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Unusual Birds Near Princeton

By Mrs. Vinnie T. Dyke

This summer the nature-lovers in our area have been thrilled by the sight of a stately white Mute Swan on Rawson's Lake in Bureau, Illinois. I.A.S. members who attended the annual meeting a number of years ago at Princeton will recall this lake as a haven for herons, sandpipers, and fishermen.

The swan appeared early in June and seems to enjoy its adopted home, as it has remained all summer except for brief absences. The pure white bird has dark legs and feet and a bright orange beak surmounted by a black knob. It is definitely the Mute Swan, which is native to northern Europe and Asia but is kept as a semi-domesticated bird in parks and estates in North America.

No one knows where this swan came from, but his presence causes great enjoyment to the children and householders of Bureau and Princeton. Whenever a car stops or people appear with bread or grain at the water's edge, the swan swims from the center of the lake and comes eagerly to the shore to be fed. He dunks his food under water before eating. His tameness suggests that he is an escaped bird, rather than one of the wild Mute Swans that have been increasing in numbers along the East Coast (these birds also originated from captive swans). We hope that our beautiful visitor will give us a permanent swan lake.

Another unusual species that has intrigued the bird-watchers here is a Ring-necked Dove that has been coming to my feeder and bird-bath all summer. He is a creamy-buff color with a black neck ring. The dove has been feeding on seeds and berries in the neighborhood

and visits other feeders all over this vicinity. We have not been able to learn whether this bird escaped or was liberated from the loft of some nearby bird fancier, but all of us enjoy its friendly, gentle nature and its mournful calls.

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SOME BIRD OBSERVATIONS — 1963

By Elton Fawks

CARDINAL AND HOUSE WREN — July 25, 1963 — A reliable observer reported a Cardinal and a House Wren nest just five feet apart. A few days later the wrens were seen feeding the young Cardinal. This continued for two weeks. The wrens did not hatch their eggs. They fed the Cardinal about three times to each feeding by the parent birds. I was able to observe this once. Only one young Cardinal hatched. I did not see any fighting among the birds.

PARASITIC JAEGER — Dec. 6, 1963 — Driving along Route 80, which runs beside the Mississippi river near Rapid City, Ill., I saw a black bird, crow size, with white upper wing flashings, chasing a gull, twisting and turning as it flew. When I was able to pull off the road for a better look, the bird had disappeared. However, half an hour later, parked on a drive beside the road, I saw the same performance at a distance of less than one block. The bird was nearly black, with white flashings on the upper wings. It was definitely a dark, immature Parasitic Jaeger. A week earlier I had noticed a dark bird chasing the gulls as I drove by, but at that time I had only a glance, and as the bird did not twist and turn, I had assumed it to be a crow. The jaeger was seen several times by most of the local birders on the 7th and 8th of December. At no time did I see elongated central tail feathers. I believe this bird was also seen on December 11.

R. R. 1, Box 112, East Moline, Illinois