



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### GOOD NEWS ABOUT WILDLIFE IN 1981

A happy ending for a "widowed" bald eagle, a promising beginning for young sea turtles, and a successful journey for some endangered geese are just a few of the "good news" stories that happened to fish and wildlife in 1981, according to the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

—A rare black-footed ferret, the Nation's most endangered mammal, was discovered in Wyoming, and Service researchers studying it have since observed two more ferrets in the same vicinity. The ferrets are the first to be positively located in the wild since the early 1970's.

—A female bald eagle in New York whose mate was shot last year got a new family, with some help from wildlife biologists. First she found a new mate—a male eagle that had been transplanted from Minnesota and released at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in 1977. Then, because the female was too contaminated with pesticide residues to produce her own young, wildlife biologists put two eagle chicks into the new pair's nest. The chicks were reared successfully and will help to increase bald eagle numbers in New York State.

—For the first time ever, two injured manatees were successfully released to the wild in Florida after being rehabilitated in captivity. One of the large, docile "sea cows" was injured when she became entangled in a crab trap line, which wrapped tightly around her flippers. She was treated at Sea World and released with her calf, which was uninjured but had remained with its mother throughout the ordeal. Another female manatee that apparently had been struck by a boat was rehabilitated by two other private groups, Marineland and Homosassa Springs. The oceanaria and park groups rescue injured manatees, an endangered species, under an arrangement with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

—On the Hawaiian island of Kauai, a wildlife biologist turned air traffic controller in a research experiment to prevent young night-flying seabirds from crashing into brightly lighted areas. By putting shields on outdoor lights that were confusing the birds—a threatened species called the Newell's Manx shearwater—he succeeded in reducing the number of crashes by 28 percent. And at aid stations established to collect downed birds, members of the public turned in hundreds of the shearwaters, most of which were saved and released to fly another day.

--About 2,000 endangered Kemp's Ridley sea turtle eggs were moved by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Mexican Fisheries Department from a Mexican nesting beach to Padre Island National Seashore, where biologists are trying to establish a second, protected nesting beach. So that the little turtles would become "imprinted" on Padre Island, they were allowed to hatch and make their way to the ocean before they were captured again and transported to a National Marine Fisheries Service facility in Galveston, Texas. They will be raised in captivity until they are about 1 year old, when they will be large enough to have a good chance of surviving in the wild. The sea turtles will then be released in Gulf waters, and it is hoped they will return eventually to Padre Island to nest.

--Scores of endangered Aleutian Canada geese that were raised in captivity in the Lower 48 States were transplanted to Alaska's Aleutian Islands and are now migrating successfully with wild birds to wintering grounds in California. In all, more than 2,600 Aleutian Canada geese have been counted on their wintering grounds, up from a low of 800 in 1975.

--A record 530 Atlantic salmon returned to the Connecticut River to spawn. The young from the 1.2 million eggs produced by these highly prized game fish will be reared at State and Federal fish hatcheries and released into the river to help rebuild the fishery. Salmon disappeared from the Connecticut 100 years ago after dams blocked the migration of adult salmon to their spawning areas. The effort to restore the salmon in the Northeastern United States began in 1967 and involves the Fish and Wildlife Service, the States of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service, and two private power companies.

--As a result of recovery efforts for the severely endangered Puerto Rican parrot, a record number of nine parrot chicks were produced and survived in the wild this year. Two more chicks were produced in captivity, one of which was placed in a nest and survived to join the wild flock. This year's success brings the total number of Puerto Rican parrots to 29 in the wild and 15 in captivity.

--Service research biologists reported that eggshell thickness and reproduction are improving in eagles, osprey, and brown pelicans, and that the numbers of sharp-shinned hawks and Cooper's hawks are increasing dramatically. Researchers now agree that DDE, a persistent breakdown product of DDT, was responsible for eggshell thinning, reproductive failure, and population declines in the bird populations.

--American shad spawned naturally in the Susquehanna River for the first time in 150 years. The spawning followed the release of 1,165 adult shad in the river in May 1981 by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission and the Fish and Wildlife Service. The two agencies are collaborating with other State and Federal agencies and five power companies to restore the Susquehanna's historic shad fishery.

"Every year, hundreds of activities that benefit fish and wildlife are carried out by management professionals in State and Federal wildlife agencies," summarizes Robert A. Jantzen, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Many private individuals, organizations, and businesses are also doing a great deal to help conserve and restore wildlife. Although the public seldom hears about these individual success stories, each one is a contribution to a healthy future for America's fish and wildlife."

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