

10822 Ventura Blvd.
North Hollywood, Cal.
February 25, 1942

Mr. Sam Raddon, Jr.
The Oregon Journal
Portland, Oregon

Dear Sam:

I sent you an article from Irene about a week ago. Am sending you enclosed an article on the ostriches which are raised down here in southern California. Even if people don't always read an article, they also like to look at pictures. Am sending enclosed four good photographs which I hope you will publish. In case these photographs with the article take up too much space, you could shorten the article.

Irene and I have been having a good time here in the South, especially in the mountains and along the seashore. I guess you heard we were attacked by the Japs last night, but it didn't keep us awake. As far as we can find out, people got excited over some airplane maneuvers and some damage was done in a traffic jamb. One of our neighbors heard some distant bombing. Every night up the mountain side we hear a big old horned owl go "Hoot! Hoot! Hoot!". We have lots of Oregon friends here as we have watched hundreds of robins flying in from the fields at sunset to roost in the oaks and sycamores.

We expect to take quite a lot of pictures. It may be you would like two or three short articles with pictures, instead of one long one. We will try to send you some of these.

We expect to be here another week and are then starting South and on over to Arizona. I may have to go East a little later.

Hope you are feeling as fine as we are. Irene joins me in best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

North Hollywood - Santa Susana Roadhouse Inn. Feb 26 - 42
4 photos

THE BIGGEST BIRD IN THE WORLD

The Ostrich Can't Fly, But Races Like a Horse

by
William L. Finley and Ed F. Averill

In a recent issue of the Saturday Evening Post, a sketchy cartoon brings to mind the old legend of the bravery of the ostrich that, when an enemy was at hand, stuck his head in the sand and his tail in the air and waited until the danger was past. Many a child was thrilled at this hokum, and it stuck to the biggest bird for many a year. That would be as smart as for a Jack rabbit to hide in the center of a main highway. But the ostrich is not that foolish or he would have been exterminated long ago by the lions, tigers, and other big enemies of the African desert. All he has to do is to lift his head high, set his big legs in motion in that long, swinging gait and leave the lion far behind. And that is what he does without having to think very hard.

The ostrich is the largest and fastest bird in the world; that is, as a runner, not a flyer. Africa was his first home, and formerly it was the custom of natives to catch him in different ways. Some ran him down, others ham-strung him, others lassoed him, while still others killed him with javelins. Many years ago the English conceived the idea of trapping ostriches and raising them, and for some years in South Africa the business ranked next to the diamond. At one time, over \$40,000,000 was invested in the big birds and brought in annually over \$7,000,000 income. Later the birds were brought to both North and South America, and ostrich farms sprung up.

If one approached the corrals, the windy-legged birds came teetering up to the fence. Oranges were tossed out and deftly caught, making carbuncle protuberances as they proceeded on their way down the "long swallow." While waiting the peculiarities of the bird could be taken in, the small, flat-topped head, the very large almost human eye with long lashes, the long neck, stilt legs with naked thighs, and the two-toed feet with one enormous clawed toe. The useless, rudimentary wings fanned gently.

The ostrich has a maximum appetite with a minimum amount of discretion.

Photos 1 - 4 x 5 - 299 7 2/3 in. 2 - 4 x 5 - 2 1/2 in. 3 - 5 x 7 - 2 1/2 in. 4 - 1 in. 5 - 1 in. 6 - 1 in. 7 - 1 in. 8 - 1 in. 9 - 1 in. 10 - 1 in. 11 - 1 in. 12 - 1 in. 13 - 1 in. 14 - 1 in. 15 - 1 in. 16 - 1 in. 17 - 1 in. 18 - 1 in. 19 - 1 in. 20 - 1 in. 21 - 1 in. 22 - 1 in. 23 - 1 in. 24 - 1 in. 25 - 1 in. 26 - 1 in. 27 - 1 in. 28 - 1 in. 29 - 1 in. 30 - 1 in. 31 - 1 in. 32 - 1 in. 33 - 1 in. 34 - 1 in. 35 - 1 in. 36 - 1 in. 37 - 1 in. 38 - 1 in. 39 - 1 in. 40 - 1 in. 41 - 1 in. 42 - 1 in. 43 - 1 in. 44 - 1 in. 45 - 1 in. 46 - 1 in. 47 - 1 in. 48 - 1 in. 49 - 1 in. 50 - 1 in. 51 - 1 in. 52 - 1 in. 53 - 1 in. 54 - 1 in. 55 - 1 in. 56 - 1 in. 57 - 1 in. 58 - 1 in. 59 - 1 in. 60 - 1 in. 61 - 1 in. 62 - 1 in. 63 - 1 in. 64 - 1 in. 65 - 1 in. 66 - 1 in. 67 - 1 in. 68 - 1 in. 69 - 1 in. 70 - 1 in. 71 - 1 in. 72 - 1 in. 73 - 1 in. 74 - 1 in. 75 - 1 in. 76 - 1 in. 77 - 1 in. 78 - 1 in. 79 - 1 in. 80 - 1 in. 81 - 1 in. 82 - 1 in. 83 - 1 in. 84 - 1 in. 85 - 1 in. 86 - 1 in. 87 - 1 in. 88 - 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No object is too small to attract his attention, jewelry, buttons, and rings. Such articles as screws, nails, small hair combs have disappeared below with little regret showing on the face of the bird. He will snatch at anything in sight and down it goes. If he finds nothing else, he will nip a hand, but there is little power in his flat bill. We saw one big fellow stretching his neck over the fence for something, suddenly grab a man's suspender and let it snap back with a thump.

Walk down the "Ostrich Pike," and the birds will follow close inside the fence. Suddenly they turn, open their absurd wings and dart away, showing their remarkable speed with smooth, pacing gait. They swing around and come back with a ridiculous, mincing manner, their poker faces looking for more loot.

Nesting pairs are put in separate corrals. Here the adult bird is seen in all his glory, a splendid fellow between seven and eight feet tall, weighing some two hundred pounds. The Nubian ostrich's body is covered with jet-black plumes, the tail and wing plumes white. The thighs are large and muscular, the legs red, long and powerful. Unless some accident happens, ostriches are mated for life.

During the nesting season, the male always shows his fighting spirit. If one goes near the fence, he will fan his wings back and forth as a cat lashes her tail, stretch his neck and huff as if he was choking. The ostrich's weapon of defense is his big foot and he can kick with the power of a Missouri mule, but instead of kicking backward he always kicks forward. If a man happened to go in where these birds are nesting, it would be as dangerous as meeting a bull moose in the mating season. Some male birds are always in confinement, being ugly and dangerous.

One of the noticeable habits of the bird when enraged is his challenge. The male kneels on the ground facing his molestor, lashing his wings back and forth and beating his head from side to side against his body. He utters a sound remarkable in its penetrating power, a cross between a fog-horn and the roar of a lion, a roar which, under favorable conditions could be heard three miles distant. At night during the mating season, the "brooming" of the males

is often heard.

A female ostrich digs a little hollow in the ground and lays twelve to twenty eggs, each of which is about four pounds in weight. One of these eggs is equal to about twenty-five hen's eggs and would make an omelet for a dozen or more people. During the holidays, a roasted, full grown young Tom made a banquet for one of the big city clubs.

A chick two weeks old is as large as a good-sized rooster. At seven weeks it is larger than a large turkey. After about three days old, the chicks feed well on green alfalfa and begin to grow rapidly until the sixth month, when they increase about a foot a month. The ostriches are fed great quantities of green alfalfa mixed with turnips, carrots, cabbage, sand and gravel, and ground shells from the seashore.

The roaming ostrich in Africa is most certainly one of the wild creatures doomed to extinction, and is now very rare and difficult to find. Had it not been for the ostrich farmer, this great bird would have followed in the footsteps of the moa and others, and have totally disappeared. With war over Africa today, who is going to stop long enough to think of the unhappy ostrich?

2 photos / Best Sam Redden for journal
Feb 15 - 42

BIRD SANCTUARY AS A MEMORIAL

by

Irene Finley

Years ago when some of the feathered species were dropping lower in numbers because of warlike times and other kinds of air-raids they had to face, it was fortunate that the states and federal government set aside certain areas suitable for birds and made it illegal to kill them. It was public sentiment through the years aroused for the welfare of all of us that brought this about. Some time in the future, it is hoped that a world edict may be evolved with the same effect on the human race, some of whom still think they can exist only by slaying their fellow men.

It is gratifying to note that, as memorials, some lovers of bird life, especially members of Audubon Societies, have established sanctuaries where birds are not only protected but food and nesting places are available for all visitors. While studying and photographing bird life in the South, we have enjoyed visiting the Dorothy May Tucker Memorial Bird Sanctuary in Modjeska Canyon. Like the Pittock Bird Sanctuary in Portland, it is a live center of Audubon work and plans for the future. It is especially a refuge and home for the tiniest feathered flyers, the hummingbirds.

In memory of his wife, Mr. Tucker willed "Oakwood" to the California Audubon Society, Inc., and each year provides about a thousand pounds of sugar for syrup for the hummingbirds and two tons of grain for larger birds. Some honey is used also. The hummer nectar is now made of two parts of water to one of sugar. In the canyon where a stream flows under the oaks and sycamores, plenty of insects and water were available, but flowers were lacking. To supply this need, ~~the~~ after several experiments the present glass feeder was invented and has been more than successful. Twenty-four of these new glass feeders line the rail of a screened porch, behind which a dozen or more chairs stand for spectators at the hummer show.

The presence of honey and syrup soon attracted wild bees of the mountains and from domestic hives. The birds refused to eat where bees were present.

To overcome this difficulty, the lower dish of the feeder was covered with a tin top with holes just large enough for hummers to insert their bills, but too small to let the bees enter. Later a wire rail was put up around the table. The hummers were skeptical about this at first, but soon learned that they could clamp their tiny toes around the wire and sit down to eat. Now the newcomers flutter around the feeders taking their drinks on the fly, but the old-timers calmly hold down their seats on the railing and guzzle their fill, unless a bold competitor comes along to cause an aerial spat.

In the beginning of this experiment, only one bird would eat at a feeder at a time, but now it is not an uncommon sight to see from three to six birds jostling wings around the rail. It is a communal gathering and not the old dog-in-the-manger game, and is so successful that there is never a day in the year that there are not some hummingbirds that call at the food counter for their daily rations. During the height of the season, between April and October, as high as one hundred at the same time have been counted at the twenty-four feeders. There are a like number of ordinary feeders hanging in the trees also in constant use. Six or seven quarts of syrup are consumed daily. Birds are to be seen feeding during every daylight minute, and especially in the early morning and at sunset the air is alive with the constant, rhythmic hum of the wings of the diminutive boarders.

You are wondering just what kind of hummers frequent this bird haven. During the summer, the Anna, Black-chinned, and Costa are the common ones. All these birds nest somewhere about the grounds and in the canyon. While male hummers are notorious for not helping their mates in any of the nesting duties and one seldom sees them even in the neighborhood of the nests, yet they are abundant at Oakwood during the nesting season. Annas stay all winter, and recently the Costas have remained also. Many migrants are seen. Rufous, Allen, and Calliope have been found here in both the spring and fall migrations. One Black-chinned staid at the refuge as late as December.

We know that hummers as well as other birds need insect life as well as nectar to make a ballanced ration. The Tucker refuge attributes the lack of gnats

and other insects in the canyon to many hummingbirds that feed upon them. There are also flycatchers that nest in the garden, as well as cliff swallows on the neighboring cliffs, brown towhees, bushtits, sparrows, and many others. They picnic in the garden with never a fly or other winged pest.

Of almost as much interest as watching the hummingbirds feed is the ingathering of the valley quail. Either early in the morning or just before dark, these birds come by the hundreds from the hills just across the highway. They come by twos and threes, with stragglers bringing up the rear, and one hears their "Chick, Chuck" as they fairly run to get their grain.

To sit on the porch with one's face only a few feet from the scintillating, buzzing hummers about the feeders is an almost unbelievable delight. One feels like pinching himself to see if he is really awake, and this is not an ornithologist's dream.