



RAPTOR RESEARCH NEWS

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EDITORS' NOTES

The Editors' hopes to get this issue out in July were unfulfilled. Issue No. 2 which was issued in May should have been labeled April rather than May. The months of issue are January, April, July, and October. Hunter wishes to notify his correspondents that replies to their letters should be forthcoming after the moving of his office is complete.

The reader may note in the News a greater degree of subjective conjecture than is usual in a more formal journal. Although the Editors may not agree with some of the conjectures, they encourage them as a means of stimulus to the readers. If you have facts that contradict statements in the News, write them up and send them to us. Hopefully the comments will encourage and give direction to observations and experiments.

Subscriptions and Associate Memberships are on a calendar year basis. If anyone has failed to receive any of the preceding issues, please notify Don Hunter.

ADDITIONAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

We are happy to report that the following persons have agreed to serve on the Raptor Research Foundation Advisory Board.

Dr. Frank C. Craighead, Environmental Research Institute, Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Joe T. Marshall, Jr., U.S. Army-SEATO Medical Research Laboratory, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Dr. Robert M. Stabler, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

BREEDING PROJECT INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The initiation of this exchange has been postponed to the first of September. The cooperators have been sent the necessary materials and directions.

EGGSHELL WEIGHTS IN RAPTORS

Of considerable interest in a recent paper by D. A. Ratcliffe of the Nature Conservancy in Great Britain: "Decrease in Eggshell Weight in Certain Birds of Prey" (Nature 215:208-210, July 8, 1967). A rather sudden decrease in eggshell weight of several raptors

occurred in 1946-50. He noted that for Peregrine, European Sparrowhawk, and Golden Eagle, "frequency of egg breakage, scale of decrease in eggshell weight, subsequent status of breeding population, and exposure to organic pesticides are correlated." He also presents further interesting information.

Joe Hickey, Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin, has initiated a similar investigation on this continent. In a letter he writes, "we currently are having D. W. Anderson visit various museum egg collections in order to get some standardized statistics on egg-shell weights prior to 1940. Dan started in the San Francisco area where he measured 3225 eggs in 940 clutches. He is currently in L.A., will work both coasts, and expects to concentrate on 20 species of raptorial and fish-eating birds. We do not expect this survey to encounter any appreciable numbers of sets collected after 1940 for the species of interest to us."

BREEDING PROJECTS

Last year we were happy to report that several projects had produced eggs, albeit infertile, with the exception of Ron Austing's Red-tails which produced not only fertile eggs but raised the young. The problem as related to the falcons, particularly the large species, seemed to be one of obtaining fertile eggs. This year, as reported in the April issue of Raptor Research News, fertile eggs had been obtained by an identical technique from a pair of Peregrines (Beebe) and a pair of Prairies (Kendall). We have since learned that Olendorff's American Kestrels laid eggs which hatched. We have then it seems gone quite a way toward solving the problem of obtaining fertile eggs. We regret however that we must report that all young died either shortly after hatching or within two weeks, as we have learned (unofficially) was the case with the American Kestrels. It appears that while we have taken a giant step forward, we still have much to learn about incubation and nutrition. Brief resumés of the above projects and their outcome in 1967 are given below.

Beebe's Peregrines. As reported in the last issue, a second set of four eggs was laid after the infertile first set of four was taken from this pair of Peale's Peregrines. Three of these proved fertile, two hatched, and the third was fully developed but did not get out of the shell. Both of the live hatched young died within two days of hatching. The cause of death is not as yet known. Laboratory tests are being made and the exact cause of death may yet be determined. It is suspected that parental diet or low humidity or a combination of both may be the cause. There appeared to be some difficulty experienced by the chicks in getting out of the egg. We hope to have a more extended report in the next issue.

Henry Kendall's Prairie Falcons. The pair of Prairie Falcons was subjected to the same management procedure as were the Beebe Peregrines. Here too the first set of eggs was infertile, the second, fertile. Young were hatched but were apparently killed by the parent birds. There was one variant in this project in that