



# FEATHER LINK

## 2007 Annual Report



Connecting People & Birds through Conservation & Education

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## Thanks to all of our supporters

I am delighted to share another outstanding year of achievements in bird conservation. The passion that the participants and sponsors demonstrated towards these projects is remarkable, and we truly are successful because of these efforts.

► In 2007, we advanced our programs, both locally and internationally, growing our impact on bird conservation and increasing our exposure throughout the community.

► Feather Link's local projects continue with the monitoring of wildlife at Grand Valley, a reclamation project in Camp Dennison, Ohio. This year we have also created a lesson plan and activity guide for school outdoor education areas, with the goal to engage students in observing and documenting local bird populations.

► In 2007, we strengthened our international programs, continuing our work that was started five years ago with the first ecological site survey of islands along the coast of Chile. These efforts have led to important publications that will aid in the legal protection

of penguins and the areas they need to forage for food throughout the year. We presented our findings during the 6<sup>th</sup> International Penguin Conference, which was well received.

► The future holds several exciting opportunities, including invitations to participate in the Overseas Territories Environment Programme that will generate a conservation action plan to protect the rockhopper penguin throughout its range. We have also been asked to become a Species Champion for one of the 189 critically endangered birds, by BirdLife International.

► While we are extremely gratified by the financial support that we have received from those individuals, foundations and corporations that have invested in conservation, we are also focused on delivering long-term growth and advancement in our programs. Everyday we wake up to the challenges that wildlife throughout the world faces and know we have a huge responsibility to meeting these challenges quickly to ensure the survival of birds



*Rockhopper Penguin chick*

and the habitats they depend on to endure. On behalf of the staff and board members of Feather Link, Incorporated, I would like to thank you personally for your continued support.

David A. Oehler  
President  
Feather Link, Inc.  
January 15, 2008

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## PROJECT UPDATES

### Grand Valley Reclamation Project

The Grand Valley Site, formerly a gravel pit excavation, has become a reclamation project for the Camp Dennison, Ohio area. The site is located near the Little Miami River. The habitat here is known as the Western Mesophytic Region and with other forest habitats from the area it represents one of the most biologically diverse temperate regions of the world. Although 95% of this type of habitat has been lost over the last 200 years, these forests continue to sustain the most diverse and endemic land snail, amphibian and herbaceous plant biotas in the United States and Canada.

Restoration of the Grand Valley Site to

better represent the mixed mesophytic and riparian habitats will benefit species associated with these areas. Bald eagles, warbling vireo, mink and river otters use the habitat along the Little Miami River. Warbling vireos and Acadian flycatcher need mature forest, where they can forage for insects. A summer resident, the cerulean warbler is one of the most severely declining Neotropical migrants, due to habitat fragmentation. Frogs and salamanders lay



*Belted Kingfishers, one of the many birds that can be found at Grand Valley*

their eggs in vernal pools associated with the floodplains of this site. The future of the wildlife in these habitats relies on conservation and restoration efforts within these ecosystems in the face of past and future developmental pressures.

If you would like to help with our monitoring efforts or in creating bird and butterfly gardens, please contact us immediately!

## Survival of the Guam Rail

In 2007, Feather Link sponsored the work of Eric Duning, from Cincinnati, to work on Guam and Rota in the introduction of the Guam rail back into the wild. These birds, along with most of the other birds and reptiles on Guam, have been extirpated by the brown tree snake that was accidentally introduced onto Guam after World War II. Eric assisted in the care and feeding of the captive population of rails on Guam and also helped in the release of birds into suitable habitat on Rota.

While the rails on Guam still face major challenges there, the population on Rota is doing well and has been producing offspring for several years.



*Over the last 200 years, more than 100 bird species have disappeared and another 1,200 face extinction this century.*

## Searching for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker

On May 21, 2005, Dr. Geoff Hill, ornithology professor at Auburn University and two of his assistants, took a kayak trip down the Choctawhatchee River, in the Florida panhandle. Within an hour of launching their boats, they heard a bird hammering loudly on a tree. When the bird flew off through the canopy they got a clear view of a large woodpecker with white on both the upper

and underside of the trailing edge of the wing. An hour later they heard the distinctive double-knock of the ivory-billed woodpecker.

Members of Feather Link's staff have been fortunate to participate in the field work that is being conducted by Geoff and his team. We have also been able to provide equipment that will help in recording video of these birds.



*John Ruthven take a break to sketch a picture while surveying woodpecker nest cavities.*

## Penguins of Chile

Our work with the rockhopper and macaroni penguins has continued and we have successfully surveyed several islands along the coast of Chile in our search for penguin colonies. Along the way we have discovered that there are far more rockhopper penguin on these islands than was previously thought,



*Macaroni Penguins on Isla Noir*

although one island has seen the disappearance of 10,000 rockhopper and macaroni penguins, probably due to human disturbances. We have also documented new finds that include one island that was not on any map, undocumented black-browed albatross and macaroni penguin colonies on this island and a few other items including more striated caracara on the outer islands than was once thought. This year we continued our work, surveying colonies in the Beagle Channel and at the same time collecting DNA samples and tracking birds from this area to see if the increased numbers are from birds moving away from the Falkland Islands (where they were declining from over

fishing). Geolocational archival tags were attached to wing-bands and placed onto 15 individual rockhopper penguins within a colony found in the Beagle Channel, on Isla Terhalten. We will revisit this colony in 2008 to retrieve the tags and determine where these birds forage and migrate throughout the year. The first of two peer-reviewed articles appeared in the September issue of *The Wilson Journal of Ornithology*, outlining our results in Chile. A second, more comprehensive article will be published in that journal in September of 2008.

## Recognized Donors for 2007

We would like to thank the following investors in bird conservation for providing funds and assistance in our efforts during the 2007 year!

### EMPORER PENGUIN LEVEL

August A. Rendigs, Jr. Foundation  
Brian & Holly Hunt

### TROPICAL KINGBIRD LEVEL

William & Mary Jane Helms Trust  
Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden  
American Association of Zookeeper  
(Indianapolis Chapter)  
Grace Harvey Trust  
Kimberly Lenhart  
Jo Rapley  
Eric Mathis  
Emilie Duning

### SPLENDID QUETZAL LEVEL

National Band & Tag  
Cindy Richmond  
Susan Schmid

*With your help, we can join  
together in a growing  
educational and conservation  
partnership!*

## Looking Ahead

► *A Field with our Fine Feathered Friends*, is our lesson plan and activity guide for school outdoor education areas. Our goal is to supply classes with the booklets and materials that will allow each group to attract birds to their school and document these observations during the annual Great Backyard Bird Count.



*Rockhopper Penguin chick on Isla Terhalten, Chile*

► *Crested Penguins*, continue to be our focus in Chile. We will be tracking these charismatic birds with geolocational archival tags and through DNA analysis. We will also be taking a closer look at the impact the penguin colonies have on the plant life. These observations will help in restoration projects involving other seabirds throughout the world.



FEATHER LINK, INC.  
1013 Westchester Way  
Cincinnati, OH 45244  
USA

Phone: 513-475-6153  
Email: [david.oehler@fuse.net](mailto:david.oehler@fuse.net)

We're on the web!  
[www.featherlink.org](http://www.featherlink.org)

## We need your support!

Bird species are being lost at an alarming rate, due to habitat loss, the introduction of alien species and most recently global warming. Feather Link enlists participants in both local and global programs to learn first hand how and why conservation is so important.



*Seabirds face man-made threats from habitat loss to long-line fishing.*



*We are calling on you for support!*

Feather Link is looking for environmentally active investors to sponsor the tracking of penguins for the 2008 season. Tracking efforts are expensive, although the information that we gather is imperative for saving the foraging areas these birds need once they leave the breeding areas. For just \$1,200 you can help track one penguin for an entire year!

Feather Link, Inc. is a tax exempt 501 (c)(3) organization and contributions and donations are fully tax-deductible. Please feel free to contact us at;

[david.oehler@fuse.net](mailto:david.oehler@fuse.net) or write to us at Feather Link, Inc., 1013 Westchester Way, Cincinnati, OH 45244, USA



*Building nestboxes can help birds like these bluebirds to increase in numbers.*