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Report No. 4 3.3(h)(2)

PROGRESS REPORT, AVIAN FLIGHT TRAINING

1. Present bird census

Species	Juveniles	Adults	Trained	In trainin
Red Tail Hawks	0	7	7	0
Ravens	8	3	0	11
G.H. Owl	0	0	1	0
Harris Hawks	0	1	1	0
Peale's Falcons	0	2	2	2
Prairie Falcons	0	1	1	1
Pigeons (bandtails)	0	7	1	6

2. Birds to be acquired

	Juveniles	Adults
Peale's Falcons	2	1
Prairie Falcons	0	1
Gyr Falcon	1	

3. Remarks

a. The Red Tail Hawks listed above are all basically trained to the extent that any one of them is capable of being used in a scenario that lies within their scope. This is the result of at least 1 year of training. At the present time only 2 of them are being actively worked. This implies that the ones not being so worked are being kept on fill-up both for the sake of their well being and further inducement to the molt. The 2 which are kept at working weight have a molt rate significantly slower. We assume this is nature's provision for periods of deprivation.

b. The Harris Hawk is fully trained and, being unusually bright, is capable of acquiring sophisticated behaviors in a short period of time, although this does not include flying greater distances of several miles.

c. The Horned Owl is well trained to free flight as well as visual and audio orientation. His full capabilities have not been fully explored but it has been ascertained he will respond and "home" to a high frequency dog whistle in almost total darkness. It is our present evaluation that the owl does not have visual discriminatory potential of either the hawks or ravens in the presence of daylight.

d. Bandtail pigeons, contrary to our first estimate, have been quite easy to tame and train to recall. The ones we obtained were extremely wild but in a matter of 3 weeks one of them

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readily responds to a whistle in free flight. It is noted, however, it does not have the degree of discrimination we are used to in our other birds at this stage of its training. We also observe it does not appear to have the faculty of carrying the amount of weight we had hoped it might.

e. Regarding the birds to be acquired: arrangements have been made with Canadian exporters for the PEALE'S Falcons. With the blessings of the proper Fish and Game authorities it will only be a short time until they are in transit. The amount of time they will be in quarantine is still not determined. The additional PRAIRIE Falcon mentioned above should be in our possession in the coming week but, again, we defer to the Fish and Game officials. Arrangements have also been made for the GYR Falcon but because of certain restrictions we will not be able to take possession until some time in October.

f. The 8 juvenile RAVENS are all exceptional prospects. As the result of many years of experience and of past mistakes, we are confident these birds have a very special place in our future plans. Fortunately, they were acquired at almost the exact time best suited to imprint them to humans and not too young to impede their proper start in life. In this regard, a matter of only one or two days is critical. Experience has also taught us that these birds must be entirely hand fed and must proceed to a condition of full growth before subjected to deprivation. At this stage they are in perfect condition and, in our judgement, almost ready to start training.

4. <u>Training schedule</u>

a. While daily reports are included herein, we feel some further definition is needed to round out the picture of the past several weeks. We are, of course, in short supply of falcons, a situation to be resolved in the near future. The male PEALE'S has shown both outstanding potential and ability. He, like all falcons, require a very delicate touch until behavior patterns have been firmly established. We feel the daily reports do not present an accurate picture of this bird. In part, we must accept some of the responsibility in attempting to avoid live stimulus in training. We have recently adopted another course and the difference was noticeable almost instantly. The falcon has changed from a reluctant trainee to a charger who needslittle or no persuasion. He is presently performing to what we feel is the limit of our safety factor which will be covered in more detail later in this report. The same story applys to the PRAIRIE

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falcon except for the fact that this bird has always shown strong motivation. His limitation was due to impaired wing feathers which have now molted. In spite of his small size it is our belief he will live up to all our expectations. Both of these latter birds are flying one mile round trips from boat to shore. We feel they can be extended immediately when we are equipped with the proper telemetry.

5. The Saga of Do da

We feel thatthose who have suffered through former reports must be familiar with Do da the RAVEN. I suspect they are also familiar with the fact that I had very small expectations for one of his species on this project even though I had raised and trained him from the time he was a small downy fledgling. [redacted] he was in a class by himself, [redacted] too numerous to mention, [redacted] In any case, he had a very large bag of tricks and was loved by all. In view of these talents I suppose I shouldn't have been too surprised when he so quickly became a star on this project. The accompanying resume gives some notion of his brief but spectacular career on San Clemente Island. In a little over 3 months he was doing up to 6 miles from shore to boat and very nearly that same distance on return. The resume, however, does not tell the full story. Hoping for your indulgence, I would like to recap some of the day-to-day experiences that do not become apparent in the rather terse daily report. When one is not personally involved in handling these birds it would not be easy to visualize how they are not only learning to do what is expected of them but, at the same time, are learning what they must do in order to perform such a feat. Here the trainer is helpless. With each training period we were able to observe Do da as he discovered which altitudes he had to maintain under various wind conditions. In addition, he was acquiring sufficient guile to outwit the native ravens and gulls. These excercises, on his part,had reached some stage of sophistication, although, it is our belief that it was ultimately a pair of ravens that finally did him in. In the early stages the native birds did not pose such a threat but, it is a fact that, as they became more familiar with our schedule they would time their attacks to coincide. Do da had found out how to maintain enough altitude to out fly the errant gulls but other ravens were a different matter. They had developed the technique of hiding behind a nearby bluff, waiting for the most opportune time to attack. Typically, Do da would parry these tactics with small dog fights during the first mile at which point the pair of ravens would turn back toward shore. From that point our observer would usually

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lose visual contact. There was always a tense few minutes until Do da appeared from out of the blue and the trainer on the boat breathed another sigh of relief. His condition upon arrival was always good. Unless weather conditions were extreme he was never breathing heavy and our impression was that he could have done twice the distance without much stress. What may have occured on June 19th is only a matter of conjecture. After leaving the release point Do da was seen being attacked by the usual pair of ravens. The shore operator observed one of these birds pecking Do da in the back of the head. The final sighting was only seconds later when all three birds disappeared behind a bluff. A full week's search on land and sea failed to show a trace of Do da. It is our firm conviction that he was either killed near the shore line by these same birds or, being wounded, attempted to make it to the boat and failed. In any case,it is a certainty his relations with the native birds were not such that he would have taken up with them but instead would have looked to us for security. In spite of our deep sense of loss we do understand such tragedys are inevitable and, we may add, this is not the first one. To be sure, it was some kind of a thrill the first time we saw him head out to sea, on his way to a boat the keenest eye on land could not see. If his performance is any indication, our new flock of 8 young birds should give us ample back-up protection.

The other documents with this report are self explanatory. Others will be included in report No. 5.

6. Telemetry

We have located what is purported to be the most reliable telemetry system available for use on birds and other wildlife. The system includes a small beacon which is attached to the bird and a receiver which picks up the beacon signals up to distances greater than 10 miles when the bird is in the air and approximately 1 mile on the ground. The name of the company is [redacted] We hope to work out something with the Contracting Officer in the shortest possible time for the purchase of one of these units.

Respectfully,

[redacted]

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Do da

On San Clemente 2/25/74 780gr

Introduced to boat 2/25/74 780gr

3/4 mile to boat 3/18/74 805 gr

1 mile to boat 3/19/74 805 gr

1 1/4 mile to boat 3/20/74 805 gr

1 1/2 mile to boat 3/25/74 775 gr

Break 3/26 to 4/8 At studio

1 mile to boat 4/8/74 750 gr

1 3/4 mile to boat 4/11/74 770 gr

2 1/4 mile to boat 1/2 mile to shore 4/17/74 750 gr

3 mile to boat, 2 mile to shore 5/3/74 770 gr

4 mile to boat, 2 mile to shore 5/4/74 770gr

Start flying from out of sight over top of Island. 5/9/74

4 3/4 mile to boat 5/16/74 755gr

5 mile to boat, 4 mile return 5/21/74 750gr

6 mile shore to boat, 4 mile to shore 5/22/74 750gr

3 mile to shore 5/28/74 760gr

New target introduced 5/30/74 760gr

Break texas trip 5/31 to 6/11 74

4 mile round trip to target 6/13/74 760gr

6 mile to boat 6/14/74 750gr

6 mile to boat 6/18/74 750gr

Lost 6/19/74 750gr

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