

C R O S S R O A D S

*This section, to be expanded in later issues, has but one purpose: to give members the opportunity to present informal articles and notes. Such notes may be handwritten and can be sent to the Editor at any time. Consider this section as "News in Brief" - the only difference is, it is no longer written by the editor, but by anyone who contributes to it. Notes for this section will not be reviewed or extensively edited. Please mark your contributions with the word "Crossroads" across the top. Thanks.*

How to save Great Horned Owl nests - contributed by Gerald Church of Eaton, New York (13334).

In the spring of 1971, while banding Great Horned Owls, a female flew off the nest, pushing out an one week old youngster. The nest was 60 feet high, but somehow it survived the fall. I climbed the tree to get the bird back into the nest after banding it, but the next day it was back on the ground.

The nest was in such poor condition that something had to be done. I got out my 10' ladder and climbed the 10' up an adjoining tree. There I stapled some chickenwire in the crotch of that tree and made a nest of sticks and leaves. I put the week-old youngster into the new nest and the adults fed him there for the next six weeks.

I photographed the bird each week and showed the photos to a grateful audience when I lectured at Hawk Mountain, last fall. This successful nest gave me the idea for building more Great Horned Owl nests!

The nests are made of chickenwire, 24"x24", interwoven with green sticks through the mesh, making a basket-like effect. This affair gets up into the tree on a rope pulley and is stapled to a good looking location in a crotch, about 40' up. Then I add more sticks to the nest and some evergreen branches for decoration.

I've made five of these nests so far. One nest, made on 21 February 1972 was in use by a Great Horned Owl on 2 March. I've also put up 19 boxes for Kestrels and Screech Owls. Last year I only had 5 boxes up, three were used by Kestrels and one by a Screech Owl. These boxes have hinged fronts for easy cleaning and banding. It also permits access to the young when they're old enough to be photographed.