



The Burren Birds of Prey Centre and Aillwee Cave Present

First Annual Raptor Conservation Seminar

Saturday, 7th November, 2009
Aillwee Cave, Ballyvaughan, Co Clare



PRESS RELEASE AND INVITATION

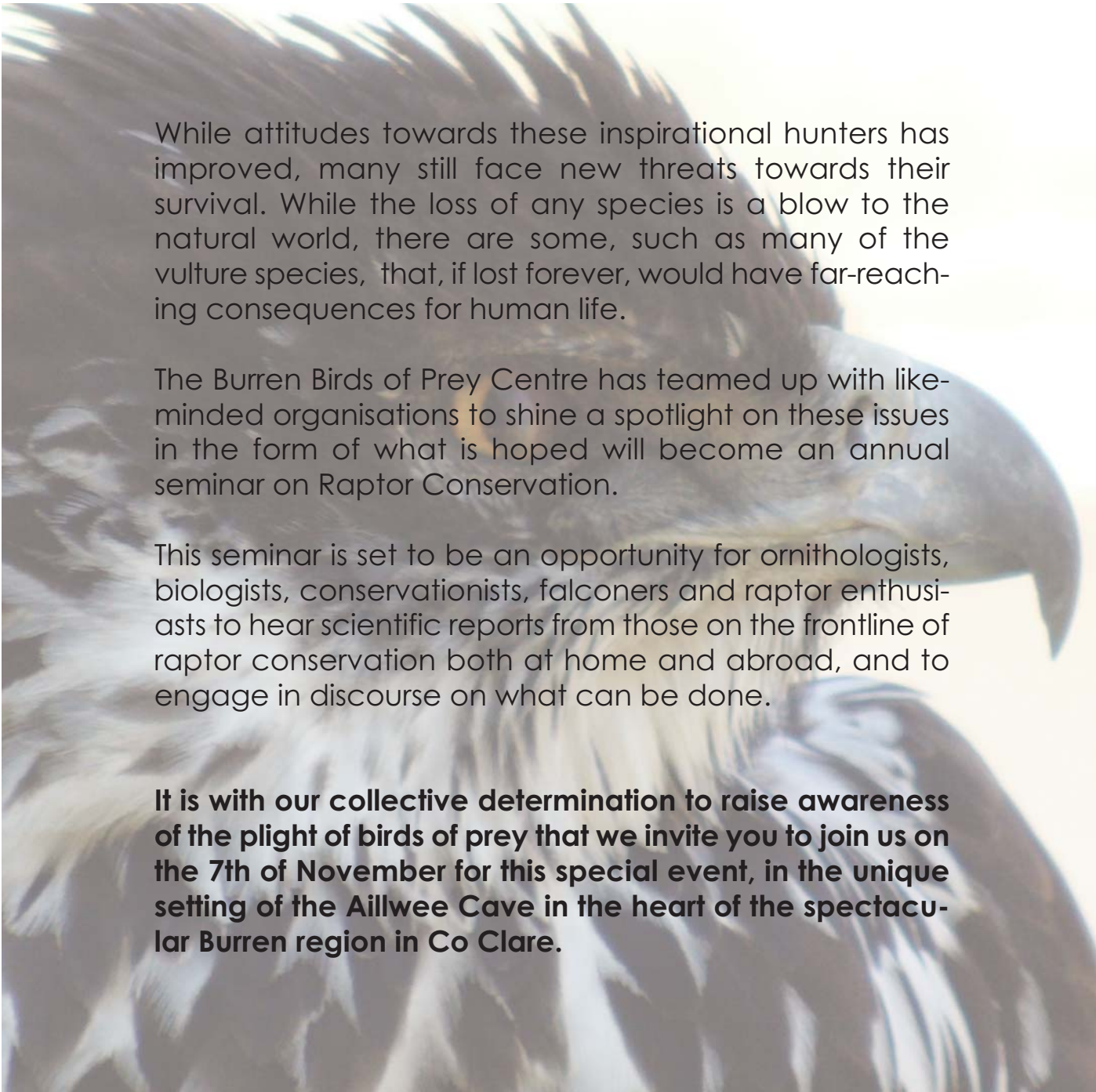
Raptors are many things:

Vital components in the balance of nature.

Iconic predators that have enthralled man since ancient times.

Paeans to evolutionary perfection.

And, sadly, some of the most persecuted animals in human history.



While attitudes towards these inspirational hunters has improved, many still face new threats towards their survival. While the loss of any species is a blow to the natural world, there are some, such as many of the vulture species, that, if lost forever, would have far-reaching consequences for human life.

The Burren Birds of Prey Centre has teamed up with like-minded organisations to shine a spotlight on these issues in the form of what is hoped will become an annual seminar on Raptor Conservation.

This seminar is set to be an opportunity for ornithologists, biologists, conservationists, falconers and raptor enthusiasts to hear scientific reports from those on the frontline of raptor conservation both at home and abroad, and to engage in discourse on what can be done.

It is with our collective determination to raise awareness of the plight of birds of prey that we invite you to join us on the 7th of November for this special event, in the unique setting of the Aillwee Cave in the heart of the spectacular Burren region in Co Clare.

AN INTRODUCTION TO

Raptor Research and Conservation in Northern Ireland and Raptor Monitoring Schemes

Presented by

Dr Marc Ruddock, Queens University, Belfast and Northern
Ireland Raptor Study Group

After centuries of persecution and pesticide misuse, Ireland has the lowest diversity of Birds of Prey in Europe.

There are many raptor conservation, management and research initiatives occurring within the island of Ireland from government, non-government and volunteer organisations. These initiatives are essential in delivering best-practice management techniques and ultimately ensuring conservation of our native and re-introduced raptors.

Dr Marc Ruddock will be giving an overview of his studies in raptor (mainly peregrine and hen harrier) ecology and will look in-depth at raptor monitoring programs and the opportunities for raptor enthusiasts to engage in raptor conservation at local and national levels.



Hen Harrier chicks at the nest

AN INTRODUCTION TO

The Asian Vulture Crisis

Presented by
Dr Richard Cuthburt, RSPB and Vulture Rescue

Tens of millions of vultures used to be present across India, Pakistan and Nepal.

Since the early 1990s, three vulture species – the Oriental White-Backed Vulture, Long-Billed Vulture and Slender-billed Vulture – have undergone catastrophic declines. Populations have decreased by at least **99.9%** in India over the last 12 years and by **92%** in five years in Pakistan.

Vulture numbers continue to decline at around **50% a year**, placing three critically endangered species on the brink of extinction.

Extensive research has identified the cause of the declines to be diclofenac, an anti-inflammatory drug routinely administered to livestock in Asia. Vultures are exposed to the drug when they consume carcasses of animals that were treated with it a few days before death. Diclofenac is highly toxic to vultures, causing kidney failure.

The potential loss of these species has profound ecological and social consequences in Asia. Vultures play a vital role by rapidly disposing of dead matter that would otherwise pose a risk of disease. Their decline has also seen a dramatic increase in feral dog numbers, which pose a real risk to human health and safety.

Vulture Rescue aims to halt these declines and to minimise the ecological and social costs of the decline in the three species of vulture. Through an active program of conservation research, captive breeding and advocacy, Vulture Rescue is working to ensure the survival of these vital waste-disposal experts in Asia.

Dr Richard Cuthburt will be talking about his current mission in Asia to arrest this catastrophic decline.



Seminar Programme



10.00 – Arrival & Tea/Coffee

10.30 – Welcome & Introductions, Mission Statement / Purpose of Centre & Seminar, Funding Opportunities and Conservation Goals

– Ben Johnson (Burren Birds of Prey Centre),
Eoghan Ryan (Irish Hawking Club)

11.00 – Raptor Research & Conservation in Northern Ireland and Raptor Monitoring Schemes

– Dr Marc Ruddock

12.00 – Lunch

13.15 – Tour of Centre and Flying Demonstration

14.30 – Asian Vulture Crisis and Conservation in Nepal

– Dr Richard Cuthbert, with introduction by James Irons

15.30 – Tea & Coffee

**16.00 – Questions & Answers;
Resolutions and Close**

RSVP (and for advice on accommodation)

Tracy Lynch, Aillwee Cave

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or

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