

Hawks and Mankind Linked for Centuries -

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Write These Wild Life Articles

Oregon Birds Do Much Good As Bug Eaters

In the literature of all nations the hawk has appealed to the imagination of mankind. In the middle ages falconry was one of the popular sports. It dates back to the unwritten past. The early Egyptians and Persians pictured it in frescoes and sculptures.

When firearms were invented, this proved to be a quicker and less expensive way of getting meat. So the use of hawks for hunting gradually disappeared.

In recent years, as the country has been settled and more people have taken to hunting, game birds have become scarcer. It has become a habit of many sportsmen to lay the blame of disappearing game birds to everything but themselves. Inasmuch as hawks and owls are predatory and hunt for a living, sporting and commercial interests have urged the shooting of all birds of prey on the ground that such killing will increase game.

It is true that some species of hawks, like the sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawk and the great-horned owl, are destroyers of many birds, yet the many other species live largely on insects and rodents and generally do more good than harm.

Among the various hawks of the Northwest, the sparrow hawk is the smallest and most brightly colored. From his name, one might think he made a business of killing sparrows. This is not true. Grasshopper-hawk would be a better name as he lives largely on insects and small rodents like field mice. He may be recognized by his reddish-brown back and black bars. This color extends on to the tail with a black band near the tip. The white throat and two black stripes down the side of the head are the easiest marks of identification.

This little falcon is a bird of the open country. One often sees him alighting on the top of a telephone pole, his tail moving up and down with an easy motion. He hunts over the open fields, sometimes hovering in mid-air with rapid wing beats, watching for some little animal in the grass below. His nest is usually in a hole in a dead tree. During the breeding season the male flies about with a high-pitched call note that sounds like "killy-killy-killy-killy." In the South this note has given him the name of killy-hawk.

Game Surveys Pushed

Under a co-operative agreement between the forest service and the biological survey, game surveys are now being made in national forests as fast as funds and men are available to the biological survey, the results of which will furnish the basis of sound game management plans. The first project tackled is the Superior national forest in Minnesota.

Today's Bird Walk

Today's bird walk will be led by W. A. Eliot, president of the Oregon Audubon society and author of the book on Oregon birds which bears his name. Those wishing to participate are requested to meet at the Washington street entrance of Washington park at 8 a. m.

Birdland's Marathoner and Two Hawk Species



—Photo of Sparrow Hawk by A. L. Campbell, others by Finley and Bohlman.

Above is the Caspian Tern, which, with other members of its ilk, are the greatest roamers among birds. Center left is the Sparrow Hawk and center right is the Cooper Hawk. Below is the Forster Tern, snapped on his nest.

Tern Travels 9000 Miles in Two Months

A recent press dispatch from Boston told how a common tern apparently flew 9000 miles in 60 days.

The trip of the far-flying tern began on a coastal island off Labrador. The bird was banded by Dr. Oliver H. Odgen Jr., and within two months of that date was found on the southern tip of the Island of Madagascar in the Indian ocean, indicating a flight of approximately 9000 miles. It was said that either the long flight or the climate was too much for the tern, for it was dead.

The story is of interest to Oregonians who occasionally have an opportunity to view this beautiful cousin of the gull, popularly termed Sea Swallow. Few persons, however, are familiar with its breeding and migration habits. Still fewer perhaps realize that one member of the family, the Arctic tern, is the world's champion traveler.

Terns are less marine in their habits than their cousins, the gulls, and are not so often seen so far from land. Whereas gulls seem to prefer rocky shores upon which to breed, the terns, except for two members of the family, Forster's and the Black, favor sandy beaches, laying their eggs in a smooth circle of pebbles without other nest preparation.

They haunt harbors, shores and beaches and live largely upon small fish caught near the surface by quick, sudden dives from the wing. Terns are easily distinguished from other birds by their long, graceful wings and long forked tails. Most of them have white bodies with pearl gray wings and black head caps.

The world's migration champion, the Arctic tern, is given its title of "Arctic" because it nests as far north as the bird can find anything stable on which to construct its nest. Indeed, the first nest found by man was only 7½ degrees from the north pole and contained a downy chick surrounded by a wall of newly fallen snow that had been scooped out of the nest by the parents. When the young are full grown, the entire family leaves the Arctic and several months later they are found skirting the edge of the Antarctic continent.

Wells W. Cook, assistant biologist in the United States bureau of biological survey, says "what their track is over that 11,000 miles of intervening space no one knows. A few scattered individuals have been noted along the United States coasts, but the great flocks of thousands and thousands of these terns which range from pole to pole have never been noted by an ornithologist competent to indicate their preferred route and their time schedule."

They arrive in the far north about June 15 and leave about August 25, thus staying 14 weeks at the nesting site. They probably spend a few weeks longer in the winter than in the summer home, and this would leave them scarcely 20 weeks for the round trip of 22,000 miles.

GUNNERS WASTE DUCKS

"The squirrel hunter with his long rifle of the old days never wasted a shot. He should be emulated by the boob who wastes a million crippled ducks every year by shooting at birds out of range," said Carlos Avery, former president of the American Game association.

4 Chief Enemies Of Duck Listed in Audubon Survey

"Shall Ducks Follow the Dodo?" is the title of a pamphlet just issued by the National Association of Audubon societies, setting forth the reasons why wild fowl in America is close to extinction, and explaining how it may be saved.

Although many factors have contributed to the plight of the ducks, the association points out that the only immediately controllable factor in reducing the kill of ducks, in order that an adequate breeding stock may be restored, is limitation of the kill by man.

The pamphlet lists as the four chief enemies of the ducks drouth, drainage, commercialization, including both bootlegging for the market and establishing of heavily baited slaughtering places masquerading as duck clubs, and legal hunting.

Drouth and drainage decreases the birth rate, and commercialization and hunting increase the death rate, the pamphlet points out. As to drouth, it says there is nothing to do but "hope and pray."

Blue Birds Move In on Swallows; Use Vacant Nest

Twenty-five students of bird life comprising a "bird walk" party under leadership of O. E. Wheeler and Mrs. L. A. Campbell experienced a thrill last Sunday morning. It was caused by the discovery that a pair of blue birds were using an abandoned cliff or eve swallow nest for their own home. The young birds evidently had the usual hearty appetites, for they kept both father and mother busy feeding them with insects from nearby gardens and fields.

The nest is one of several constructed by the swallows under the eaves of a barn at the home of J. N. Hartley, 2150 N. E. 92d avenue. Up next to the rafters on the inside were occupied nests of barn swallows, so that in addition to the blue birds, three members of the swallows family were studied in the one location. The nest of the Violet Green swallow was not found but the birds were in the air and on the telephone wires.

Nearly 40 different kinds of birds were identified on the walk.

Food Supplies Keen Problem In Fish Circles

The ocean is like a great balanced aquarium, where the upper layer of water is crowded with various kinds of organisms, and each layer of water has its own food supply for different kinds of fish. Our streams and lakes are governed by different conditions, and these are often determined by actions of man. The greatest problem in Oregon is to determine the relationship of various fishes to their food supplies. This can be worked out only by students trained for research. The problems are involved.

The native trout in Oregon streams might well be compared with the people living in any farming community. The existence of both depends on the food supply in the area.

If a thousand Asiatics or Europeans were suddenly landed in a farming community and had to hustle for a living, the Americans would suffer or be driven out.

SUPPLY LIMITED

The scientific facts, which few persons recognize, are that each good trout stream has a natural supply of insect food which is limited in amount. It is precisely the same as a meadow in the mountains. Its carrying capacity, according to the forage, may be 100 head of sheep. Turn a thousand loose in this area and they are soon starved out. There is a chance of the sheep surviving by spreading to other pastures, but the livestock business is not run on gamble and chance.

For years efforts of the game commission have turned toward producing 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 game fish fingerlings and planting them in streams, trusting to luck that the crop will mature. Many sportsmen have expressed the opinion that the fish supply is not increasing but diminishing and that out of the millions planted, few survive. The opinion is expressed that when 50,000 or 100,000 fingerling trout are planted in a stream in order to improve angling, the commission should supply some proof that fishing conditions on the stream have improved, so anglers may know that their license funds are not wasted.

Will an investigation show that Oregon's system of trout hatcheries is a failure? In the last six years, 122,038,467 fingerling fish have been released in the state at a cost of \$761,602. What are the results? Are our native game fish increasing, holding their own or decreasing?

IN DIFFERENT LOCATIONS

A preliminary survey of the food of Oregon trout, published by Oregon State college, strongly advises a scientific survey of streams where trout fry are planted. Large numbers of fish should not be liberated in any one area but rather in different locations along the course of a waterway. Hatchery-reared fish should be planted only where a survey shows fish-food organisms are abundant. Since the food supply in a stream varies the same as the forage does in a meadow, the survey should always determine the time of the year fingerlings should be released.

In the light of the facts discovered, liberations of young trout should not be made in tidewater or even where the water is fresh above tidewater because few aquatic insects are found in or near salt water. Observations showed that fish liberated in such places drifted downstream and no food was found in their stomachs. Many of these little fish were gobbled up by predatory species.

Massacre of Birds Goes On, Writer Avers

Arthur N. Pack, president of the American Nature association of Washington, D. C., thinks the present regulations regarding duck shooting are not much different from those of the old days when market hunting was in vogue. His statement follows:

"One of the principal benefits of the migratory bird treaty act and regulations of 1918 was the abolition of market shooting. It was thought then that the commercialization of any wild game was a threat to its existence—so hunting for the market was prohibited. If we were right then, we are wrong now, for we have permitted the growth and firm establishment of another form of exploitation of wildfowl for private gain—namely, by purveyors of hunting. This gentry includes a great variety of guides, boatmen and duck tenders, as well as proprietors of shooting lodges, game preserves and commercial duck 'clubs'."

"In banning the market hunter, we tried to prevent shooting for sale, but while reflecting smugly on that achievement, we have seen built up a system of sale for shooting that is a far greater menace to wild fowl."

"The system runs the gamut from comparative decency to enormous and ruthless abuse. Among such abuses are duck pens where no duck that comes is out of range, and worse, duck trenches where narrowly confined birds are shot en masse on the water. Massacre is the only word for slaughter of birds thus lured to their doom by heavy baiting. In some places, desert lands are made into ducking grounds by flooding and baiting, both of which practices are abruptly discontinued at the end of the shooting season. Some duck clubs guarantee the legal bag limit of ducks, making up deficits from a jackpot of birds shot by employees. Some are so managed that several 'limits' can be bagged in a day from a single shooting stand."