

the desired feather be cut off which will be replaced at the next molt in normal sequence. One more word of caution: while the bird will probably not suffer significant reduction in flight ability with only the loss of one tail feather, the loss of more certainly would. Also the feathers give partial support to adjacent feathers; those next to removed feathers are more vulnerable to breakage. Use of common sense is indicated in taking feathers for the above worthy purpose. (DVHJr)

CAPTIVITY BREEDING COMMITTEE

Reports of Successful Captivity Breeding Attempts. We have a report that Tony Schramm, a young man in Washington state, was successful in raising a young Peregrine from parents in captivity this year. We hope to be able to publish details at a later date.

Henry Kendall of St. Louis, Missouri, was successful this year in captivity breeding Prairie Falcons. Two males and a female were fledged. Five eggs were laid; apparently only three hatched. It is understood that a complete account of this successful attempt will be published elsewhere at a later date. An account of Kendall's last year near success was reported in the B.P.I.E. last fall. The following section is a report of the feeding of his birds before and during incubation which is of high interest.

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Notes on Food Preferences of Captive Breeding Prairie Falcons. For the past two years, about a month prior to egg laying time (April), I have made a point of giving my breeding pair of Prairie Falcons a wide variety of food, ranging from small birds, chickens and pheasants to squirrel, beef heart and lean beef, amply fortified with Vionate (a vitamin and mineral supplement). This year, a daily capsule of wheat germ oil was also given both birds during this period. Obviously, this program of feeding was designed to insure potentially healthy chicks.

At this stage of the breeding cycle, the adult birds showed no particular food preferences, at least as far as I could discern. About the same amount of food was consumed daily and the falcon (a 1962 eyass) and the tiercel (a 1964 eyass) maintained a weight of 32 oz. and 20 oz. respectively, when on the full feed program.

During the egg laying and incubation period, which can cover as long as 45 days (as it did this year when five eggs were laid), mainly chicken was fed that was sprinkled with the Vionate supple-

ment. It's always a fresh food as I raise many batches of broiler chicks to about 3 weeks of age, over the course of a year.

When the Prairie eggs hatched at the end of May, there was some apprehension about what would be the best food to give the adult birds to feed the young. English Sparrows, both live and fresh-killed, were put in the pen, the live sparrows with the thought that catching prey might stimulate the feeding response. The falcon assumed the feeding role and each sparrow was thoroughly plucked before being taken to the nest ledge. It took the falcon several minutes to figure out bite sizes that could be handled by the newly hatched chicks, but thereafter, feeding was routine. The entire sparrow, except for legs and bill, was consumed. Starlings were given in addition to the sparrows, and for the first several days only small birds were fed to the young.

Food preferences changed rapidly and by the time the young Prairies were a week old, the adult birds were interested in feeding pigeon, squirrel and lean beef, in that order. Small birds were no longer fed and would remain neglected in the pen, until removed.

Growth rate was very rapid, as the young birds were fed often, and at the age of 16 days the pair of tiercels weighed 12 oz. each and the young falcon, 20 oz. At this time, I started feeding day old chicks and the adult Prairies preferred them to all other food, as though chicks contained ingredients not found elsewhere. Squirrels were now refused entirely as food for the young, only chicken, beef heart and pigeon accepted. Plucking was always done, prior to feeding, away from the nest ledge.

The Prairie fledglings reached full body weight at 3 weeks of age, with the adult falcon continuing to do most of the feeding; the tiercel filling in when the falcon did not respond to fresh food placed in the pen. Feeding continued at a rapid rate and the young were not left with food to pull on their own. For the next week, feeding was quite simple as live chicks were put in the pen in the morning and at noon. The adult falcons would only kill a chick when they fed the young, so it became a bit of a self-service routine. In the evening, a feeding of beef heart and Vionate supplement was offered and the young continued to be fed by the parent birds.

The pair of tiercels were taken out of the pen on June 22nd and the falcon removed about a week later; no hunger streaks of any kind developed during the period of time the young were fed by the old birds.

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