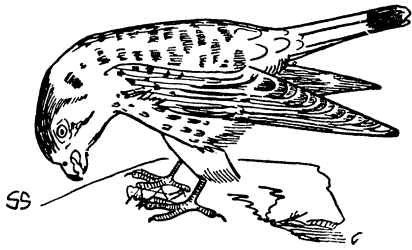


BIOLOGY

NATURE RAMBLINGS

By FRANK THONE



Sparrow-Hawk

The indiscriminate condemnation and persecution from which all hawks used to suffer is being somewhat relaxed of late years, and many of these swift, rapacious birds are now recognized as among the farmer's best friends. Among them all, the farmer has no greater friend than the least of the hawks—the sparrow-hawk.

The sparrow-hawk gets its name from its diminutive size, rather than from any fondness it displays for sparrows as prey. As a matter of fact, sparrow-hawks seldom offend by killing small birds or young chicks. When they want warm-blooded meat they generally take field mice, but their principal food during the warm season consists of insects. They seem to have a special liking for grasshoppers, crickets and that clan of crop-chewing pests in general, varied with big caterpillars, large spiders, bloated beetles and similar creeping things that nobody is very fond of.

The sparrow-hawk is much less shy of man and his works than are most of its larger brethren; indeed, most of its hunting is done over cultivated fields and clearings. Since it preys on small things that usually keep close to cover, it is not a lofty soarer, like its relatives, but is given to hanging suspended over a particular point by a rapid fluttering of its wings; whence its other name of "windhover."

It has one of the widest ranges of Northern American birds, being found everywhere east of the Rockies, from the Yukon and Mackenzie basins across to Newfoundland and south to the Gulf. A closely related hawklet, the desert sparrow-hawk, covers the rest of the continent, south through Mexico into Central America.

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The Romans devised ways of replenishing depleted oyster beds.

Douglas fir trees sometimes produce lumps of a sugar which is worth over \$50 a pound because one ingredient is valuable in medicine.

SOCIOLOGY

Ideas of Family Shaken

The popular myth that a "normal" family consists of two parents and three children has been taken as the basis for many discussions as to family budgets, salaries, house plans and other living problems. But this mythical family does not live in the average American city home, in Chicago, at least, according to an investigation just made under the auspices of the American Home Economics Association and the University of Chicago.

The study covers 23,373 families, some of which are childless, some having one or more children and some of which are "broken," that is, made up of one parent and one or more children. Of all these families, almost one-fourth had no children living at home when the figures were obtained. Another fourth had only one child. Practically one-fifth had two children, and less than one-third had three or more.

"The so-called normal family of two parents and three children was found in only 11 per cent. of the families studied," the preliminary report of the investigation states.

Considering the actual number of children that must be provided for in these families, the data show that "more than two-thirds are in families which have three or more children. In other words, were each family to receive an income sufficient to support four members, more than two-thirds of the children would be inadequately provided for, since they would be in families of more than four members."

The study which aims to add to the meager statistical data available on the American family shows the important economic point that in a four-child family the parents carry the burden of child care and dependency over an average period of 24 years. During seven years of this time one child is cared for; during another seven-year period two children; during six years three children, and during the last four years, four children.

The popular idea that the father, single-handed, supports his family was found true in only three-fifths of the families. In the other two-fifths, the wife or children, or both, were listed as wage-earners.

The number of children in divorced homes and the number of children living in lodging houses and hotels was very small.

Some light on the question of whether married women work because of necessity or in order to have careers is obtained through figures show-

ing that 20 per cent. of the wives of the unskilled laborers are gainfully employed, while only 12 per cent. of the wives of the managerial and executive group are earners.

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AVIATION

Pacific Weather Favorable

True to its name, the Pacific Ocean provides more stable weather for long distance flying than the Atlantic. While the trans-Atlantic flyers had to wait for the storms to adjust themselves so as to provide the most favorable air passage, Maitland and Hegenberger and others spanning the distance from America to Hawaii could hop off with the assurance of fair weather this time of year.

Data at the U. S. Weather Bureau here show that those aviators flying westward from the mainland have the aid of favorable winds to push them on to their goal. The flight eastward from Hawaii to the mainland involves buffeting a head wind for two-thirds of the long flight.

Such a condition is just the reverse of the situation in the Atlantic. There prevailingly westerly winds give the advantage to flyers who go eastward from America to Europe.

Starting from California, the trans-Pacific aviator should expect crosswinds, neither favorable nor unfavorable, for 200 to 300 miles from the mainland. Then the trade winds, blowing northeasterly and easterly, will help the rest of the way with velocities of from 15 to 30 miles per hour.

In summer the Pacific is practically free from wind or thunderstorms. Generally, the flyers will have fair weather, although sometimes in the mid-Pacific it is cloudy and showery.

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AVIATION

Aviation Interest Takes Spurt

Due to the inspiration of recent transatlantic flights, Lindbergh himself and all the aeronautical sections of the government have been deluged with mail.

The Navy Department reports that nearly every boy in the United States wants to be an aviator now. Inquiries since Lindy's homecoming have tripled.

The Department of Commerce has had the same sort of deluge. Numerous chambers of commerce desire information regarding the opening of municipal airports.

The Army Air Service reports that requests for information have more than doubled.

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