Phenotypic and Morphometric Description of the Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) in Southeast Alaska

C. FLATTEN, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, 2030 Sea Level Drive, # 205, Ketchikan, AK 99901 U.S.A. R. LOWELL, K. TITUS, and G. PENDLETON, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, P.O. Box 240020, Douglas, Alaska 99824 U.S.A.

The taxonomy of North American Goshawk subspecies is currently a topic of much interest among biologists, forest managers, agencies, and conservation groups. Legal issues require that management agencies maintain well-distributed, viable goshawk populations and protect distinct population segments that may be threatened or endangered. One issue has focused on the validity of Goshawk subspecific designations that are based primarily on subtle phenotypic and morphometric distinctions. The American Ornithologists Union recognizes three North American Goshawk subspecies: A. *g. atricapillus, A. g. apache*, and *A. g. laingi*. *A. g. laingi* has been described as a smaller and darker race inhabiting the coastal temperate rainforests of British Columbia and Southeast Alaska. We collected phenotypic and morphometric data from 55 adult and 58 juvenile Goshawks captured at nest sites between 1992 and 1998. Comparisons of plumage suggest that adult and juvenile goshawks from Southeast Alaska express phenotypes ranging the darkest extreme of *laingi* to a form intermediate between *laingi* and *atricapillus*. Some individuals appeared to completely overlap *atricapillus*. Mean wing chords were smaller than those reported for other Alaska goshawks, but larger than *laingi* specimens from coastal British Columbia. Interpretation of comparisons between our live birds and museum specimens may be confused by slight shrinkage known to occur in the latter. We also found clinal variation in size within Southeast Alaska in some age-sex classes with smaller birds occurring in the south. Our results generally support the original description of the *laingi* subspecies, noting the probable occurrence of clinal variation within this region.

RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION

1998 Annual Meeting

Program and Abstracts

OGDEN EGYPTIAN CENTER

Ogden, Utah

30 September - 4 October