

Last year we put two European Goshawks together. They fought each other or so we thought for three days. Then they settled down and started to build a nest. The cock worked much harder than the hen. Between them they built a nest eighteen inches in depth. Time and time again the cock tried to mount the hen but she would have nothing to do with him and he would sit on the edge of the nest mewling piteously. Each morning he decorated the nest with a sprig of dead stinging nettle, never plucking it until it was actually in flower. We wondered if the hen was too old to start breeding as she was then thirteen years old. We had hoped to find a mature hen European Gos before this breeding season but have had no luck although we did have an American Gos which had landed exhausted on a trawler in the Arctic Circle.

Relying on injured birds for our breeding stock means that they do not generally turn up in the order we would like. We have had over eighty European Kestrels in, for example, during the last two years. Only one has been a hen. That has paired up and is sitting on six eggs at the moment, so we are hoping.

Quite a few people are getting on top of breeding birds of prey and I have heard many talk loftily of breeding in captivity animals and birds to release to the wild. In a very modest way we have found this considerably easier said than done and would be most interested to hear of anyone else's experiences in this field.

NESTING OF GREAT HORNED OWLS AND REDTAILED HAWKS IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS 1969

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During the spring of 1969, 36 square miles were censused for large birds of prey. The study area is in the northern part of Boone County, Illinois. The area is principally prairie land, now under agriculture, with numerous small woodlots, no rivers but contains a good number of small creeks. There has been little change in land use within the last 10 years.

The only large birds of prey breeding within this area are Great Horned Owls and Red-tailed Hawks. Two nests of Great Horned Owls were found, each contained two owlets. Another Great Horned Owl was seen but it appeared to be unmated. Seven Red-tailed Hawk nests were located within the study area. These seven nests fledged nine young and in addition there were two addled eggs and one dead young found. Each nest fledged at least one young. In addition one Red-tail nest, containing one young, was banded outside the study area. Seven Red-tails were banded in all; three having left the nest before they could be banded.