

November, 1971

2709 S. Fairfield, Amarillo, Texas 79103

Vol. VIII, No. 8

ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF TREES:

The Amarillo Garden Center will hold its annual "Festival of Trees" on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 4th & 5th, at the Garden Center. The TPAS entry this year promises to be the best ever and those of you who have seen Peggy Acord's creative work will see why. They are beautiful and there will be some 200 on the tree. Boxed sets of 10 ornaments each will be on sale for \$3.00 a box beginning Nov. 15th. At our TPAS meeting that night a sample set will be on hand for your inspection. Tickets for the show will be on hand and we urge all our members to assist in selling them.

INFORMATION NEEDED ON THE GREAT BLUE HERON:

Beginning in 1972, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is planning a nation-wide survey of the Great Blue Heron. Since this species is at the top of the aquatic food chain, it may well be an important indicator species. The first step will be to compile an inventory of heronries. To this end, we appeal to all contributors with knowledge on this point to write us. Information may be recent or old, detailed or sketchy, as long as the site is remembered well enough to locate on a topographic map. We want this inventory to contain the exact locality of the herony, a general description of the site, and as much history as possible. Hopefully this stage of the program can be completed by winter so that arrangements can be made for census work in the 1972 breeding season.

A TEXAS WELCOME TO THE PEREGRINE:

Researchers investigating birds of prey say that possibly half of the peregrine falcons migrating to Texas in the fall may be killed by Texas hunters.

The estimate is based on a report by Dr. James H. Anderson of Colorado Springs who did the majority of banding of peregrines along the Texas coast.

An article in "Raptor Research News", a publication of the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. at the University of South Dakota, said that bands from 23% of the peregrines migrating from the Arctic and trapped in Texas during the fall are recovered. One researcher banded 25 immature birds and ten adults. He recovered 8 bands, and all but one of the birds were shot. This recovery rate is astronomical compared with other banding operations. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. reports a recovery rate of 6% on the mourning doves banded.

Researchers say that the recovery rate of banded birds isn't the full picture. They cite studies which show that less than 50% of banded birds recovered by hunters are reported.

The peregrine is the swiftest of the birds of prey. It feeds mostly on birds and can overtake nearly any bird in flight. The peregrine has been highly prized by falconers for centuries as a bird of sport. It is protected by state law in Texas. Each year Arctic migrations of peregrines come down the Texas coast on their way to winter in South America. While they are concentrated along the coast, they are banded.

Those interested in birds of prey have, for years, been worried about the declining numbers of peregrines due to the use of DDT. DDT and other chlorinated hydrocarbons affect egg shell thickness, making the shell so thin that the parent birds often break them during incubation. Researchers fear that the combination of DDT and guns pose a serious threat to the future of the peregrine.

....Texas Parks and Wildlife....

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION OF A RED-TAILED HAWK:

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology witnessed an "ornithological happening" this spring. When Stanley Temple, a graduate student working under Dr. Tom J. Cade, introduced two Red-tailed Hawks to each other and they did nothing but fight, he realized that the prospects for their successful mating were dim and decided to try artificial insemination, a technique well developed in the poultry industry and almost untried in wild birds. Both hawks, a 14-year-old male and an eight-year-old female, had associated with humans most of their lives, a condition that he knew was necessary for the experiment.

Mr. Temple collected semen and injected it daily into the female beginning March 25. When she laid her first egg on April 25, he immediately transferred it to an incubator that maintained a constant temperature and humidity for the 32-day period necessary for incubation. After struggling for the last two days to pip the egg, the nestling emerged, a one and one-half ounce, three-inch long male---just an ordinary normal healthy baby hawk. He was named "Egor". To look at Egor, no one would ever have suspected that he was history-making, that he was the first successful hatching, as far as we know, from the artificial insemination of a wild bird of prey, and that the possibilities suggested by his success were unlimited---possibilities for other experiments which, in time, might help restore and renew the declining populations of other birds of prey, including the rare and splendid Peregrine Falcon.

Mr. Temple kept the young hawk in a portable brooder where the temperature ranged between 75 and 85 degrees F until the natal down was almost fully replaced by juvenal feathers. Every four hours for the first 25 days, Stanley Temple and his wife, Barbara, fed Egor on raw meat supplemented with powdered calcium and vitamins. They cut the meat in small pieces and passed it to him with forceps.

When Egor acquired his juvenal feathers, the Temples moved him to a nesting ledge that they built outside their apartment window where he was exposed to sunlight and stimulated by the sight of the outdoors. The young hawk played by himself with sticks, small stones, and a plastic ball. Often the Temples took him out on the ground and played with him, tossing objects for him to roll and chase so that he could practice grasping, or, in the falconer's language, footing.

When the Temples brought Egor's male parent close to the nesting ledge, the young bird, recognizing the parent as another hawk and a menace, screamed and threatened and made such a racket that a pair of wild Red-tailed Hawks flew in and attacked the adult male twice. Stanley Temple feels that the response of the wild pair was due to a natural tendency of

of Red-tailed Hawks to defend any young hawk within their territory, Wild birds of prey will adopt and begin feeding a young hawk placed in their territory.

Eger has moved again. He now occupies spacious quarters in the new Behavioral Ecology Building on the grounds of the Laboratory. Because of the publicity surrounding his conception, he has many human contacts which keep him quite tame. Even if Mr. Temple wanted to, he would not release this tame creature into the wild where his first friendly advances to a human being might result in a newspaper headline, "Hawk Killed While Attacking Child," accompanied by a picture of a man "proudly" holding a dead hawk by the wings. Such a story did appear in a mid-western newspaper not too long ago. Of course, the bird of prey was only a tame Red-tailed Hawk accustomed to approaching people and alighting on them, a Red-tailed Hawk that, when fully grown, weighs only about three pounds and is an enemy mainly of mice and rabbits, its principal food.

In the event that artificial insomination becomes a practical and workable method for restoring endangered species, the young birds will grow up with the least possible contact with human beings and, when released into the wild, will be really "wild" birds.

....Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology....

GUADALUPE WILDERNESS HIKING:

The Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club has suggested some rules to follow while hiking in the "beautiful wilderness of the Guadalupe". We pass them on to you for your future reference should you wish to make the hike.

"The main thing to remember is that the Park Service has very strict rules and regulations for the Guadalupe which they enforce to the letter. Anyone entering the Guadalupe must obey the rules or the Park Service will not allow them to return.

1. A couple of weeks before you plan to visit the area, write 3 letters, one each to Don Payton, Carlsbad Cavern National Park Supt.; John Chapman, Park Manager, Guadalupe National Park; and Roger Reisch, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Pine Springs Route, Carlsbad, New Mexico. Tell them when you want to be there, what you want to do, and how many will come. Ask them if you can come at this time.

2. Keep the group small - 5 or 6 is the number the Park Service prefers. For regional outings, 30 is too large a number, we always divide into 3 separate hiking groups, so as to keep only 5 to 10 in each group.

3. They will write you back and when you arrive, check in at the visitor center so they will know you are there. If the rangers suggest an alternate outing or hike, take their advice, since they know the weather, etc.

4. Basically, 3 one day hikes are available: (1) up Guadalupe Peak (Texas' highest); (2) up to the Bowl and Pine Top Mountain (best view of the range); and (3) McKittrick Canyon (one of the most beautiful areas in Texas). The rangers will mark the trails for you on the map. All 3 are strenuous day hikes.

5. Everyone is required to car camp at Pine Springs Camp Ground only. No overnight camping elsewhere.

6. All litter must be carried out, so carry along litter bags. We always pick up the trash left by others.

7. All water must be carried. None is available.

8. Containerized fuels only - no cook or campfires due to extreme fire hazard.

9. Hikes should start early (daylight) since all hikes are long (8 hours) and extra time should be allowed for emergencies and finding trails.

10. Exercise legs for two weeks early, stay on trails, and remember that many people (some experts) have become lost in these mountains and have had to be rescued.

11. Guadalupe Peak Hike - stay on the trail drawn by the ranger. All other routes end in cliffs not passable.

12. Bowl and Pine Top Mountain Hike - stay on the trail. The Bowl forest is very dense and is the easiest place to get lost.

13. McKittrick Canyon Hike - you need a pick-up or 4 wheel drive. The best hike for those not used to strenuous hiking. Only 3 cars per day are allowed to go the entrance gate of McKittrick. Park only at designated location since every place surrounding is private property.

No one shall wade in the trout stream or fish, or climb on the stream banks or use the stream for drinking. Everyone must stay on the trail. The reason is because the stream ecosystem is very fragile and disturbing the stream bed or banks promotes erosion which does unreparable damage to its ecological balance."

BANDING BALD EAGLES IN MONTANA:

A few of the more than 200 Bald Eagles expected along McDonald Creek, Glacier National Park, during November are to be banded.

Glacier National Park is much interested in knowing where the big birds come from. Record count was Nov. 20, 1970 when 373 of America's emblem birds were observed. Attraction is spawning salmon.

Top figure is usually the third week of November though last year a count of 310 was made Dec. 3. The National Audubon Society formerly credited Montana with having 139 Bald Eagles with about 15 in Glacier. This figure has been revised to 209 for the state.

Yet, Glacier's eagle convention of 1970 attracted more birds than are known to be in the states of Montana, Idaho and Washington combined. Local belief is that many come from British Columbia.

CALENDAR:

Nov. 15: Monthly society meeting at the Garden Center - 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 18: Annual Christmas Bird Count - Lake Meredith (West).

Dec. 19: Annual Christmas Bird Count - Palo Duro Canyon (meet at Park entrance at the crack of dawn).