 miles (Table 6). This was followed by the North Coast and South Coast with 224 and 216 raptors per 100 miles respectively. For the past two years the North Coast has demonstrated its importance as a wintering ground for raptors.

During the breeding season, the North Coast and the Sacramento Valley-Delta had the highest number of raptors per 100 miles. The Cascade region has ranked high in the last two surveys (1975 and 1979), however, the Cascade survey was not conducted this year.

ANALYSIS:

Efforts were made to ensure as complete coverage of the 42 routes to be surveyed each season as possible. Although completion percentages were not as high as in 1979, there was enough coverage to provide adequate data for analysis.

The apparent population declines of Marsh Hawk and American Kestrel in the Sacramento Valley-Delta and San Joaquin Valley which appeared in 1979 did not continue in 1980.

This year's sightings of American Kestrels and Marsh Hawks were greater or equal to that reported in 1975 and 1979.

Sightings of White-tailed Kites indicate a slight increase this year over 1979 data, but sightings are still fewer than in 1975.

Most of the remaining populations of soaring species appear to be stable with the exception of the Swainson's Hawk. Sightings of this species continue to indicate an extremely small breeding population.

Accipiters and Red-shouldered Hawks remain largely undetected due to the unsuitability of this survey method to census these woodland species.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Continue to run the 42-route survey program to determine trends of White-tailed kites, Swainson's Hawks, and Marsh Hawks.
- 2. Subject all raptor survey data to computer and statistical analyses to determine validity of apparent population trends.
- 3. Initiate and develop alternate survey methods to determine population trends of Accipiters and Red-shouldered Hawks.
- 4. Contact personnel designated to run raptor routes prior to established survey periods, and schedule alternate observers if necessary, to achieve full coverage of routes.

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Wildlife Management Branch

Date: September 22, 1980

TABLE 1

Raptor Survey Routes - 1980

Route Name	County	Route No.
Region 1		i,
Garberville-Bridgeville	Humboldt	R1-12-01
Litchfield-Nevada Line	Lassen	R1-18-01
Warm Springs Valley	Modoc	R1-25-01
Redding-Platina	Shasta	R1-45-01
Lower Klamath-Butte Valley	Siskiyou	R1-47-01
	Total 5 routes	
Region 2		
Sacramento River	Butte, Glenn & Tehama	R2-4-01
Calaveras-Stanislaus	Calaveras & Stanislaus	R2-5-01
Colusa	Colusa	R2-6-01
Sierra Valley	Plumas & Sierra	R2-32-01
White Rock	Sacramento	R2-34-01
Bradford-Jersey Island	Sacramento	R2-34-02
Sutter-Natomas	Sutter	R2-51-01
North Yolo	Yolo	R2~57-01
	Total 8 routes	
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Region 3		•
Bodega Bay-Stafford Lake	Marin & Sonoma	R3-21-01
Coast Highway #1	Mendocino	R3-23-01
Longvale-Covelo	Mendocino	R3-23-02
King City-Santa Ana Valley	Monterey	R3-27-02
Napa-Lake Berryessa	Napa	R3-28-01
San Juan Valley	San Luis Obispo	R3-40-01
Paso Robles-Laguna Lake	San Luis Obispo	R3-40-02
Mt. Hamilton-Livermore	Santa Clara & Alameda	R3-43-01
Santa Cruz-Pescadero Marsh	Santa Cruz	R3-44-01
Grizzly Island	Solano	R3-48-01
Laguna de Santa Rosa-Sulphur Creek	Sonoma	R3-49-01
•	Total 11 routes	
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Region 4	·	• '
Los Banos Wildlife Unit	Fresno	R4-10-02
	•	R4-15-01
Tehachapi Wildlife Unit	Kern	R4-15-01 R4-16-01
Avernal Wildlife Unit	Kings-Kern	R4-20-01
Madera Wildlife Unit #1	Madera .	R4-24-01
Turlock Wildlife Unit	Merced	R4-24-01 R4-36-01
Ridgecrest Wildlife Unit	San Bernardino-Inyo	R4-54-01
Sequoia Wildlife Unit	Tulare	グサーフサーハエ

TABLE 1 (Cont.)

Route Name	County	Route No.
Region 5		
Imperial Wildlife Area Pleasant Valley-Big Pine Palmdale-Gorman North Mono Lake Mathews Palo Verde Valley San Jacinto Unit Topock Gorge New York-Providence Mt. Camp Pendleton	Imperial Inyo Los Angeles Mono Riverside Riverside Riverside San Bernardino San Diego	R5-13-03 R5-14-01 R5-19-01 R5-26-01 R5-33-01 R5-33-02 R5-33-03 R5-36-02 R5-36-03 R5-37-01
Orcutt-Vandenberg	Santa Barbara Total 11 routes	R5-42-03

State Total -- 42 routes

Table 2
Raptor Survey, Statewide Summary of Birds per 100 Miles, 1971-1980

Year	Month	Miles Traveled	Raptors Reported	Raptors per 100 Miles
1971	Jan	2,335.2	2 ,7 93	106.2
Total	May	2,337.7 4,672.9	2,10 <u>3</u> 4,896	90.0 104.8
1972	Jan	2,331.0	2,687	115.2
Total	May	2,197.0 4,528.0	1,711 4,398	<u>78.5</u> 97.1
1973	Jan	1,658.7	2,394	144.3
Total	May	1,662.0 3,320.7	1,568 3,962	94.3 110.3
1975	Jan	1,777.6	2,470	139.0
Total	May	1,451.5 3,229.1	1,403 3,873	96.6 119.9
1979	Jan	1,712.4	2,409	134.7
Total	May	1,707.1 3,419.5	1,417 3,826	<u>88.9</u> 111.8
1980	Jan	1,415.9	2,903	205.0
Total	May	1,385.1 2,801	1,302 4,205	<u>94.0</u> 150.0

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*Less then 0.1% of total.

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Summarised by Geographical Avea

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RED- TAILED HAWK	28.7	12.2	97.0 25.5 58.6	\$ 84.5 0 2/0	200.0	23.0	5.9
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