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NOTES

SUMMARY REPORT 1988 NEBRASKA PEREGRINE FALCON PROJECT is the title of an almost five page (letter-sized) report in *Free Flight* (Volume 5, Number 2, Fall 1988), published by Raptor Recovery Center, Inc., Box 100, Eagle, Nebraska 68347-0100, which covers the operation of the project in considerable detail.

Almost five pages, because about a three by five inch portion of the last page is devoted to a photograph of a large white bird in a tree top, with the caption: Pictured is a white hawk that lives in the Valparaiso area. According

to some area residents, he had been in the area for four or five years. He has quite a following, and has been named Edgar. (Everyone just assumes he's a male.)

KESTREL NEST BOX RESULTS. In 1986 the Game and Parks Commission obtained the consent of the Department of Roads to install nest boxes, intended for Kestrels, on the back of large highway signs on I-80 between Lincoln and Omaha. Kestrels nested in old woodpecker holes, but trees, particularly dead trees, have been cut down, and the introductions of the European Starling increased the competition for such cavity nest holes. Since the highway right-of-way is a good hunting area for the Kestrels, it is a good place for nest boxes intended for their use. The Sierra Club worked with the Commission in the placing and monitoring (to discourage any Starlings, to check on any Kestrels, and to band young Kestrels) of the boxes. In 1986 only Starlings occupied the boxes; in 1987 7 (6 west of the Platte, 1 east) of the 31 available boxes were used by Kestrels, and in 1988 12 (9 west and 3 east of the Platte) of the 29 available boxes were used by Kestrels. (One box west of the Platte was lost because the highway sign was removed; one east of the Platte was removed because it was felt that it was in an unsafe location). The higher use west of the Platte is partly due to the fact that originally there were 18 boxes west of the Platte and 13 east of it, and possibly to lesser competition from Starlings the farther the boxes were from Omaha. John J. Dinan of the Commission provided the information from which this was summarized.

WHOOPIING CRANE REPORT. The Fish and Wildlife Service office in Grand Island reported five confirmed sightings of Whooping Cranes in Nebraska in fall 1988:

One adult 19-20 October in Cherry Co., 2.5 mi. S of Brownlee, T26N, R28W, S6; T27N, R28W, S31; T26N, R29W, S12. This bird had been at Pocasse NWR, Campbell Co., S.D. from 4 to 16 October.

Four adults 24-25 October in Custer Co., 2.5 mi. W, 2 mi. S, and 2.5 mi. W of Merna. T17N, R22W, S16, NW 1/4.

Two adults 26 October in Cherry Co., North Loup River, 1/4 mi. E of US 83 bridge.

Two adults and a juvenile 29-31 October in Custer Co., 2.5 mi. W, 2 mi. S, and 2.5 W of Merna. T17N, R22W, S16, NW 1/4.

Two adults 2-4 November in Custer Co., 2.5 mi. W, 2 mi. S, 3 mi. W. of Merna. T17N, R22W, S17, SE 1/4.

There were five probable sightings in Nebraska:

One adult 2 October in Howard Co., 12 mi. N, 5.5 mi. W, and .5 mi. S of St. Paul. T16N, R11W, S3, SE 1/4. Highly probable, struck power line and flew off.

One adult 11 October in Cherry Co., 2 mi. SE of Long Lake, T28N, R26W, S20.

One adult 27 October in Polk Co., 4.5 mi. E and 1.5 N of Stromsburg. Flying.

Two adults 1 November in Custer Co., 1 mi. N and 1 mi. W of Merna. T18N, R21W, S20, SW 1/4.

One adult 4 November in Dawson Co., 4 mi. E of Darr Bridge over the Platte River, flying.

There were six unconfirmed sightings in Nebraska:

Two adults 3 October in Buffalo Co., 1 mi. E of Gibbon bridge on the Platte River. Flying.

One adult 5 October in Keith Co., 9 mi. S of Ogallala. Flying.

Two adults 11 October in Lincoln Co., 1 mi. W of Sutherland I-80 exit. Flying.

Ten to twelve adults 12 October in Dundee Co., Benkleman. Flying.

One adult 26 October in Perkins Co., 10 mi. S of Ogallala. Flying.

Four adults 16 November in Hamilton Co., flying over Platte River south of Chapman.

The seven birds reported near Halsey just before the Fall Meeting (NBR 556:97) were not listed in the report, probably because of the lack of definite information.

The report stated: "A total of 134 (115 adults/subadults and 19 young) whooping cranes had arrived at Aransas by December 5, 1988. The two subadults

which spent the summer in Aransas are not figured in the arrival total. Since their arrival at Aransas, one adult bird and one chick from family groups have disappeared. are and are presumed dead. An additional four-year-old female, of a family group, was shot near Aransas by a waterfowl hunter on January 3, 1989. Three subadults were last observed at Aransas in November 1988 and are considered missing. The number of birds at Aransas, as of January 3, 1989, was estimated to be 130. A subadult, believed to be the 1986 chick nicknamed "Oklahoima", was confirmed in late December in southwestern Oklahoma with sandhill cranes. This crane brings the number of Aransas/Wood Buffalo Flock birds surviving to between 131 and 134, depending on the fate of the three missing subadults. One-hundred twenty-nine whoopers departed for the breeding grounds last spring (two additional birds remained at Aransas all summer) and 20 young fledged during the summer. Under optimum conditions, a total of 149 whoopers were expected to arrive at Aransas this fall. As of January 3, 1989, one breeding pair and two color-banded subadults had not arrived at Aransas." *Grus Americana* commented: "If some of these birds are not found alive somewhere it will be the most tragic loss since 1972, when 13 disappeared." It quoted Dr. Lewis' report that the Gray's Lake flock is down to 14 to 16 birds, and added that there are 49 birds in captivity.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT. After having seen these birds on my meadow for several days I went out about noon 1 October 1988 to take some pictures. This is one of them. The meadow is located in Holt Co., seven miles east and a mile and a half south of Chambers. There were several of the birds. I was able to get close to this one by driving slowly with the pickup. They would sneak through the grass trying to hide. When flushed they would fly away, sometimes making a chirping noise. They flew about 40 yards or more. They were scattered, not in a tight flock.

The meadow had been hayed the middle of July. The grass had grown back to a height of only several inches.

