

Track's fake snakes haven't fooled birds; nests still a problem

By Alfred Gross
Of the Emerald

Though they may scare off a mouse or two, the 500 rubber snakes bought by the athletic department to scare birds from Hayward Field haven't been entirely successful, says Steve McBride, director of athletic affairs.

Hundreds of swallows flock around the field's grandstands and make quite a mess, but the athletic department isn't out to banish the birds just because of their unsightly excretions, McBride says.

"Swallows build relatively large nests that they make out of mud, and once they are through with the nests — sometimes before they're through with them — the nests get dried out and they fall," he says. "We perceive it as a threat to the safety of spectators — and anyone else who happens to be in the grandstands — if they should get hit by one."

The swallows and their large nests are the main problem, though the pigeons and sparrows are "an irritation because birds aren't too discreet about relieving themselves," McBride says.

"We did talk to a lot of different people within the University and the biology department

and outside. A lot (of people) suggested that we hang up a likeness of something that's going to be perceived as a threat to the birds naturally," he says.

So for a buck each, the department hung handfuls of rubber snakes on both sides of the buildings at Hayward Field with the hope that the birds would be scared off, he says.

But the fake snakes didn't bother the sparrows and only temporarily discouraged the swallows, McBride says.

After the swallows returned from their winter migration, they were hesitant to build their nests near the rubber snakes. "But we find now that they're getting used to the fact that these things are there," McBride says.

There still are not as many nests being built as there were previously, however, he says.

Because swallows are a protected species, "we can't go out and harm the birds. Not that we'd want to, but we might if that was the only solution to our problem," McBride says.

"There must be somebody out there that has something that works, but maybe not. These swallows are apparently pretty tenacious animals," McBride says.

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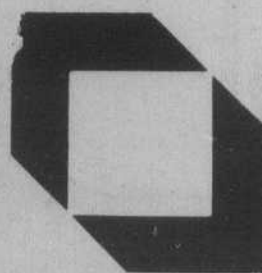
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Men's I	SAE II	Student Ghetto	Team - Men	RIM Bombers	
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Coed I	Clones of Dr. Funk	Cruel Shoes	Individual - Man	Jessica Stradtmann	Karla Rice
Coed II	Indicators		Women		
Coed Unaffiliated	Tri Deltas		Volleyball Classic	1st Mixed Bunch	2nd M & Ms
Women			Men	Mixed Bunch	Gimme a Break
Swim Meet	1st Sigma Chi	2nd SAE	Women	Mixed Bunch	Brumbies
Men	Sea Slugs		Coed		
Women			Golf	1st SAE	2nd Sigma Chi
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