

Two trips were made several weeks later to look for the birds, but none was seen either time, and it is believed that the nesting was unsuccessful, perhaps broken up by red squirrels. Since there were old holes in the tree, it is possible that the tree may be occupied another year. — Walter R. Spofford, 766 Irving Ave., Syracuse

The Behavior Pattern of some Ruffed Grouse chicks in captivity (Part 1) — The behavior pattern of wild things, normally an interesting spectacle in the wild state, is profoundly interesting under atypical conditions. This is especially true when young of a certain species are removed from the parents before they have had an opportunity to learn the various responses to the different situations that arise.

These adaptations to given situations are collectively called a behavior pattern and in a large number of species this pattern is very well known. For example, the Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Bobwhite, and most species of wild ducks have been well studied, and in fact the domestic breeding of some of these birds is rapidly becoming a big business.

For the Ruffed Grouse, however, there appears to be no future in this respect. Although many attempts have been made to rear it artificially, most have not been too successful, perhaps due to its inherent wildness or to its susceptibility to diseases when artificially bred.

Therefore, when a chance was offered me to observe the young of this species first hand I was glad of the opportunity. Five one-day old chicks were brought to me after their mother had been hit and killed by a car. They were active and lively but at first refused any type of food offered. Their age was determined by the beak-tooth and by the fact that day-old chicks seldom eat. I placed the birds in a cardboard box and then placed the box over a fairly large dish pan in which I had inserted and lit a 100-watt bulb. This seemed adequate since the day was warm, but as night came on plaintive calls indicated the birds were becoming chilled. Small perforations made in the floor of the box admitted more heat, and this seemed satisfactory.

On the following day the birds were still active and accepted some flies as food. The instinct to be brooded was very strong, and a hand placed on the floor of the box would soon have all five endeavoring to crawl under it. There was absolutely no fear to any measures taken with them. On the third day one chick was found dead, and another on the sixth day. By this time the remainder were taking flies, small garden worms, lettuce cut in small pieces, and they were half heartedly picking at a commercial turkey starter. Water was taken in surprisingly small amounts varied with a taste of milk now and then. The lettuce probably supplemented the moisture that they needed.

By the end of the second week they would each consume several leaves of lettuce per day, plus clover, chick weed, flies, worms, and small grasshoppers. At the start of the third week they were taken out of doors during the warmest part of the day, but they would soon become chilled and indicate a desire to be brooded. During this same period, of course, the birds were beginning to feather out (beginning with the wing feathers). Attempted flights during the first and second weeks were not successful. By the third week they could make a sustained flight of about fifty feet, but they would always come immediately back to me. After the scapulars the breast feathers began to develop. Since this aided materially in keeping the birds warm, they were left out of doors for increasing periods. They were allowed to hunt in the taller grass and they became adept in capturing a variety of insects, but they never wandered far from the person with them.

At the end of three weeks the birds were as happy a trio as one could want. By this time a little top-knot of several feathers had developed on the forward part of their heads and they would erect them at the slightest sound, giving them a very ludicrous appearance and causing many a laugh from the children. By this same time they had developed the characteristic best known as typical of the Grouse. They would seek a small tree and walk about its branches as well as they did on the ground, and at the sound of a dog's bark they would assume the characteristic straight up-and-down pose, standing motionless for several minutes. If on the ground they would slowly sink down and remain quite still.

I must make a few remarks about their peculiar calls. There was the common shrill call so well known to gallinaceous species when cold, the contented chirrup when

they were warm and well fed, and the merry chatter when they played among themselves. Later they developed an alarm note when they thought danger threatened. These are all notes accepted as common in all young chicks, but what is most interesting to report is a peculiar call that they have used in conjunction with the feeding call. It was tinkling, melodious, and sweetly shrill, strongly reminiscent of the song of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet. In fact, I cannot describe it in any other way. As the birds got older this call became more guttural but it was still recognizable as the "Kinglet" call. As I write this they are starting the fourth week of their visit with me. They are still active, curious, and flying about freely, although they are brought in each night. They respond to a low whistle and are a star attraction for all who chance to see them.

I have found nothing difficult about raising the birds so far, other than an intelligent appraisal of their needs as a species, and I hope to rear them to maturity. I have used medication in their drinking water when gaping indicated gape-worms, found that they are ninety percent vegetarians, noted the unusual song as described above, and best of all have found that a naturally very wild species not usually considered adaptable to hand rearing can be reared with care. I have noted the responses which I have concluded are adopted and those which obviously are inherited, and I shall report these and my success at rearing the birds to maturity at a later date. — Tom Lesperance, Keeseville

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMER SEASON JUNE — AUGUST 15, 1958

JAMES K. MERITT

Observations during the summer season indicate that the period was quite similar to that of last spring. Most birds continued to be relatively scarce, and one can only hope that a successful breeding season will alleviate this condition to some extent. Throughout the state temperatures were below normal, and rainfall exceeded the average everywhere but in the extreme eastern section which missed some of the violent storms which came in from the west.

There was little evidence of any southern heron flight. Common Egrets were reported from most localities, but these reports indicate that the birds arrived late and in poor numbers.

Of interest, however, is the number of reports of the Red-headed Woodpecker. This species was observed in Regions 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7. A Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen near Rochester (on the Lake Road near Webster — O'Hara).

Fred Hough presents an interesting summary of bird life in the higher Catskills in his regional report. As he indicates, more thorough studies in some of these seldom visited areas, would probably yield interesting and informative results.

REGION 1 — NIAGARA FRONTIER

ROBERT F. ANDRLE

The slight coolness of May was considerably exceeded during June when the average temperature departed 3.6°F from the normal. It was a fairly sunny month, however, and the clear nights contributed to the coolness with low minimum temperatures. Consequently Lakes Erie and Ontario remained quite cold until well into the summer. The only weather dis-