"BOREAS"—A RED-TAILED HAWK

By WINNIFRED SMITH

The privilege of having a permit* for caring for sick and injured, and baby birds, carries with it responsibilities. Young avian orphans are demanding in their clamor for food; often the sick and injured birds do not survive and one is saddened by the inability to do more for them. However, the occasional successes and the pleasure of knowing the birds more intimately compensate for any inconveniences or worried moments.

"Boreas," a young red-tailed hawk (Buteo jamaicensis), came into our lives for only two short weeks, but the experience will always remain an outstanding one in our memories.

The air was crisp and cool, on November thirteenth, the last day of the duck-hunting season. Fleecy herds of cumulus clouds were driving out of the northwest. It was a day for migrating hawks—not ducks.

Several hunters had parked their cars in the lane along the north end of Winghaven's acres. When I heard shots I reached for my binoculars. As there were no ducks flying I thought perhaps a stray flock of geese or even a wedge of swans might have attracted the hunters. One hunter shot again and then I saw the big, faltering shape of a Buteo. Another hawk was heading heavenward, up and up towards the clouds, but the first one was losing altitude and seemed to fall to earth behind the "barn."

I jammed into my coat and with the binoculars around my neck, hurried out to see if I could get a good look at the hawk. He (or perhaps she) was sitting in the middle of the road and flew up at my approach; his flight was slow and heavy and he soon alighted in a nearby field. As I walked toward him he spread his wings and opened his beak in a most menacing manner. I slowed my steps and began speaking to him. When I realized that he wasn’t going to fly up this time, I started removing my coat. Much to my surprise I succeeded in getting the coat over his head—to my sorrow and discomfort, I failed to get it over his talons. He plunged all eight of them into my right hand, and hung on with a vise-like grip. I finally succeeded in prying them loose and I tucked the hawk, wrapped in my coat, under my arm, and with a bleeding hand and chattering teeth, headed homeward. When I met the hunters who had shot him, the hawk glared balefully at them while I told them in no uncertain terms what I thought about fellows who shot down a red-tailed hawk!

We called him “Boreas” and put him in a large wire cage that had been used for the ducks, down beside the pond.

His under-wing coverts were splotted with blood, but the wings did not seem to be broken. He appeared to be a young hawk, but did not exactly conform to the descriptions at hand. The tail was definitely rufous. The eyes were yellow, speckled with brown; the bill was horn colored and the cere a soft greenish shade.

Feeding him presented somewhat of a problem. He would not eat the bits of steak and sausage that I tried to give him. Although we set several trap lines the following day, only two mice were caught. These he accepted readily. A neat shot, by a Winghaven visitor, brought down a rabbit. That kept Boreas in food for four days. Then he had to go

*Both federal and state.
back to the scant diet of an occasional mouse. One soggy night when the snow was falling in big, wet flakes, we transferred the hawk to another cage where he had some shelter. This time I wore thick gloves!

Although I never got within reach of his talons again, the big fellow seemed gentle enough. We could walk in and out of his cage with nothing more serious than a glare from his expressive golden eyes and a ruffling of his feathers.

Another rabbit, a piece of beef and a few more mice kept our boarder in food for another week. He seemed much stronger and was able to fly up to the perch in his cage, but he never showed any restlessness.

The weather during these two weeks was cloudy and rainy. There hadn't been a single day similar to November 15th. During mid-morning of November 27th, the skies cleared, and again the cumulus herds were moving in from the northwest. The barometer was rising and the readings taken at 1:30 p.m. on the 15th and the 27th were exactly the same. Boreas was extremely restless. He banged against the side of his cage until he showed some signs of bleeding about the cere. We took some pictures of him in his cage and then opened the door. He stayed on his
perch. We reached in and carefully moved the perch outside and onto the roof of the coop. Oh, for a picture of that—but the film had been used up on the others. Slowly Boreas looked about him, shook himself and then took off across the neighboring fields. His flight was low, but speedy. Apparently he had completely recovered from his wounds.

As I had no bands on hand large enough to fit him, we will never know his fate. To us, every red-tailed hawk we see in the neighborhood will be "Boreas."

Winghaven, Route #1
Two Rivers, Wisconsin
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THE BIRDS OF WISCONSIN

By L. KUMLIEN and N. HOLLISTER

With Revisions by A. W. Schorger

(Continued from last issue)

Residents of the extreme southwestern counties claim that a few were found among the bluffs near the river as late as 1894, and it is highly probable that they were. Newspaper reports claim the capture of three at Boscobel in 1872. A few birds have been introduced and escaped from captivity of late years about Koshkonong, and it is not an impossibility that genuine "wild" turkeys may yet be taken in Wisconsin.


[Phasianus colchicus torquatus (Gmelin). Ring-necked Pheasant.

There were several attempts between 1895 and 1900 to establish the Ring-necked Pheasant in Wisconsin. (A. W. Schorger, Pass. Pigeon 9,1947:101). However, the present wide distribution of this species is due to the numerous plantings made between 1910 and 1930↑

ORDER COLUMBAE: PIGEONS

FAMILY COLUMBIDAE: PIGEONS

Ectopistes migratorius (Linn.). Passenger Pigeon.

The wild pigeon was an abundant migrant and summer resident in many parts of the state until the years 1879-83. From that time to the present day the bird has been one of our rarest species. Mr. J. M. Blackford, now residing at Delavan, states that the last large catch of the netters was in 1882. The following spring but one hundred and thirty-eight dozen were taken in the best pigeon grounds in the state, and this was practically the end. Small flocks, pairs and solitary individuals have been reported from various parts of the state nearly every year since this time, however, and it is highly probable that a very few still nest in isolated pairs within its limits. Mr. J. N. Clark furnishes the following data for the past fifteen years in Dunn County: May 2, 1886, a nest containing one egg; June, 1890, nest containing one young; April 20, 1897, 3 seen, 1 taken; April 26, 1897, 3 seen; April 27, 1897, 2 seen; May 5, 1898, 1 pair seen, last record. Several have been taken and more