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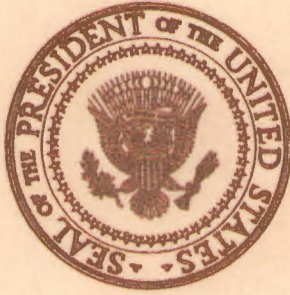
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Last Updated: 05/3/2023



National Birds of Prey Month, 1986

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The skies of our United States are host to hundreds of species of birds, but among the most awe-inspiring and magnificent are the more than fifty species known collectively as the birds of prey. These include the hawks, the owls, and our national symbol, the bald eagle.

These birds are not only some of the most graceful and impressive flyers, they play a vital role in the ecological balance by maintaining predator-prey relationships so essential to the stability of the natural world.

While nearly all Americans today recognize the beauty and value of these great birds, this recognition was long in coming. As we settled the land and developed our Nation, we were slow to heed what loss of habitat and indiscriminate shooting could do to this priceless resource. Fortunately, however, our knowledge and appreciation of these splendid creatures has deepened, as have our efforts to protect them. We now see the bald eagle nesting populations increasing each year. Once again, the peregrine falcon is a fairly common sight for bird-watchers along our coasts and even in several of our major cities. Motorists along our interstate highways can enjoy the frequent sighting of redtailed hawks resting in trees along the rights of way. Indeed, bird-watching for birds of prey is becoming an economic plus to many local economies.

Thanks to increased public interest and effective conservation law enforcement, illegal shooting of these great birds is on the decline. More and more, our citizens grow to understand the importance of these creatures to the American landscape and to treasure the spirit of strength, freedom, and boldness they represent.

To celebrate the continuing restoration of this magnificent resource, and to remind our citizens of the abiding need for wildlife conservation, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 288, has designated the month of May 1986 as "National Birds of Prey Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of May 1986 as National Birds of Prey Month. I encourage all Americans to observe this month by participating in appropriate events and activities sponsored by government agencies, individuals, and private associations and organizations throughout the country to promote the appreciation and conservation of America's birds of prey.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan