

**SOCIETY OF AVIAN
PALEONTOLOGY AND EVOLUTION**

INFORMATION LETTER

No 12, October 1998

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IN MEMORIAM

Nikolai Iosifovitch Burchak-Abramovitch
(1900-1997)

Eldest paleontologist, Professor Nikolai Iosifovitch Burchak-Abramovitch passed away on 15 October, 1997, when he has been sitting for working table at his home-office in Tbilisi, Georgia. Nikolai Iosifovitch was born 26 September, 1900, in the village of Martynovka, Zhitomir province, Ukraine, in the priest family. After finishing the grammar school in 1919, he started either to Kiev University, or to "Oswiaty Narodowej" Institute, exactly he did not know. After graduation N.I. worked in the Geological Institute of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, here he began to study palaeontology. Because of the beginning of the Second World War, N.I. went to a post-graduate course of the Palaeontological Institute in Moscow, where he defended a dissertation of Candidate of the Biological Sciences in 1941. However, documents for the ratification of dissertation were lost during the War. N.I. spent the years 1941 to 1945 on the South Ural area studying the caves. From 1945, N.I. began to work in G. Zardabi Natural History Museum in Baku, Azerbaijan. At the same time, he began his doctorate in the Palaeontological Institute in Moscow. The defence of his theses took place in the Tbilisi Institute of Palaeobiology in 1951. Here N.I. simultaneously defended the candidate dissertation "Fossil Oxen of the Old World" and the doctor dissertation "Fossil Ostriches of the Caucasus and South Ukraine". The years of his Azerbaijan period were occupied mainly by excavation and study of birds and mammals of the late Pleistocene Binagady Site.

From 1961 to the last day of his life, N.I. worked in the L.Sh. Davitashvili Institute of Palaeobiology in Tbilisi. His principal interests in science were fossil birds and mammals. He described

16 new genera and species. N.I. also studied many individual Pleistocene taphocenoses in Caucasus, Ukraine, Central Russia and Russian Far East. The cave deposits were of special interest for N.I. He was also an easily carried away man by nature and many years spent in search of Big Foot in Talysh Mountains, Azerbaijan. Also N.I. was expert on mosses and lichens, he had a large collection of them and published some papers. N.I. created a large skeleton collection of living birds and mammals, which will be useful for a long time in science.

N.I. was a famous tutor and reviewer. Many Azerbaijan, Georgian and Armenian experts in palaeontology were trained under his leadership. N.I. was closely connected with the Palaeontological Institute in Moscow. Some papers were published by him in collaboration with colleagues of this Institute, and he participated in some expeditions of this Institute, including the Soviet-China Palaeontological expedition in 1959.

Nikolai Iosifovitch was one of the last widely educated naturalists of the old hardiness. May his memory life long for everybody who knew him.

E. N. Kurochkin

Hildegarde Howard
1901-1998

Hildegarde Howard Wylde, Chief Curator Emerita of Science at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, died at her home in Laguna Hills on February 28, 1998; she was 96.

Dr Howard began her association with the museum in 1921, when, as a student at UCLA, she obtained a part-time position sorting material from the then recent excavations from the Rancho La Brea deposits. She continued this work throughout her student years, but it was the fossil birds of that famous site that quickly drew her attention and led to her specialization in avian paleontology.

At the University of California, Berkeley, Dr. Howard obtained her B.A. (1924), M.A. (1926), and Ph.D. (1928) degrees. In 1929 she accepted a full-time, permanent position at the museum; although her title was at first Junior Clerk and soon Junior Assistant in Vertebrate Paleontology she was actually charged with the care of the fossils from Rancho La Brea and with research on the birds of this collection; this fact was finally recognized with her promotion to Curator in 1938. She was probably the first museum scientist to hold a curatorship with a specialty as an avian paleontologist. After she was appointed Chief Curator of Science in 1951, she was responsible for an important expansion of the museum's scientific staff. She retired 10 years later but continued to come into the museum to carry out her research for decades thereafter. She published her last scientific paper, one of over 150 publications, in 1992.

Dr Howard published on fossil birds from all over the world but her most accomplished works were her monographic studies of birds of Rancho La Brea. Her research on these fossils was important not just for science but to exhibitry as well. After sorting through and identifying thousands of disarticulated bird bones recovered from the tar pits, she oversaw the preparation of the museum's first skeletal mounts of the extinct birds of Rancho La Brea; many of these dramatically posed skeletons are currently on exhibit in the George C. Page Museum.

Among the awards that Dr. Howard received during her exceptional career were honorary memberships in several scientific societies. In 1953, she was presented with the distinguished Brewster Medal of the American Ornithologists' Union. After retirement, she received a Guggenheim Fellowship in support of her continued research in palaeornithology. Her long dedication and service to the Natural History Museum were recognized in 1977, when the Hildegarde Howard Hall of Cenozoic Life was

dedicated in the Exposition Park Museum.

K. E. Campbell

NEXT SAPE MEETING

The 5th International Meeting of the Society of Avian Paleontology and Evolution will be held in Beijing, in June 2000. The persons who have not received the first circular can contact the

Organizing Committee

5th International Meeting of Society of Avian Paleontology and Evolution

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UPDATE ON SAPE PROCEEDINGS

Storrs OLSON will meet during the 28 September to 3 October week with the copy editor at the Smithsonian Press to go over the typescript for the proceedings of the fourth SAPE conference in Washington, DC. After long delays, the Press is at last moving steadily towards publication. Long delays in the publication of our proceedings are apparently the inevitable price our Society must pay for free publication by the host institution. Helen JAMES wishes to thank the authors who adjusted their artwork over the summer to meet the requirements of SI Press.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Without any notification, the general editor changed the numbering of our volume so that it is **NOT** number **88** as previously announced. For those who are citing papers in press in the volume, the correct citation is now Smithsonian Contributions to Paleobiology **89**.

NEWS FROM THE MEMBERS

ARGENTINA

Jorge I. NORIEGA is now working in estimations of body mass of the giant darter *Macranhinga paranensis* from the "Mesopotamian" (Late Miocene of Entre Rios Province, Argentina), and describing the remaining materials priorly referred to this taxon. From the same stratigraphic and geographic provenances of the latter, he is beginning to study (together with Claudia TAMBUSI - Museo de La Plata) the hind-limb bones of a medium sized phorusrhacid that seems to be very similar to another one found in earlier sediments of Patagonia.

He has also been working (together with Eduardo TONNI - Museo de La Plata) on Pleistocene climatic variations and paleoenvironments of Buenos Aires Province (Argentina) based on fossil seedsnipes (Thinocoridae) and micromammals.

Finally, he summarized the fossil record of Passeriform birds from the Late Pliocene-Pleistocene of Buenos Aires Province and discussed its paleobiogeographic implications.

NOVAS F. E. and PUERTA P. F. 1997. New evidence concerning avian origins from the Late Cretaceous of Patagonia. *Nature*, 387: 390-392.

TONNI E.P. y J.I. NORIEGA 1998. Los cóndores (Ciconiiformes, Vulturidae) en el Cenozoico superior de la región pampeana (República Argentina): Distribución, interacciones y extinciones. *Ameghiniana* 35 (2): 141-150.

TONNI E.P., PARDIÑAS U.F.J., VERZI D.H., NORIEGA J.I., SCAGLIA O., y DONDAS A. (in press). Microvertebrados pleistocénicos del sudeste de la provincia de Buenos Aires (Argentina): Bioestratigrafía y paleoambientes. *Actas de las Quintas Jornadas Geológicas y Geofísicas Bonaerenses*.

NORIEGA J.I. (in press). El registro fósil de Passeriformes (Aves) del Plio-Pleistoceno en la provincia de Buenos Aires: Implicancias paleobiogeográficas. *Actas de las Quintas Jornadas Geológicas y Geofísicas Bonaerenses*.

AUSTRALIA

Walter BOLES had several papers published, including a collaborative study with Dr Judith Field (University of Sydney), which reported the presence of dromornithid birds at 30,000 years b.p. This record is significant because it is the youngest accurately dated occurrence of these birds and because the remains appeared in the same deposit as human artefacts. He presented a paper to the Conference on Australasian Vertebrate Evolution, Palaeontology and Systematics on graculavid-like remains from Murgon (early Eocene); this will appear in the conference proceedings. Walter is in the final months of writing up his PhD and has been told not to allow himself to be distracted by any new and enticing material until he has completed this task.

Ralph MOLNAR has completed a manuscript on avian tibiotarsi from the Early Cretaceous (Albian) of New South Wales, Australia. This manuscript is to be published in the proceedings of the Second International Symposium on Gondwanan Dinosaurs (National Science Museum, Tokyo). The tibiotarsi seem to derive from ornithothoracine birds, less derived than *Patagopteryx*: they are clearly not enantiornithine. An incomplete vertebra, resembling those of *Ichthyornis*, is also described from the same locality.

BOLES W.E. 1997. Fossil songbirds (Passeriformes) from the Early Eocene of Australia. *Emu*, 97: 43-50.

BOLES W.E. 1998. A Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus* from the Pliocene of Riversleigh, northwestern Queensland. *Emu*, 98: 32-35.

FIELD J.H., & BOLES, W.E. 1998. *Genyornis newtoni* and *Dromaius novaehollandiae* at 30,000 b.p. in central northern New South Wales. *Alcheringa*, 22: 177-188.

BULGARIA

The activities of Zlatozar BOEV are :

- Discovery of a new Late Villafranchian locality where 20 avian bones have been collected in July

1998. The site represents a destroyed cave near the village of Kunino (Vrasta Regio, NW Bulgaria), with a fossil terrestrial vertebrate fauna. It is situated in a quarry, in a rocky massif, in Maastrichtian limestones.

- Works on Neogene and Quaternary birds of Bulgaria. Several new taxa have been described and the submitted papers are now in press. The new taxa include a Phasianidae, new genus and species, an Anatidae, new genus and species, new species of the genera *Falco*, *Buteo*, *Tetrao*, *Actitis*, *Geronticus*, *Coccothraustes* (two species) and *Regulus*, and a new subspecies of *Fulica atra*.

Papers in scientific journals

BOEV Z. N. 1997. Wild Galliform and Gruiform Birds (Aves, Galliformes and Gruiformes) in the Archaeological Record of Bulgaria. *Intern. Journ. of Osteoarchaeology*, 7: 430-439

BOEV Z. N. 1998. On some ornithofaunistic and ornithogeographical peculiarities of Bulgaria. *Historia naturalis bulgarica*, 8: 147-154 (in Bulgarian, English summary).

BOEV Z. N. 1997. Ornithoarchaeology in Bulgaria: Developments and results. *Archaeologia Bulgarica*, Sofia, 2:71-80.

BOEV Z. N. 1998. Species composition and evolution rates of birds (Aves): a review of modern concepts. *Historia naturalis bulgarica*, 8: 137-146 (in Bulgarian, English summary).

PANOVSKA-ASSENOVA C., ASSENOV L., BECHEV B., and BOEV Z. N. 1997. Results from the Census of the White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) in the Former District of Lovech in 1994-1995. In PETROV T. (ed.). The White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) in Bulgaria. BSPB, Sofia, 75-76 (in Bulgarian, English summary).

BERNARD-LAURENT A., and BOEV Z. N. 1997. *Alectoris graeca* Rock Partridge. In HAGENMEIJER W. J. M. and BLAIR M. J. (eds.). The EBCC Atlas of Breeding Birds. Their Distribution and Abundance. London, T. & A.D. Poyser, 207.

Papers in semi-popular editions

BOEV Z. N. 1997. The birds in the ecosystems of the past and present times. *Priroda*, Bulg. Acad. Sci., Sofia, 4: 37-40 (in Bulgarian).

BOEV Z. N. 1997. Where to Watch Birds in Bulgaria by P. IANKOV, Pensoft, Sofia, 1996, 182 p., L12,95 pb. ISBN 954 642 011 5. World Birdwatch, 19 (3): 23.

BOEV Z. N. 1997. About an unknown letter of my father, Nikolay Boev. *For the birds*, Spring/Summer, Sofia, 28 (in Bulgarian).

and about 20 other popular papers about animals.

CHINA

In October 1997 Zhonghe ZHOU gave a talk at the annual SVP meeting on the early diversification

of birds. While preparing for his oral exam, he has spent some time working on the anatomy of *Confuciusornis*, and as a result, two papers he co-authored have been published. He successfully passed his oral exam in May 1998 and also won a dissertation fellowship from the University of Kansas for the 1998-1999 academic year, hopefully the final year of his study in the United States. He returned to China this summer from 1st June to 12 August. For one and half months, he had been working in the field in Inner Mongolia, Gansu, Ningxia, Northwest China. Although abundant dinosaurs, turtles, crocodiles, fishes and even mammals were collected, no definite fossil birds had so far been recognized from the Early Cretaceous deposits. He spent a week with his family and the rest of his time in Beijing. He was able to examine a couple of new Mesozoic birds collected recently. Also he was very happy to see an unpublished segnosaur dinosaur with "feather"-like structure similar to that of *Sinosauropteryx*. This specimen is about twice as big as *Sinosauropteryx*. As in *Sinosauropteryx* Zhonghe has seen no branching or any other modern feather character. Mr Xing Xu from IVPP is currently working on this dinosaur.

ZHOU Z. 1998. Cladistics and Popper's philosophy. In Special Publications in Memory of Late Professor C. C. Young. Y. Tong, J. Li, L. Si (Eds). *Ocean Press*, Beijing.

ZHOU Z., and HOU L. 1998. *Confuciusornis* and the early evolution of birds. *Vertebrata Palasiatica*, 36 (2): 136-146.

Papers concerning the new discoveries of dinosaurs and early birds in China

Pei-ji CHEN, Zhi-ming DONG, and Shuo-nan ZHEN 1998. An exceptionally well-preserved theropod dinosaur from the Yxian Formation of China. *Nature*, 391: 147-152

FEDUCCIA A., and MARTIN L. D. 1998. Theropod-bird link reconsidered. *Nature*, 391: 754

GIBBONS A. 1998. Dinosaur Fossils, in Fine Feather, Show Link to Birds. *Science*, 280: 2051

NORELL M., MAKOVICKY P., and CLARK J. A. .1998. Reply to Feduccia and Martin, *Nature*, 391: 754

PADIAN K. 1998. When is a bird not a bird ? *Nature*, 393: 729-730

Ji QIANG, CURRIE P. J., NORELL M. A., and Ji SHU-AN 1998. Two feathered dinosaurs from northeastern China. *Nature*, 393: 753-761

RUBEN J. A., JONES T. D., GEIST N. R., and HILLENUS W. J. 1997. Lung Structure and Ventilation in Theropod Dinosaurs and Early Birds. *Science*, 278: 1267-1270

UNWIN D. M. 1998. Feathers, filaments and theropod dinosaurs. *Nature*, 391: 119-120.

CUBA

Oscar ARREDONDO reminds that he described, together with Storrs OLSON, the species *Bubo osvaldoi* in the Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington, in October 1994. The genus *Bubo* was cited for the first time in the Antilles.

This was, for the moment, his last article dealing with new fossil birds. But he has some very interesting new taxa described, together with his son Carlos, who is a biologist, but they have not been published yet. One of them deals with *Teratornis* and the species will be in honor of Dr. Olson. This genus is new for the Antilles, although it was known before in California.

The second species is probably the largest Accipitrid and is also a new genus. It will be dedicated to Dr. William Suarez, who is very interested in the Antilles' Paleornithology. With his son Carlos, they have another pleistocene material waiting for publication that includes remains of *Sarcoramphus* (new genus for the Antilles).

With Dr. W. Suarez they are describing another species of the extinct genus *Amplibuteo*, and a rather small species of *Cathartes*, from the Pleistocene. They are also working on some remains of *Gymnogyps*, the Californian Condor, which seems to have been present also in Cuba.

From these findings it is possible to affirm that the avifauna which lived in Cuba during the Pleistocene was diverse and abundant, especially as far as the birds of prey are concerned. It is also possible to remember the genus *Geranoetus*, published by A. Wetmore in 1928 from Ciego Montero, and discovered again in La Habana, then *Pulsatrix arredondoii* Brodkorb, four giant species of *Ornimegalonyx*, two large species of the genus *Tyto*, and *Titanohierax borraisi* (Arredondo).

This carnivorous avifauna inhabited the Antilles because of the absence of great carnivorous mammals that controlled the population of herbivorous mammals (rodents, monkeys, edentates). The Indian mute dog (*Indocyon caribensis*) arrived to the Antilles at the end of Pleistocene or even in the Holocene.

There are also a large number of new, extinct species, belonging to other orders O. Arredondo is working on them, together with his son Carlos and Dr. W. Suarez, and hopes that this work will be finished in a near future.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Jiri MLIKOVSKY continues to work on the late Cenozoic birds, with special respect to the Miocene of Central Europe. His joint project with Tommy Tyrberg (Bibliography of fossil birds) is slowly progressing.

MLIKOVSKY J., CHENZYCHENOVA F., and FILIPPOV A. 1997. Quaternary birds of the Baikal region, East Siberia. *Acta Societatis Zoologicae Bohemicae*, 61: 151-156.

MLIKOVSKY J. 1997. Late Pleistocene birds of Karlukovo, Bulgaria. *Historia Naturalis Bulgarica*, 7: 59-60.

MLIKOVSKY J. 1997. Taxonomic identity of *Haliaeetus angustipes* Janossy, 1983 (Aves: Accipitridae) from the early Pleistocene of the Czech Republic. *Buteo*, 9: 51-56.

MLIKOVSKY J. 1997. Sternal pneumatization in the waterfowl (Aves: Anatidae). *Acta Societatis Zoologicae Bohemicae*, 61: 227-231.

MLIKOVSKY J. 1997. Vogelreste aus dem Jungpleistozän der Gudenushöhle, Niederösterreich. *Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen aus dem Niederösterreichischen Museum*, 10: 33-38.

MLIKOVSKY J. 1997. Jungpleistozäne Vögel aus der Schusterlucke, Niederösterreich. *Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen aus dem Niederösterreichischen Museum*, 10: 102-5-114.

MLIKOVSKY J. 1998. Vertebrates from the Early Miocene lignite deposits of the opencast mine Oberdorf (Western Styrian Basin, Austria): 4. Aves. *Annalen des Naturhistorischen Museums in Wien*, (A) 99: 39-42.

MLIKOVSKY J. 1998. A new loon (Aves: Gaviidae) from the middle Miocene of Austria. *Annalen des Naturhistorischen Museums in Wien*, (A) 99: 331-339.

MLIKOVSKY J. 1998. A new barn owl (Aves: Strigidae) from the Early Miocene of Germany, with comments on the fossil history of the Tytonidae. *Journal für Ornithologie*, 139: 247-261.

MLIKOVSKY J. 1998. Early Pleistocene birds of Deutsch-Altenburg, Austria. *Acta Societatis Zoologicae Bohemicae*, 621: 135-141.

DENMARK

Anette V. KRISTOFFERSEN has begun a Ph. D. study on the birds from early tertiary deposits of Denmark, at the Geological Museum of Copenhagen, with E. Hoch as supervisor. The primary aim of the project is to get a comprehension of the diversity of birds in the latest Paleocene/ earliest Eocene Fur Formation of Denmark, both taxonomically and as to functional specialisation. This will be based on comparative anatomical studies of approximately 50 hitherto undescribed avian fossils from the Fur Formation.

A smaller number of avian fossils from the slightly younger Danish Plastic Clay (M. Eocene) will equally be analysed and considered. Preliminary studies suggest that the diversity of birds in the Fur Formation is fairly high, with several representatives of small to tiny perching birds, shorelike birds, lithornithids etc. Seemingly the avifauna of the Fur Formation is very similar to the avifauna from the London Clay (judged from literature and communication with Michael Daniels) and from the early tertiary formations of Wyoming. The preservation state of the fossils varies but often they are split along the plane of the fossil giving a more or less two dimensional aspect. There are however, several articulated specimens.

This Ph. D. study is a continuation on her master thesis studies, which comprised three articulated postcranial skeletons. An extended abstract is available on internet: New records of perching birds from the latest Paleocene/ earliest Eocene Fur Formation of Denmark. Geological Society of Denmark, On Line Series 1: <http://home4.inet.tele.dk/dgftth/online/anette.htm>.

FRANCE

Since the last SAPE Newsletter, Cécile MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ has worked on several manuscripts but, with the exception of the one on Moleta Cave, in collaboration with B. SEGUI and J. A. ALCOVER, none of them has been published. The manuscript describing a new species of *Ameripodius* (Galliformes, Quercymegapodiidae) was submitted to *Palaeontology* in October 1997, but so far no answer has been received. Another manuscript concerning the relationships between the Lower Tertiary avifaunas from Europe, North America and South America, has been accepted by the Société géologique de France and will be published in 1999. Cécile worked, together with Jacques BLONDEL, on a paper on the History and Evolution of the European Avifauna, which will be published in *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*. The rest of her time was spent working on the Upper Pliocene avifauna of the locality Ahl al Oughlam, situated along the Atlantic coast of Morocco. This locality has been excavated by D.

GERAADS and is dated at 2.5 mya. It includes a marine avifauna (Diomedidae, Pelagornithidae, Sulidae, Alcidae) associated with a terrestrial avifauna (Struthionidae, Threskiornithidae, Phasianidae, Psittacidae etc.). A part of the study of this avifauna has already been written up.

Antoine LOUCHARTE continues his PhD dissertation on the Pleistocene avifauna of Corsica. This includes mainly the localities of Castiglione 3 (Middle Pleistocene), excavated by Mrs SALOTTI, and of "La Coscia" (Upper Pleistocene), excavated by E. BONIFAY, and which belongs to the same group as the locality known as "Macinaggio". Antoine has also written a preliminary study of the Lower Pleistocene avifauna of Dursunlu, in Central Anatolia, Turkey. This locality has been excavated by a Turko-American team led by F. CLARK HOWELL and Tim WHITE, from Berkeley, and Erksin GULEÇ, from Ankara. This preliminary study is about to be published in the Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Sciences de Paris.

BUFFETAUT E. 1997. New remain of the giant bird *Gastornis* from the Upper Paleocene of the eastern Paris basin and the relationships between *Gastornis* and *Diatryma*. *N. Jb. Geol. Paläont. Mh.*, 1997, H. 3, 179-190.

BUFFETAUT E. 1997. L'oiseau géant *Gastornis* : interprétation, reconstitution et vulgarisation de fossiles inhabituels dans la France du XIXe siècle. *Bull. Soc. géol. Fr.*, 168 (6): 805-811.

BUFFETAUT E. & LE LOEUFF J. 1998. A new giant ground bird from the Upper Cretaceous of southern France. *Journal of the Geological Society*, London, 155: 1-4.

MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ C. 1997. Review of J. MLIKOVSKY : Tertiary Avian Localities of Europe. *Ibis*, 139(4): 715.

GEORGIA

Papers by Burchak-Abramovich translated into Polish by Zygmunt Bochenski, published in 1997 and 1998:

BURCZAK-ABRAMOWICZ M. [BURCHAK-ABRAMOVICH N.I.]. 1997. Śmiertelność ptaków wodnych powodowana skażeniami ropą i substancjami ropopochodnymi dawniej i dziś [Mortality of water birds caused by crude oil in the past and today]. *Wszelchswiat*, Krakow, 98 (7-8): 182-184. [in Polish].

BURCHAK-ABRAMOVICH N.I. & ZAVERNYAEV F.M. 1997. Kostny material ssaków i ptaków z gornopaleolitycznego stanowiska Chotylewo 2 - Bone material from the Upper Palaeolithic locality Khotylevo 2. *Przegląd zoologiczny*, Wrocław, 41 (1-2): 51-55. [in Polish with English summary]

BURCZAK-ABRAMOWICZ N.I. & SOŁOWIOW B.L. 1998. Cenny przyrodniczo obszar dorzecza Amtkelu w zachodniej Gruzji - The valuable nature area of the Amtkel catchment in Western Georgia. *Chronmy Przyrode ojczysta*, Krakow, 54 (2): 113-117 [in Polish - paper contains among others the list of late Palaeolithic birds and mammals from the Khupynypshakhva cave in the western Caucasus]

GERMANY

Although being retired since July 1997 D. S. PETERS had to be busy for various conferences and meetings dealing mainly with more theoretical items like species concepts etc. He has still his own little study in the Senckenberg-Institute and he is glad to have GERALD MAYR as his successor in the Department of Birds.

In summer 1997 Ji QIANG (National Geological Museum of China, Beijing) visited the Senckenberg- Institute for several weeks. He brought along with him four specimens of *Confuciusornis sanctus* from the collection of his institute. In the meantime about 25 specimens of this exciting bird from different collections could be studied. Papers on the results are being prepared or already in print. Anatomical data published previously (Peters 1996) could be corrected and/or completed. A humerus affiliated to *Aegialornis broweri* COLLINS 1976 is the first record of a swift from Geiseltal (Middle Eocene). A short note on this finding is in print.

The speculation presented at the SAPE meeting at Washington that Coliiformes and Sandcoleiformes should be lumped together could be substantiated by a more thorough analysis of new material (see G. Mayr). In this connection at last some of the enigmatic presumed "Coraciiformes" from Messel could be properly classified.

Some well preserved bones from near Nassirabad, Iran (Oligocene), seem to belong to a new species of *Frigidafons* CHENEVAL 1995. A publication is being prepared (cooperation with ALI HAMEDANI).

Gerald MAYR continues working on the Middle Eocene birds from Messel and finished the description of the caprimulgiform birds and of a new family of zygodactyl birds; together with D. S. Peters he described the coliform birds from this locality (including two species of the Sandcoleidae). He also completed the description of a trogon from the Oligocene of Cereste.

MAYR G 1997. Ein fruechtefressender Spechtvogel. - In: VON KOENIGSWALD, W. & STORCH, G. (Hrsg.): Messel - Ein Pompeji der Palaeontologie: 128-129, *Thorbecke*, Sigmaringen.

MAYR G. 1998. Exponat des Monats Januar: ein eozaener Papagei aus Messel. - *Natur und Museum* 128 (1): 26-28.

MAYR G. 1998. Ein *Archaeotrogon* (Aves: Archaeotrogonidae) aus dem Mittel-Eozän der Grube Messel (Hessen, Deutschland)? - *J. Ornithol.*, 139 (2): 121-129.

MAYR G. 1998c. "Coraciiforme" und "Piciforme" Kleinvoegel aus dem Mittel-Eozän der Grube Messel (Hessen, Deutschland). - *Courier Forsch.-Inst. Senckenberg*, 205: 1-101.

PETERS D.S. 1997. Ein Verwandter der Mausvoegel. - p. 122-123 in: V. KOENIGSWALD W. & STORCH G. (Ed.): Messel. - *Jan Thorbecke*, Sigmaringen.

PETERS D.S. 1997. Ein Kranichvogel. - 124-125 in : V. KOENIGSWALD W. & STORCH G. (Ed.): Messel. - *Jan Thorbecke*, Sigmaringen.

PETERS D.S. 1997. Ein frueher Greifvogel. - p. 126-127 in: V. KOENIGSWALD W. & STORCH G. (Ed.): Messel. - *Jan Thorbecke*, Sigmaringen.

PETERS D.S. & PETERS W.S. 1997. Anpassung - Kernpunkt oder Missverstaendnis der Evolutionstheorie? - p. 73-82 in: Koenig, V. & HOHMANN, H. (Ed.): Bausteine der Evolution. -*Edition*

Archaea, Gelsenkirchen.

GREAT BRITAIN

Gareth DYKE continues with his thesis research on the composition and morphology of fossil birds from the London Clay.

DYKE G.J. 1998. Does archosaur phylogeny hinge on the ankle joint? *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*, 18(3), 558-562.

DYKE G.J. 1998. The Lower Eocene Avifauna of the London Clay. *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*, supp to 18(3).

RAYNER J.M.V., and DYKE G.J. 1998. Comparative analysis of the limb bones of flying and non-flying vertebrates. *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*, supp to 18(3).

DYKE G.J., and THORLEY J. (in press). Reduced Cladistic Consensus Methods and the Avian Affinities of *Protoavis* and *Avimimus*. *Archaeopteryx*.

DYKE G.J. (in press). Dealing with problems of phylogenetic reconstruction in an extinct vertebrate group : an example using Mesozoic birds. *Abhandlungen der Jahrestagung der deutschsprachigen Palaoherpelologen*, Tübingen.

Michael DANIELS sends the following information:

The 12 months since I last wrote have been generally eventful with visits from several members leading to interesting discussions on various topics concerning fossil birds. Despite what I have observed in certain publications which misleadingly refer to avian fossils from the London Clay being in private hands and thus not available for scientific study, I should make it thoroughly clear that as far as my collection is concerned and the same comment would apply in respect of Mr. Bergdahl's material. we both allow full access and some of our specimens have been formally described in published manuscripts.

The results of Naze collecting have shown a considerable decrease in avian acquisitions. This situation being in part due to site conditions which are always influenced by the weather in this region of south-east England bordering the North Sea. Nevertheless, there does seem to have been a sharp decline in the number of bird fossils occurring in this *low* section of the London Clay. It appears that there is evidence of a lithological change having taken place in the strata now accessible. This may be due to the effect of erosion which could serve to reveal ever lower horizons of the formation. Birds are still to be found and the beds continue highly fossiliferous, fish remains appearing as frequently as previous, but turtles, which were once relatively common, are now only seen occasionally. These observations are relevant since for a considerable length of time exposures have been extensive and so the potential for success should have been enhanced. There is once again a threat to the site as the local authority plans cliff stabilization work. As previously, attempt has been made to proceed secretly and we only became aware that something was afoot by finding a small notice in the local newspaper inviting

contractors to tender for rock installation along part of the Naze cliffs. .

Despite a decrease in acquisitions, several recoveries have proved of exceptional interest. In April I was fortunate to dislodge a slab of uncharacteristically bluish coloured clay upon which a number of bones were seen on the broken surface. Outwardly this spot on the foreshore presented few signs to encourage digging hereabouts, but often recoveries depend on lucky chance probings and maybe some degree of sixth sense intuition! Fortunately, the matrix containing the bird was not of the usual crumbly nature and this factor helped to secure the bones from more damage than might otherwise have been the case. Importantly, though several long bone shafts had collapsed under pressure, these were to provide reliable measurements of length and assist in determining the bird's general configuration. Once slab and counterslab could be carefully prepared other hidden elements were discovered including both tarsometatarsi, one pristine. It was really due to the availability of these bones that two previous occurrences of the bird were traced, although one of these was represented by an appreciable part of the skeleton (see SAPE 1996) no clue as to identity had been established. Fortuitously, two circumstances that occurred just prior to the fossil's recovery proved remarkably enlightening. In March, Bob Chandler and Greg Tomlinson visited us, and a short time earlier friends at the Royal Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh had sent me a freshly dead *Tauraco leucotis*. Bob's visit was prompted by his need to examine the Naze Phorusrhacid specimens, the group of birds he is currently studying. No doubts were raised as to the legitimacy of these bird's identity so we were able to discuss positive aspects of their osteology and those of types on which he brought data and several actual relics. His commentary on these birds and his findings were both fascinating and instructive. Maybe, his further belief in a connection linking touracos, seriemas and Phorusrhacids might be met with some scepticism, but the practicality of his conclusions he was well able to demonstrate, and I feel convinced that he has a viable argument. Because I had already sensed that WN 94848A might have something to do with the Musophagidae, I brought this out for perusal and we again found reasons for seriously considering the affinity of these seemingly disparate examples. By remarkable near coincidence, the day after Bob and Greg left, I was to find the most extensive specimen that I first referred to which has added further important data to what may become an evocative issue.

Another pleasing event occurred for me when I accepted the invitation to visit Frankfurt. Stefan Peters, Gerald Mayr and others of the Senckenberg Museum treated me most kindly. Here I must mention Mrs Peters, who, together with her husband, provided me with such memorable hospitality on my last evening in Germany. My week at the Senckenberg was both happy and productive and the opportunity to see the Messel Pit another high point. To see the teams at work extracting the fossils and be shown all the infrastructure assembled to process the remarkable discoveries demonstrate for me the ideal circumstances when all the authorities work together to maximise a sites' potential. Messel fossil birds, about 6 my younger than those from the London Clay are nevertheless in many respects complimentary, with a number of types showing noticeable relationships. Thus our exchange of information has been very important.

On the downside, I have received further evidence that members have come under pressure not to visit the Daniels Collection. Indeed, I have been furnished with names of those advising that we here should be viewed as persona non grata. I have, of course, much contempt for those so involved. I suspect that their actions arise partly from the difficulties that would ensue from wider appreciation of Naze fossils and how the revelations from that source might endanger cherished and widely publicized "authoritative" convictions concerning avian evolution. To my mind, if there are flaws in what has been proclaimed about fossil birds, then such must be admitted and mistakes corrected. It is bad science if some feel that the concepts they advanced must be defended at all costs, especially so when their personal reputations are put at risk. New knowledge must be welcomed and accommodated, not suppressed by devious unprofessional intervention.

Members should also be aware that attempt was made to have my SAPE newsletter contributions excluded and. as far as visits to us at Holland-on-Sea are concerned. some have felt so intimidated. fearing of course the possibility of incurring damage to their careers if they chose not to heed 'advice' given have cancelled coming just to avoid this threat

I must say I am appalled to witness such behaviour amongst some members, people who would wish to be regarded as of higher intellect. There are wonderful opportunities for us all to further our avian palaeontological interests with all the exciting data that is coming forward. Yet some obviously seek to continue their pursuits in a narrow-minded, uncooperative and juvenile manner. A bunch of five year olds would likely show greater maturity.

Michael Daniels

ITALY

Marco PAVIA started a PhD project which concern the study of the Neogene-Pleistocene avifauna of the Southern Italy and Sicily, to know paleoecological and paleobiogeographical aspects of these quite unknown avian communities. At this moment the major part of the material comes from some localities near Palermo, in Sicily, and from the Gargano region, near Foggia, in Puglia, where a big collection of fossil bones, with *Nyctea scandiaca* and many other birds of prey, is present.

In November 1997, after the publication of the 11th Information Letter of the SAPE, there was the 5th Meeting of the AIAZ (Italian Society of Archeozoology), where he made a poster about some medieval birds bones from Moncalieri, a little town near Torino, in which the 30% becoming from wild birds, with some interesting species, such as *Phalacrocorax pigmaeus*, *Tetrao urogallus*, *Grus grus* and *Ciconia ciconia*.

Unfortunately the New Catalogue of Italian Fossil Vertebrates is now stopped, because L. Sorbini, editor-in-chief, died and it is difficult to reorganize the work.

He's still working on the skeletal collection of comparison, in collaboration with the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale of Carmagnola, a little town near Torino, and now this collection includes more than 400 skeletons of 180 species.

Monica GALA, from Roma, is a new member of the SAPE. She is working on the butchery marks and the tracks of utilization by man on the Late Pleistocene birds of Romanelli.

CASSOLI P. F., and TAGLIACOZZO A. 1997. Butchering and Cooking of Birds in the Palaeolithic Site of Grotta Romanelli (Italy). *Intern. Journal Osteoarchaeology*, 7: 303-320.

CASSOLI P. F., and TAGLIACOZZO A. 1997. Avifauna e Ittiofauna di Grotta di Castelcivita: considerazioni ecologiche ed inquadramento crono-stratigrafico. Il Paleolitico di Castelcivita. Culture e ambiente. *Electa Napoli*, p. 60-74.

GALA M. 1997. Strategia di macellazione e sfruttamento dell'avifauna nel giacimento dell'Epigravettiano finale di Grotta Romanelli. *Tesi di laurea in Ecologia preistorica*. Universita' degli studi di Roma "La Sapienza", 93 p. dact., 20 fig., 146 tabl., 109 fiches.

NAPOLEONE G., FUMANAL M. P., MASINI F., ABBAZZI L., CASSOLI P. F., TAGLIACOZZO A., CASTELLETTI L., MASPERO A., & GAMBASSINI P. 1997. Sintesi delle conclusioni; Synthèse des

conclusions; Synthesis of the conclusions. Il Paleolitico di Castelcivita. Culture e ambiente. *Electa Napoli*, p. 147-159.

JAPAN

Masaichi KIMURA, from the Laboratory of Earth Science, Hokkaido University of Education, and Kazuhiko SAKURAI, Curator at the Hobetsu Museum, Hokkaido, are new members of the SAPE. They have described the remains of a Pterosauridae from Northern Hokkaido.

KIMURA M. and SAKURAI K. 1998. An extinct fossil bird (Pterosauridae) from the Tokoro Formation (Late Oligocene) in Abashiri City, northeastern Hokkaido, Japan. *Journal of Hokkaido University of Education* (Section IIB), 48 (2):11-16

NEW ZEALAND

Joseph McKEE reports the collection of two further pseudodontorn (Pelagornithidae) humeri from the Pliocene Ohawe Sandstone (3.1-3.6 my) at Hawera, North Island, New Zealand. Both humeri are slightly crushed, but represent the first complete humeri of these gigantic birds found in New Zealand. The Hawera site has previously produced 3 partial humeri, a partial coracoid and a partial radius from these birds. The material collected, so far, from the Ohawe Sandstone indicates that there were at least 5 pseudodontorn specimens preserved in these strata, and suggests that these birds were quite abundant during the New Zealand Pliocene. The Ohawe Sandstone has recently produced bones from several other, but much smaller, marine birds which are currently under preparation.

Trevor WORTHY had not contributed since No 10 for 1996. The following are recent publications by his team from NZ. The Pleistocene fossil rail bones described here have been known for years and represent the first described landbirds older than the Late Quaternary in NZ. The paper on *Cnemiornis* draws upon morphological and genetic data to place this derived NZ genus close to *Cereopsis*.

The surveys of the NZ late Quaternary has progressed. The fossil record of Stewart Island to the south of the South Island has been examined and papers are in prep. Its fauna was depauperate compared to South island. Of note was the discovery that the abundant diving petrel bones in the western parts of the island were *Pelecanoides georgicus*, yet another extinction for the NZ region. Having determined how this species is distinguished from *P. urinatrix* it is now possible to show that it was also present, if not the main species, in the Chatham Island dunes as well.

R.N. HOLDAWAY and Trevor have lately been examining the Holocene faunas of the North Island in the Hawkes Bay region where volcanic tephra give wonderful stratigraphic controls. Searching for a significant North Island last glacial fauna continues with one site identified in the Waitomo karst.

In collaboration with A. Anderson of Australian National University and the Fiji Museum, THW is investigating the fossil record of Viti Levu in Fiji. New, important fossil sites have been found in 1997 and 1998 producing a range of new herp faunas but also birds. The historically extinct *Nesoclopeus* is abundant. Of considerable interest is the discovery of a very large pigeon and a similarly large megapode. Investigations continue and hopefully he can report on these taxa in the near future.

HOLDAWAY R. N. and WORTHY T. H. 1997. A reappraisal of the Late Quaternary fossil vertebrates of Pyramid Valley Swamp, North Canterbury, New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Zoology*, 24:

WORTHY T. H. 1997. The Quaternary fossil fauna of South Canterbury, South Island, New Zealand. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 27(1): 67-162.

WORTHY T. H. 1997. Fossil deposits in the Hodges Creek Cave System, on the northern foothills of Mt Arthur, Nelson, South Island, New Zealand. *Notornis*, 44:111-124.

WORTHY T. H. 1997. A mid-Pleistocene rail from New Zealand. *Alcheringa*, 21: 71-78 (New genus and species *Pleistorallus flemingi*).

WORTHY T. H. 1997. A survey of historical Laughing Owl (*Sceloglaux albifacies*) specimens in museum collections. *Notornis*, 44: 241-252

WORTHY T. H., and HOLDAWAY R. N. 1996. Quaternary fossil faunas, overlapping taphonomies, and palaeofaunal reconstruction in North Canterbury, South Island, New Zealand. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 26 (3): 275-361

WORTHY T. H., HOLDAWAY R. N., SORENSON M. D., and COOPER A. C. 1997. Description of the first complete skeleton of the extinct New Zealand goose *Cnemiornis calcitrans* Owen, (Aves: Anatidae), and a reassessment of the relationships of *Cnemiornis*. *Journal of Zoology*, London, 243: 695-723.

WORTHY T. H. 1998. The identification of fossil *Eudypetes* and *Megadyptes* bones at Marfells Beach, Marlborough, South Island. *NZ Natural Sciences*, 23: 71-85.

WORTHY T. H. 1998. A remarkable fossil and archaeological avifauna from Marfells Beach, Lake Grassmere, South Island, New Zealand. *Records of the Canterbury Museum*, 12(1): 79-176.

POLAND

Zygmunt BOCHENSKI continued works on the late Oligocene passerine remains from Polish Carpathians (a part of the text and photographs were sent to the coauthor D.S. Peters). The work on small Pliocene owl from Rebielice Krolewskie was limited to comparative studies of recent skeletons borrowed from the Zoological Museum in Kopenhagen. He determined one part of the Holocene bone material excavated at el Nabta in S Egypt - the paper should be completed next year. Zygmunt wrote also several entries concerning fossil birds for a popular encyclopedia and he prepares a complete set of entries for the new edition of a Great Encyclopedia. He prepared for publication in Acta zool.cracov. two papers received from N.I. Burchak-Abramovich before his death; one of them, concerning bird fossils from the Altai Mts is in press, the other which contains detailed description of the skull of *Caspiodontornis* will be published in 1999. Three papers by Burchak, mentioned last year have been published (their bibliography is given in the paragraph on Georgia). Zygmunt worked also on the nesting of recent birds.

Zbigniew M. BOCHENSKI continued his taphonomic studies (damage to bird bones by various species of raptors). He also worked (together with T. Tomek) on the guide to the identification of corvid

bones from Europe, and prepared (also together with T. Tomek) a guide to the identification of galliform hybrids. Zbigniew wrote also a chapter on taphonomy for a students' handbook "Podstawy archeozoologii - szczatki ptakow" [Fundamentals of archaeozoology - bird remains]. He presented his results during the 3rd Bird Bone Working Group Meeting (ICAZ), Victoria, Canada in August 1998 (abstracts published by the organizers of the ICAZ).

Teresa TOMEK prepared a guide to the identification of domestic birds from archaeological sites of Central Europe (it will be a separate chapter of the students' handbook "Podstawy archeozoologii -szczatki ptakow" [Fundamentals of archaeozoology - bird remains]. She also worked (together with Z.M.Bochenski) on the guide to the identification of corvid bones from Europe, and prepared (also together with Z.M.Bochenski) a guide to the identification of galliform hybrids. Teresa took part in reconnaissance trip to several excavation sites in the Ukraine. Bird remains from the upper Pleistocene of those sites will be probably studied in Krakow.

The handbook for university students: "Podstawy Archeozoologii - szczatki ptakow" [= Fundamentals of Archaeozoology - Bird Remains] is nearly finished. We hope to submit it for publication in 1998.

The avian skeletal collection of the Krakow's Institute has increased by several new species.

Andrzej ELZANOWSKI has a new position as Associate Professor and Chair of Vertebrate Zoology, at the Institute of Zoology of the University of Wroclaw. He has kept his honorary appointment as a Research Associate in the Department of Vertebrate Zoology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, USA.

BEKOFF, M. and ELZANOWSKI, A. 1997. Collecting birds: the importance of moral debate. *Bird Conservation International*, 7: 357-361.

BOCHENSKI Z. (1996) - Enantiornithes - a dominant group of the Cretaceous terrestrial birds. *Przedglad Zoologiczny*, vol. XL (3-4): 175-184 (in Polish)

BOCHENSKI Zy. 1997. List of European fossil bird species. *Acta zoologica cracoviensia*, 40 (2): 293-333.

BOCHENSKI Zy. 1998. The collection of bird skeletons at the Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals, Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow. *Notatki ornitologiczne*, 38 (3): 234-237 [in Polish with English summary].

BOCHENSKI Z. M. 1997. Preliminary taphonomic studies on damage to bird bones by Snowy Owls *Nyctea scandiaca*, with comments on the survival of bones in palaeontological sites. *Acta zoologica cracoviensia*, 40 (2): 279-292.

BOCHENSKI Z.M., HUHTALA K., JUSSILA P., PULLIAINEN E., TORNBORG R., TUNKKARI P.S. 1998. Damage to bird bones in pellets of Gyr Falcon *Falco rusticolus*. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 25: 425-433.

BOCHENSKI Z.M., TOMEK T. 1997. Preservation of bird bones: erosion versus digestion by owls. *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 7 (4): 372-387.

BOCHENSKI Z.M., HUHTALA K., TORNBERG R., SULKAVA S. 1998. Fragmentation and preservation of bird bones in food remains of the Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*. ICAZ Bird Working Group Meeting, Victoria, *Final Program and Abstracts*, p.: 10.

BOCHENSKI Z.M., TOMEK T. 1998. Identification of bones of galliform hybrids. ICAZ Bird Working Group Meeting, Victoria, *Final Program and Abstracts*, p.: 11.

ELZANOWSKI, A. 1998. Behaviorism, Derogation of animals, Individual interests. In: M. BEKOFF, ed. *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Welfare*, Greenwood Publishers, Westport, CT.

TOMEK T., BOCHENSKI Z.M. 1998. A guide to the identification of corvid bones from Europe. ICAZ Bird Working Group Meeting, Victoria, *Final Program and Abstracts*, p.: 9.

ROMANIA

Dr. Eugen KESSLER and Erika GAL continue to work on Pleistocene and Holocene avifaunas of Romania. Eugen identified two *Anser* sp.: one is from the Oligocene site of Cluj (from the same facies as that where *Rallicrox kolozsvariensis* LAMBRECHT comes) and the other one is from Minis (West Romania) and it has a Miocene age. Erika continues her Ph.D. studies and she identified Pleistocene and Holocene bird remains from different sites of Hungary. She was the guest of the Hungarian Geological Institute from Budapest in June and she is going to spend another year there. She obtained an one-year scholarship from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Both Eugen and Erika attended with papers the ICAZ Bird Working Group Meeting held in Victoria (Canada) in August. They are sorry that they could not be there personally. During the last two years Eugen wrote another two coursebooks for university students: "Ethology" and "Taxonomy, evolution and comparative anatomy of Vertebrata" (both in Hungarian).

GAL E., KESSLER E., and KOHL St. 1997. Osteometrical Studies of the Pectoral Girdle and the Forelimb Skeleton of Buzzards (*Buteo buteo* L., Cl. Aves) - *Studia Univ. Babeş-Bolyai, Biologia*, 42 (1-2): 83-95 (in Romanian with English summary).

GAL E. 1998. Osteometrical Studies of the Pectoral Girdle and the Forelimb Skeleton of Sparrow-Hawks (*Accipiter nisus* L., Cl. Aves) - *Collegium Biologicum, Cluj*, 1: 35-47 (in Hungarian with English summary).

RUSSIA

KUROCHKIN E.N. 1997. *Archaeopteryx* and birds. *Drug, Birds*, 3: 4-5 (Rus.).

KUROCHKIN E.N., and MOLNAR, R. 1997. New material of enantiornithine birds from the Australian Early Cretaceous. *Alcheringa*, 21: 291-299.

KUROCHKIN E.N., and TA PHUONG. 1997. Chim thuy to khong con la thuy to cua cac loi chim. *The gioi moi*, 258: 43-46 (Vietn.).

- KUROCHKIN E.N. 1998. New dinosaurs from China and the origin of birds. *Priroda*, 7: 63-65 (Rus.).
- KUROCHKIN, E.N., and WALKER C.A. 1998. Who were the Enantiornithes? In: ADAMS, N.J. & SLOTOW, R.H. (eds.), Proc. 22 Int. Ornithol. Congr., Durban. *Ostrich*, 69, 1-2: 174.
- KUROCHKIN, E.N. 1998. A new synthesis in early avian evolution and phylogeny. In: ADAMS, N.J. & SLOTOW, R.H. (eds.), Proc. 22 Int. Ornithol. Congr., Durban. *Ostrich*, 69, 3-4: 206.
- MIKHAILOV, K.E. 1997. [The character classification versus hierarchy of taxa?]. *Zhurnal Obshchei biologii* [J. General Biology (Moscow)], 58 (3): 107-112 (In Russian, Engl. summ.)
- MIKHAILOV, K. E. 1997. Fossil and Recent Eggshell in Amniotic Vertebrates: fine structure, comparative morphology and classification. *Special Papers in Paleontology*, No 56; The Paleontological Association, London; p. 80.
- MIKHAILOV, K.E. 1997. Avian Egg-shells: an Atlas of Scanning Electron Micrographs. *British Ornithologist's Club Occasional Publications*, No 3, p. 88.
- PANTELEYEV A. V. (1998) - New species of enantiornithines (Aves: Enantiornithes) from Upper Cretaceous of Central Kyzylkum. *Russ. J. Ornithol.*, Express-issue 35:3-15 (in Russian).

SPAIN

Tomeu SEGUI and Josep A. ALCOVER have been working mainly on the faunas from Menorca, that range mainly from the upper Miocene-Lower Pliocene to the Upper Pleistocene. While in Mallorca the upper-most Pleistocene is best known, the knowledge from Menorca comes mainly from the older assemblages. This fact is very important because gives us a vision of bird communities in a period rather unknown in the Mediterranean. It includes rich Procellariiformes faunas, Rallidae, Gruidae and Strigiformes as dominant elements. As new materials come up, the knowledge of some of this taxa will increase. Other have already been described in the PhD, that together with Dr. Alcover, we expect to finish by the end of the year.

Together with Pere Bover from Mallorca (who is studying *Myotragus*) and Bep Quintana from Menorca (who is working on mastozoological faunas from that island), we have visited Sardinia to collaborate with Dr. Paul Y. Sondaar in the excavation of some sites. Some preliminary work was done with the fossil birds of these sites, that proved the fauna to be diverse and to register a wide period of time.

Mercedes LOPEZ and J. C. RANDO continue working on fossil vertebrates from Canary Islands, mainly on birds. Together with B. Segui they have finished the description of a new species of extinct flightless passerine (Emberizidae: *Emberiza*) from Tenerife (Canary Islands). The fossil is larger than any living *Emberiza*, with larger legs and shorter wing elements giving unique proportions in the genus, and similar to Stephens Island Wren (*Traversia lyalli*) and Long-billed Wren (*Dendroscansor decurvirostris*), two extinct passerines from New Zealand. Its reduced forelimb bones and carina sterni, estimated wing length, weight and wing loading, indicate the absence of powered flight. The cranial osteology situates the species at one end of the variation of the genus. The reduction of its presumed habitat, the laurel forest, and the introduction of terrestrial predators to the island seem to be the reasons

for the extinction. This paper will be published in a few months.

Luis GARCIA i PETIT continued working on bird bones from archaeological sites and he studied the remains from the following localities :

- Sant Marti d'Empuries (northern catalan coast): 6th century B.C. to 3rd century A.C. Among the bones from the first settlement of the greeks in Empuries, he identified *Phalacrocorax carbo*, *Cygnus olor*, *Cygnus cygnus*, a goose, *Gallus gallus*, and *Fulica atra*.

- Cerro del Villar (province of Malaga): 6th century B.C. This phoenician settlement contained remains of *Sula bassana*, *Gallus gallus*, *Larus argentatus* or *cachinnans*, and *Columba palumbus*.

- City of Lleida (Catalonia). The most surprising find was the identification of a *Gyps fulvus* in the levels from medieval times.

- La Solana (Cubelles, southern catalan coast): 6th-7th century A.C. The following species were identified, most of which were very probably consumed by the inhabitants of this settlement: *Falco tinnunculus*, *Alectoris rufa*, *Gallus gallus*, *Columba livia-oenas*, *Garrulus glandarius*, *Pica pica*, *Corvus corone* and *Coccotharustes coccothraustes*.

- Culip VI (Roses, northern catalan coast): 14th century. Among the bones from this underwater remaining ship, he identified *Calonectris diomedea*.

ALCOVER, J.A., McMINN M., SEGUI B., SONDAAR P.Y., and John de VOS, 1997. Het paleontologische belang van de karstgrotten van de Balearen. *Cranium*, 14 (2): 83-90.

ALCOVER J.A., SEGUI B., and BOVER, P. (in press). Extinctions and local disappearances of vertebrates in Western Mediterranean Islands. in: R.D.E. MacPHEE (ed.): Extinctions in near time: causes, contexts and consequences. *Plenum Press*, New York City.

ELORZA M. 1997. La avifauna del yacimiento de Urratxa III (Orozko, Bizkaia). In MUNOZ SALVATIERRA M. and BERGANZA E. (coord.). El yacimiento de la cueva de Urratxa III (Orozko, Bizkaia). *Cuadernos de Arqueologia*, Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao, 16: 191-205.

GARCIA L. 1996. Los restos de aves. In PALOMAR V. & GUSI F. Campaña de excavaciones en el yacimiento del calcolítico-bronce de Cova Puntassa (Castellon). *Quaderns de Prehistoria i Arqueologia de Castello*, 17.

GARCIA L. 1997. Les restes d'oiseaux des sites de Serinya (Pays Catalans). In FULLOLA J. M. & SOLER N. (eds.). El mon mediterrani després del Pleniglacial (18 000 - 12 000 BP). Girona.

GARCIA L. 1997. L'estudi dels ossos d'ocell. In NADAL J., FULLOLA J.M. & PETIT M.A. (eds.). Animalia archaeologica. L'Arqueozoologia i la Tafonomia aplicades a l'Arqueologia. Societat Catalana d'Arqueologia. Barcelona.

RANDO J.C., LOPEZ M., and JIMENEZ M. C. 1997. Bird Remains from the Archaeological Site of Guinea (El Hierro, Canary Islands). *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 7: 298-302.

RANDO J.C., LOPEZ M., and SEGUI B. (in press). A new species of *Emberiza* (Emberizidae: Passeriformes) from the Canary Islands (Spain). *Condor*: february 1999.

SEGUI B. 1997. Avifauna fòssil del jaciment plistoholocènic de la Cova des Moro (Mallorca). *Boll. Soc.*

Hist. Nat. Balears, 40: 71-90.

SEGUI B., MOURER-CHAUVIRÉ C., and ALCOVER J.A. 1997. Upper Pleistocene and Holocene fossil avifauna from Moleta Cave (Mallorca, Balearic Islands). *Boll. Soc. Hist. Nat. Balears*, 40: 223-252.

SEGUI B., QUINTANA B., FORNOS J. J., and ALCOVER J.A. (accepted). A new genus of fulmarine petrel (Aves Procellariiformes) from the Upper Miocene of Menorca, Western Mediterranean. *Palaeontology*.

SWEDEN

The most important thing that Tommy TYRBERG has to report is, of course, that his catalogue of the Pleistocene Birds of the Palearctic has finally been published (see Order Form at the end of the letter). He intends to try to keep up with new developments in the field, and as a service to purchasers of the catalogue, he has started a page on the internet (<http://w1.115.telia.com/~u11502098/pleistocene.html>) where he is posting additional information as it comes to his attention.

Work is also proceeding on the bibliography of Avian Paleontology he mentioned in last year's newsletter. This is done in cooperation with Jiri MLIKOVSKY in Prague, whom he visited in February in connection with this project. The monography on the Holocene history of the Swedish avifauna which Per ERICSON and he have been working on is also finished at last, and they are now looking for a publisher.

T. Tyrberg is continuing his study of the longevity and turnover of avian species in the Pleistocene and has decided to expand it to include Nearctic as well as Palearctic data. Preliminary results indicate that most species are of Pliocene or Early Pleistocene age.

Together with Francisco HERNANDEZ, they have written a short paper on the history of the Demoiselle Crane in the Iberian Peninsula which has been submitted.

ERICSON P. G. P. 1996. The skeletal evidence of a sister-group relationship of anseriform and galliform birds - a critical evaluation. *Journ. Avian Biol.*, 27: 195-202.

ERICSON P. G. P. 1997. Systematic relationships of the palaeogene family Presbyornithidae (Aves: Anseriformes). *Zool. Journ. Linn. Soc.*, 121: 429-483

ERICSON P. G. P., and HERNANDEZ-CARRASQUILLA F. 1997. Subspecific identity of prehistoric baltic cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo*. *Ardea*, 85: 1-7

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UNITED STATES

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Gig Harbor, Washington

James GOEDERT does not have much new to report but continues to collect and prepare pterosaurs from Oligocene rocks in Washington state.

Lawrence, Kansas

Larry MARTIN and Zhonghe ZHOU enjoyed visits from Lianhai HOU and Alan FEDUCCIA in Lawrence during the fall of 1997. Their cooperation resulted in several manuscripts dealing with *Confuciusornis* and a new enantiornithine bird. One of them on the anatomy of *Confuciusornis* was published in the German journal "Naturwissenschaften" this year. Larry MARTIN attended the Dinofest Symposium in April 1998, co-chaired a session on dinosaurs, feathers and birds, and presented a talk entitled "Information on the soft tissue of dinosaurs". He also gave a talk on the nesting behavior of *Oviraptor* at the same meeting. He published a paper "The difference between dinosaurs and birds as applied to *Mononykus*" in the book "Dinofest International" in 1998. Larry Martin also published in *The Sciences* a book review on three recently published books on early birds by Feduccia, Chatterjee and Shipman respectively. Larry MARTIN and Zhonghe ZHOU were pleased to welcome John Ostrom, Paul Sereno, Luis Chiappe in 1997, and Ken Campbell this year. They enjoyed their talks and interactions with the graduate students. For this year's SVP meeting in Utah (30 Sept. to 3 Oct.), Larry Martin, together with Virginia NAPLES, and Zhonghe ZHOU, are going to present a poster on the

evolution of the avian furcula. Zhonghe Zhou will present a talk defending the arboreal origin of avian flight. Larry Martin, John Ruben, Alan Feduccia and Storrs Olson got a chance to examine the supposed feathered dinosaur *Caudipteryx*. There was a general agreement that the skeleton had many avian features including some more advanced than in *Archaeopteryx*. For the activities of Zhonghe Zhou, see also the paragraph on China.

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Los Angeles

Ken CAMPBELL and Fritz HERTEL continue their collaboration on the description of the ligaments of the New World vultures. This work is progressing, albeit slowly. They also are nearing completion of their paper describing their analysis of the function of the avian antitrochanter.

Ken has also been working on the description of some Eocene owls from the western U.S. He would be most interested in learning if anyone else is also working on Paleogene owls, from anywhere. Ken spent most of July and August in Amazonian Peru collecting fossils and doing paleontological reconnaissance work. He actually found a few Paleogene bird bones, but they are too fragmentary to describe.

Madison, Wisconsin

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New Haven, Connecticut

OSTROM J. H. 1996. The questionable validity of *Protoavis*. *Archaeopteryx*, 14: 39-42.

OSTROM J. H. 1997. How bird flight might have come about. *Dinofest International Proceedings*, 301-310.

New York

Luis CHIAPPE continues his studies of Mesozoic birds. Summaries on the origin of birds and their early evolution were published since the last newsletter. Papers on new taxa from the Cretaceous of Mongolia and Madagascar were also published. Between January and March of 1998, Luis had the

pleasure of hosting Drs Ji Qiang and Ji Shu'an from the National Geological Museum of China (Beijing). During their visit to New York, several Late Jurassic-Early Cretaceous birds from the province of Liaoning were prepared and studied. In August, Luis enjoyed the hospitality of Drs Ji Qiang and Ji Shu'an in Beijing. There, Luis visited the fantastic sites of Sihetun and Jianshangou, where most of the Late Jurassic-Early Cretaceous birds from China were found. This cooperative research has produced papers on *Confuciusornis sanctus* and on its close relatives.

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CHIAPPE L. M., NORELL M. A., and CLARK J. M. 1998. The skull of a new relative of the stem-group bird *Mononykus*. *Nature*, 392: 275-278.

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CHIAPPE L. M. 1998. Wings over Spain. *Natural History*, 107 (7): 30-32.

CHIAPPE L. M. 1998. Flak about flapping. *Earth Magazine*, April 1998: 7.

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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Washington, D.C.

Storrs OLSON and Helen JAMES spent most of the summer excavating a Holocene lake deposit on Kauai in collaboration with David BURNEY of Fordham University. By pumping water from their pits each day, they were able to excavate as deep as 4 to 5 m below the water table. David Burney's expertise in underwater excavation was indispensable, and they also enjoyed the assistance of many local volunteers, students, and colleagues. This excavation has produced an abundance of bird bones including three undescribed species of anseriforms, a number of undescribed passerines, and, apparently,

an endemic gull. Seeds, wood, pollen, charcoal, diatoms, and crab and snail shell are also well preserved in the site, providing ample clues to lowland paleoecology on Kauai.

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JAMES H. F. and BURNEY D. A. 1997. The diet and ecology of Hawaiian's extinct flightless waterfowl: evidence from coprolites. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 62: 279-297.

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Wilmington, North Carolina

Steve EMSLIE has recently moved to a new position at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, where he has accepted a tenure-track position in the Department of Biological Sciences. He will teach ornithology and conservation biology courses and continue his research on seabirds. This research will include applications of new satellite imagery from NASA to examine ocean productivity and locations of seabird colonies on the coast of North Carolina. Steve received a small grant from NASA in July to help initiate this work with a graduate student. In July, he attended the meetings for the Society for Conservation Biology where he co-hosted (with Dr. Gary Miller) a symposium on 'Conservation and Ecology of Seabirds in the Southern Oceans'. He also presented a paper on his research completed last year at Palmer Station, Antarctica, on abandoned penguin colonies. This work recently was highlighted in the 'Geographica' section of the August 1998 issue of National Geographic. Steve also has completed additional research on the paleoecology of the Upper Gunnison Basin, Colorado. Excavations in two caves in May/June recovered rich samples of bones, including birds, from deposits dated 45,000-18,000 B. P. He will continue working on this project with graduate and undergraduate students at North Carolina.

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University Park, Pennsylvania

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This Information Letter has been compiled by Cécile Mourer-Chauviré, Secretary of the SAPE. A
contribution of 10 US dollars, or the equivalent in other currencies, for assisting in defraying xerocopies
and mailing expenses, will be highly appreciated (banknotes in major currencies preferred).
