SUCCESSFUL RELEASES OF CAPTIVE BARN OWLS

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Currently there is much interest in rehabilitation of raptors including release of young birds raised in captivity. However, little information is available on survival of these birds following release. Thus, 2 observations we made during a continuing study of Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) ecology in northern Utah may be of interest.

In 1978, two broods and one other young Barn Owl were turned over to us. Rather than raise the birds in captivity and release them, we decided to place them with broods of wild Barn Owls in nest boxes that we had previously erected (Marti et al., *Wildl. Soc. Bull.*, 7:145–148, 1979). One or two young were added to broods of similar ages after we banded them with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bands and unique combinations of colored plastic bands. All six young treated this way fledged. The remaining four young owls were put in a nest box in place of four infertile eggs. Two of these birds fell out of the box during a cold rain and died, but the other two fledged. In 1979, one of these fostered birds, a male, was found nesting successfully in another of our nest boxes 60 km north of the box from which he fledged.

The second instance involved a very tame female Barn Owl less than 1 year old which had been raised in captivity and appeared to be imprinted on humans. This owl was acquired by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and kept at Weber State College for several months. Age and sex were determined from wing molt and plumage. She was later transferred to Tracy Aviary in Salt Lake City, Utah, from where she escaped in the fall of 1978. Little hope was given for survival because of her tameness and the fact that she had killed only a few white mice in captivity and had had no experience hunting in the wild. However, on 30 March 1979, she was discovered with a mate in a warehouse in Salt Lake City. Identification was made by jesses placed on her at the aviary and by a peculiar toe injury incurred while in captivity. It is remarkable that an owl imprinted on humans, with no hunting experience, could survive and successfully form a pair bond in the wild. This bird provides yet another example of the adaptability of Barn Owls.

These examples, although a small sample, indicate that young Barn Owls may either be raised in captivity and released at maturity or fostered to wild Barn Owls. The fostering technique certainly requires less human effort, and we would favor it intuitively because the young owls probably learn hunting techniques from the adults.

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CARRION UTILIZATION BY TWO SPECIES OF AUSTRALIAN GOSHAWKS

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Introduction

The Brown Goshawk (*Accipiter fasciatus*) and Grey Goshawk (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*) are reported to prey on live vertebrates and insects (Cayley 1968, Brown and Amadon 1968, Wattel 1973, Morris 1976, Frith 1976). The most favored prey items of these hawks are birds and small mammals (Brown and Amadon 1968, Wattel 1973, Frith 1976). Observations made by the author, however, indicate that these birds also include carrion in their diets.

Observations

Three observations of carrion-feeding (one by *A. fasciatus* and two by *A. novaehollandiae*) were made during routine field work in southeastern Queensland, Australia. They are presented below in chronological order.

The first observation was made in open, pastoral land at Maleny (26° 46′, 152° 51′) on 27 November 1969. A single, immature female *A. fasciatus* was flushed from cover within a hedge. This bird attempted to carry a heavy food item for a short distance before abandoning it. I found the food to be a piece of cowhide, the adherent flesh of which was in an advanced state of decomposition.

The second observation was made along a roadway through subtropical rainforest near Kenilworth (26° 36′, 152° 44′) on 17 November 1974. A lone female *A. novaehollandiae* was observed feeding on the carcass of a small wallaby (*Thylogale thetis*) which had been killed by motor traffic. The carcass was bloated, but little smell of decomposition was apparent.

The final observation was made in similar habitat to the preceding, near Imbil (26° 28′, 152° 41′) on 23 September 1977. A male *A. novaehollandiae* was flushed from a road-killed *T. thetis* carcass, where it had been feeding. This carcass was bloated with a pronounced smell of decomposition.

Discussion

Apparently only the Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), has been previously recorded taking