

Bird Life Interesting Year Round

By KEN McLEOD

The "Bird Conservation Project" of the county school system has focused the attention of a great many people besides the children upon these interesting and helpful neighbors of ours. One question frequently asked is, "What is the best time of the year to study birds?" The one who asks the question possibly is under the impression that bird study, a subject that we much prefer to speak of as "bird watching," is something seasonal like harvesting spuds.

Bird watching offers interesting events at all seasons of the year. It is not a seasonal pastime. There are periods during the year when bird life is much more abundant. This is during the period of migration in spring and fall. Throughout the year we have our permanent residents, then there are migrants just passing through, winter visitors, casual strays and those who come to the area to raise their families each summer and spend their winters elsewhere.

Enjoyment

During the summer nesting season the homelife of the birds can offer many hours of enjoyment to the bird watcher. You can learn much about how they build their homes, how they raise their young and how they train the young for the life that they must follow. Often one has a glimpse of an interesting event in the home life so that time spent in watching is well repaid.

I recall a couple of hours we spent in watching a pair of red tailed hawks fed their three, almost full grown fledglings. The nest was located on a narrow ledge of a precipitous cliff facing Tule lake. The three young birds filled the nest to overflowing; they were just about old enough to try life's first great adventure, their solo flight.

So crowded was the nest that to exercise one's growing wings was a problem, but the problem was solved by each young bird taking turns in working its way to the edge of the nest on the lip of the ledge above the vertical face of the cliff. Here it could anchor itself by its talons in the material that composed the nest and then lustily flap its wings while the other youngsters crouched low to give the exerciser room.

Feeding
While we watched the performance of each young bird taking its place and exercising its wings, there

came food, mother with a big snake that from a distance looked suspiciously like a rattler. The snake was clutched firmly by the head and dangled awkwardly like a limp piece of rope as she flew. She landed on the edge of the nest, the snake hanging limp over the edge and dangling down the cliff face. Great was the commotion within the nest as the young anticipated the feast before them and mother proceeds to cut up the snake into short chunks a few inches at a time and feeding the pieces to the voracious young. We watched, fascinated, as she hauled the snake, bit by bit, into the nest. The snake almost appeared to be alive and crawling up the face of the cliff into the nest until finally the tail disappeared over the edge and into the hungry mouth of the young.

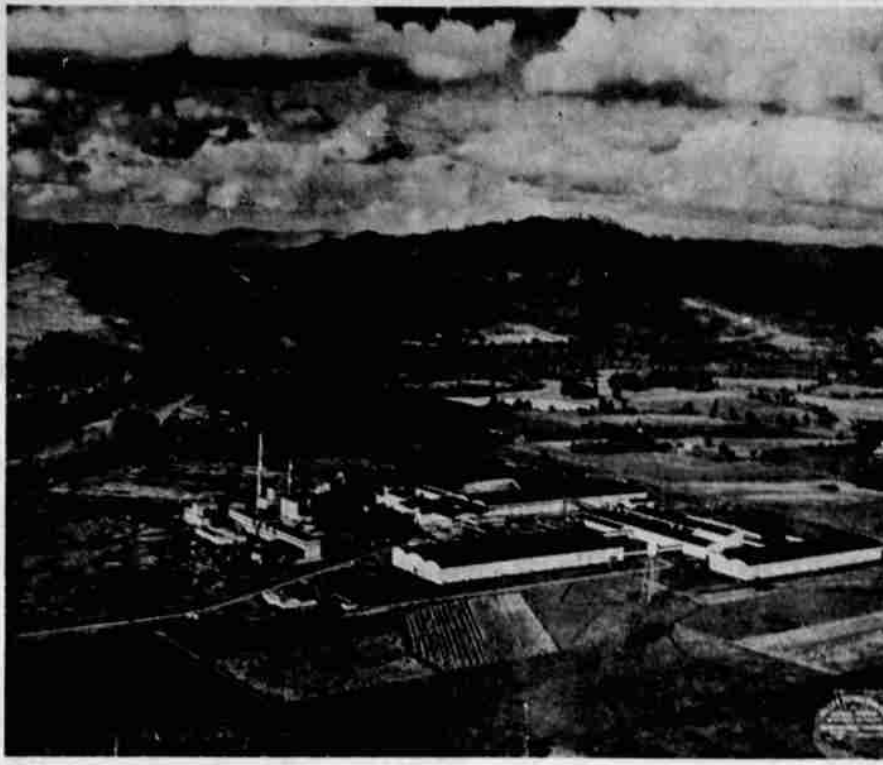
Just as the last bit of snake disappeared more food came to the nest, the male bird came soaring into the picture clutching a rodent. Probably it was a ground squirrel. The very fact that the nest was over-crowded did not bother him at all. He dove down at the nest and then pulled up sharply from the dive at the same time he released the rodent and it shot down into the nest with all the unerring aim of a bombardier releasing his load of bombs at a target. After completing this mission he soared away to find another rodent for the ever hungry young while mother appeared to divide the squirrel among the young and then she took flight to see what more nature would provide: while the young, now well stuffed with snake and squirrel, settled down in comfort.

Many Britons Get Pensions

LONDON, (AP) — Nearly 10 per cent of the British people are drawing old age pensions. Minister of National Insurance James Griffiths disclosed the figures in parliament recently.

He said 4,540,000 Britons received pensions. He estimated the cost to the government at \$784,000,000 a year.

FARM UNION HEAD
SALEM, Dec. 9 (AP)—John Bollinger, 53, Salem, was named yesterday as general manager of the Oregon Farmers Union Cooperative association.



IN OPERATION—Weyerhaeuser Timber company's Springfield plant, Oregon's first large-scale wood-using site producing lumber, containerboard and power for a kraft pulp mill and sawmill, was opened this week. The plant is waste-free, by-products of the sawmill going into the pulp mill and containerboard plant or to operate a power plant supplying electricity for all mill operations.

Can the Campus Revive Theatre?

SANTA BARBARA, Calif., (AP) — The campus theatre may be the most promising answer to the decline of the professional stage, says a California critic.

The college and university playhouse offers a chance for new plays and writers because it has less box office pressure to think about, says Theodore Hatlen, chairman of the department of speech at Santa Barbara college.

Elephant's Fest Includes Blades

HAMBURG, (AP) — A circus elephant overturned a sweet hawker's stand here, and ate about 10 pounds of sweets. The elephant followed this up by eating a traveling kit, stolen from a reporter watching the scene. The kit contained razor blades, a nail file, brushes, soap and a towel, the Hamburg paper "Abendblatt" reported.

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