

THE IDAHO CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY  
Position Statement: The Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area  
(Presented at Public Hearing Held  
February 26, 1971  
Auditorium, Boise Interagency Fire Center  
Boise, Idaho)

The membership of the Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society consists of 150 career professionals working primarily in the wildlife field in Idaho. The parent organization for the Idaho Chapter is The Wildlife Society, an international organization headquartered in Washington, DC with about 7,000 members located in 60 countries.

The Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society wishes to go on record in favor of the proposed protective withdrawal of 26,255 acres of public lands in Ada, Canyon, Elmore and Owyhee Counties by the U. S. Bureau of Land Management for the purpose of establishing the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area.

We believe it is in the public interest to withdraw these lands for the following reasons:

1. The proposed withdrawal area contains possibly the most dense breeding concentrations of golden eagles and prairie falcons to be found on the North American continent. Both species have declined in numbers in portions of their breeding range in the United States. The prairie falcon is listed as a rare species in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife Redbook. At least 11 other raptor species occur in the area in moderate numbers.
2. The unique cliffs and bottomlands encompassed within the proposed withdrawal, together with the semi-desert fauna consisting of rabbits, snakes, ground squirrels, kangaroo rats and other small rodents, provide optimum living requirements for raptorial birds. Breeding sites are abundant. The open nature of the terrain provides excellent hunting areas for the raptors and the food supply is adequate. Food habits studies on the golden eagles which inhabit this area indicate that their principal food items are small mammals, largely jackrabbits. The eagles are not preying on domestic animals except as carrion.
3. The withdrawal would provide an ideal area for and would stimulate research on raptorial birds--their behavior, habitat needs, disease problems, pesticide effects. The effectiveness of such research effort may be considerably enhanced by the protection afforded through the withdrawal.
4. These populations of raptors need the narrow strip of land adjacent to the canyon rims to provide a buffer between roosting and nesting sites and the farming activities adjacent to the rim. We deem the buffer strip specified in the withdrawal to be absolutely essential to the success of the natural area.
5. Controlled use of the area by visitors interested in observing the birds and mammals of the natural area may make the site a national attraction which would be of benefit to the State of Idaho.

For the reasons listed, we believe that the proposed withdrawal should be approved and we strongly urge that the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area be created.



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