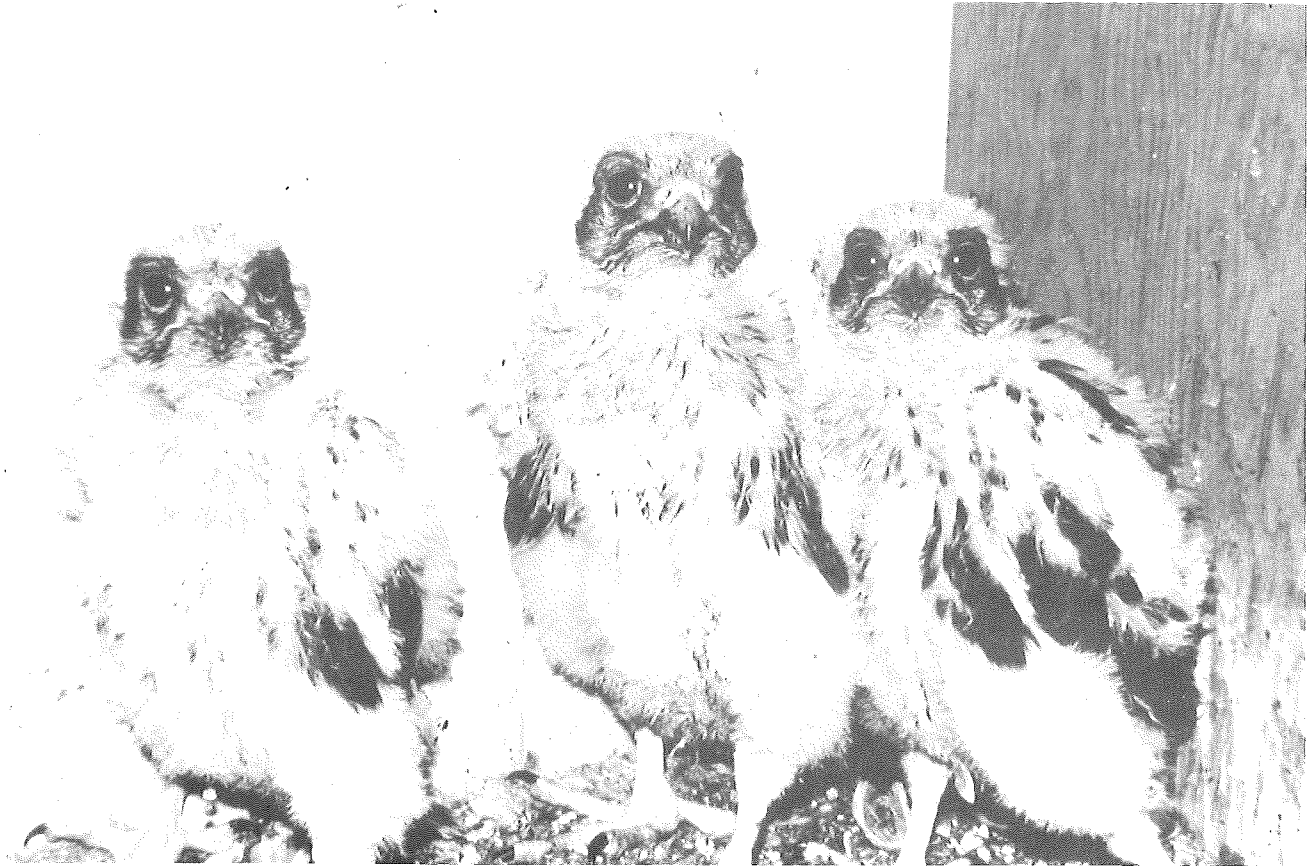


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"Nip," his sister and "Tuck" or is it "Tuck," his sister and "Nip?"

saturated with vitamins (Vionate powder).

On June 22nd I gave the pair of young tiercels, aptly named "Nip" and "Tuck," to Mike Melvill, who planned to fly them in a cast. Empty they weighed 20 ounces and 19 ounces and were well feathered out, but still about two weeks from flying. The adult birds did not seem upset by the removal of the two young and soon tapered off considerably on the amount fed to the remaining young bird. In fact, at the age of five weeks, when the young falcon weighed her maximum of 32 ounces, they took so little interest in feeding her that I removed the falcon from the breeding pen and put her on a block in order to hand feed her until

Gary Meyer came down from Chicago to pick her up on July 7th. She could fly then, but was still not hard-penned.

As of this writing, (mid-December, 1968), both pairs of Prairie Falcons are in excellent shape and I look forward to the possibility of having two pairs lay eggs in the spring of 1969. I am tempted to see how many eggs the old prairie will lay by removing them as soon as they are laid keeping one in the nest at all times or even substituting a camouflaged hen egg. Anyway, I will be considerably more relaxed this coming nesting season after the experiences of the past two seasons.

THE DOMESTIC RAISING OF THE PEALE'S PEREGRINE FALCON

by Richard S. Peterson, Issaquah, Washington

The year 1968 is believed a milestone in the process of learning to raise domestic falcons. Several clutches of eggs were laid, a pair of Prairie Falcons raised young and the pair of Larry Schramm's Peale's raised a single young to maturity.

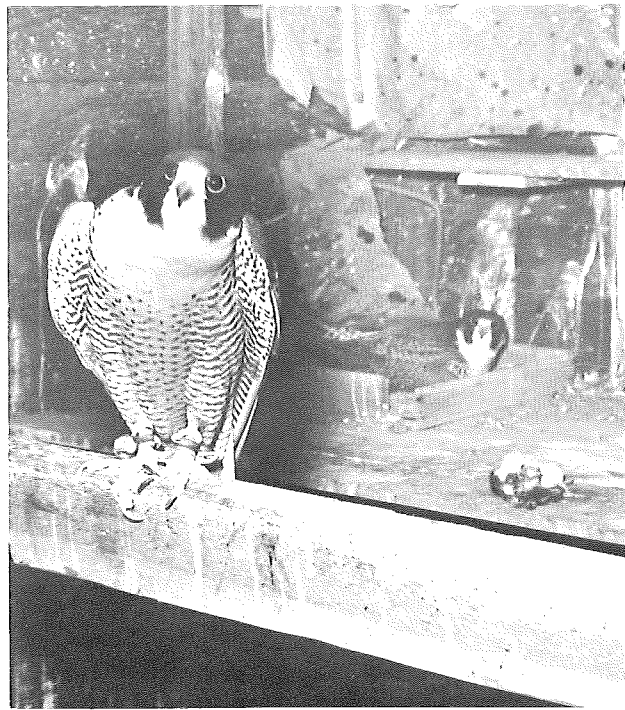
Larry has been associated with falconry for nearly 40 years. A graduate of Reed College, he is a descendant of one of the old and well-known families of Oregon. Through the past years he has been successful in the initial breeding of several species of wild game. A few of

his own words might set the stage for the paragraphs which follow:

"This pioneering (at least for me) in trying to breed falcons is full of anxieties. Everyone has ideas, mostly negative. As I go along I will have something of a launching pad of experience for 'further space explorations.' As I look back to our first breeding discussions I was really fumbling around. The late Colonel "Luff" Meredith participated in these discussions and gave me 'Labrador,' one of his tundra peregrines. This was the first step."

An eyass Peale's tiercel became available to Larry in 1963 through the help of George Galicz of North Surrey, British Columbia, Canada. This tiercel was kept and hand fed in the kitchen by Mrs. Muriel Galicz. The bird scampered around like a domestic kitten until, when fully hard-penned, he could go to Portland. This bird was named "Lokie" (Norse God of mischief) and was mated to the old falcon. The eight year old "Labrador" became ill on several occasions, however, and succumbed. "On post-mortem inspection I found a blocked bile duct and also three large ova which she should have laid the following month."

A year old (in 1964) Peale's female, "Lady Audry," was selected by George Galicz as "Labrador's" successor. "Lady Audry" was always a very aggressive eyass. She could be remembered as one which stole food from the other eyasses. She flew strongly and precisely in exhibition shows at fairs in the fall and during hunting season applied her skill on pheasant



"Lokie" on perch. "Lady Audry" incubating eggs. (All photos in this article were taken by Ken Schramm.)

and duck. "Lady Audry" loved the stormy weather of the British Columbian fall. She would wait-on at length above various groups of a hunting party watching for possible quarry. On occasion she was amply rewarded and in a single stoop killed a duck and continued on to clobber a pheasant which had chosen an inopportune time to rise.

When "Lokie" had moulted to mature plumage, a home for him and his mate was provided. They had always been tethered at adjacent perches. Now that they were freed in their new home, Larry took his reading and meditation with him to watch that no antagonism developed between the pair. As the days passed, all went well and soon "Lady Audry" and "Lokie" were left alone. It became obvious that they greatly enjoyed their naturally lighted "sunporch." A shelf and several boxes of earth were provided in a more darkened area. As spring approached, a great amount of chirping was heard from the falcon house, but only scratchings and some brooding was noted in that year.

"I believe the big problem in breeding falcons as well as everyday life, is the lack of 'control' of conditions such as is normal in the laboratory. I found that the mash I had been feeding my game birds and 'falcon fodder' chicks contained sex inhibitors. I have been advised that chick starter and some other types of chicken feed contain additives for suppression of sexual activity in order to produce infertile eggs. This poses the question: Will this exist in commercially purchased chickens and parts? I switched to a 'controlled' feeding system for 1967. My falcons are not fed vitamins, hormones or antibiotics directly. I believe that these could cause abnormal behavior if not given in the correct dosages."

During the spring of 1967 much chirping was again heard from Larry's falcon house. "Audry" brooded intently and both Peale's Falcons became quite aggressive when the falcon house was entered. Eventually three eggs were found in the nesting box.

"Possibly these eggs would have hatched except that the tiercel did such a bad job of incubating. This first year with a clutch he stood on the eggs and even tried to feed them."

The summer ended as another disappointment and nothing was left to do but await another spring and hope.

In 1968 fresh food was provided twice daily in the form of young chicken cockrels. The food supplied for the cockrels was compounded to provide high protein and vitamin content. As the days passed the pair became more protective of their home, but the weeks passed and there were no eggs. Worse yet "Lady Audry" was moulting. Despair reigned because



"Alexander the Great" on July 7, 1968. "Lady Audry" and "Lokie" defending.

game birds have passed the laying stage when the moult begins. Was the food incorrect? Had the birds become disturbed? What had caused the failure? The date of the previous year's clutch (March 15) had passed.

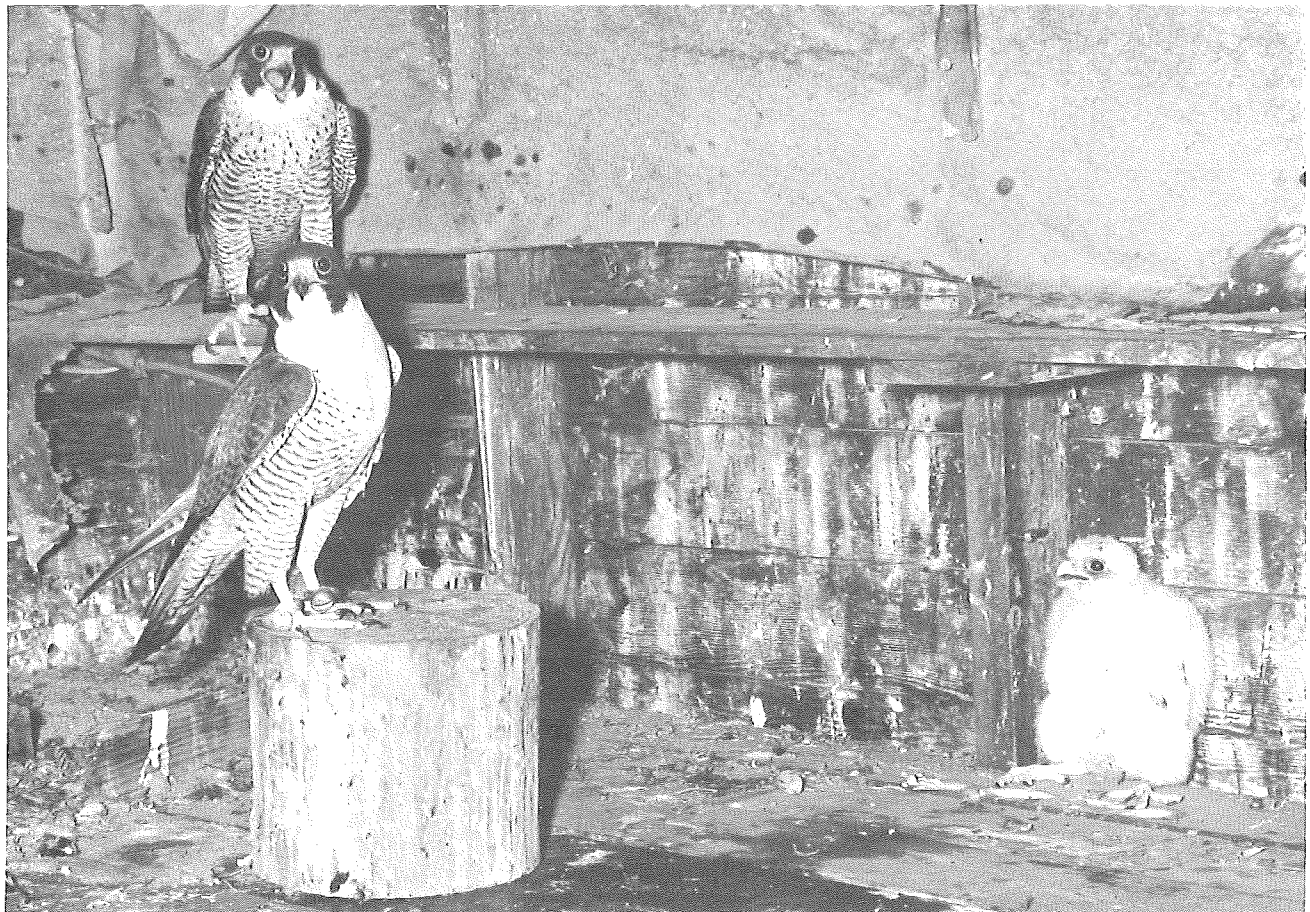
On April 15, there appeared an egg. Another was laid and another until there were four.

"When the four had not been supplemented for several days, the entire clutch was removed to an incubator. Two of the eggs when candled showed developing embryos. These eggs did not hatch." About a month passed. "Lady Audry" was



"Alexander the Great" on July 14, 1968. Larry is wearing his armor: Slicker, boots and rain hat. The tiercel usually about knocked the hat off before he could get out of the pen after changing the bath water.

in deep moult and another clutch of 3 eggs was laid by May 15. The falcons had now become so aggressive that it was necessary for Larry to protect himself by wearing a heavy rain slicker, rain hat and glove. Despite this, he received some deep facial slashes—the two



"Alexander the Great" on July 14, 1968. Weight 22 ounces on July 20, 1968.

large falcons became difficult to fend off with tenderness! After 38 days two of the eggs hatched.

"These I left with the falcons and this time 'Lokie,' the tiercel, did a good job. Again the unknown caused a failure. Would the birds take care of the young? In order to be sure, I cut a peephole and in so doing disturbed the pair which became highly protective. This undoubtedly was the cause of death of one of the young. It appeared to have been stepped on which is not unusual in domestic poultry such as ducks, geese, turkeys and chickens."

"As in the wild, all feeding of the young was done by the female. The male did the hunting and plucking, but was not allowed to feed the eyass until it was about four weeks old. Possibly, if there had been a full clutch, 'Lady Audry' would have welcomed some assistance. Hunting consisted of attacking the proffered food, which in the first few days were my young prize Amherst Pheasants as I was anxious to do this in the best manner."

In about a month the young Peale's was taken from the falcon house. As it completed its maturity in the master bedroom of Larry's ancestral home, it proved to be a beautiful dark tiercel. It was named "Alexander the Great."

Renz Waller has postulated that the "falcons are too young" to breed in their early years. Larry's pair was five years old in 1968. This seems to verify Mr. Waller's words that it would take about four or more years for peregrines to produce viable young. It was noted that with each succeeding breeding cycle the parents became more protective and more intent upon brooding.

"I have a good series of photos which are probably more informative than my writings. At this time, mid-September, the pair are 'building a nest.' Both get into the nest, making their happy (happy to me at least) nest building piping sounds. For the nest site I use a greenhouse bedding plant flat about four inches high, filled with moist loose earth so that it will not be too hard for the birds to make their 'scrape' or bowl-shaped depression in which the eggs are deposited. No sticks or straw should be used. While these appear in pictures of wild nesting falcons, it is usually because they have appropriated a nest previously used by another species. In the loose earth there is less danger of the eggs wandering away or becoming lost in the bedding."

"Since nest building takes place throughout the year it is possible that the birds could be induced to lay throughout the year. Good aviculturists, however, do not breed around the calendar. Even the best



August 11. The first two or three primaries may still have a little to grow. "Alex" was probably hard-penned on August 14, 54 days from hatching.

pigeon breeders only take four nests from their prize birds. For the time being I hope to confine breeding from March through early July."

Larry's comment concerning laying the year round has now been confirmed. I have received word from another falconer that his peregrine pair which laid in the spring again had eggs on October 18, 1968. These were intermewed eyasses with no artificial stimuli, natural northwest lighting and weather exposure. After laying, the falcon initiated her second 1968 moult.

"There is a very noticeable change in attitude during the last couple of days before the eggs hatch. The parents are very much more aggressive at this time and the falcon takes many more baths in the always available bath water."

"Incidentally, captive birds may, and no doubt will, produce retarded young. This will be a real problem to the falcon breeder. In my game bird activities I am pretty ruthless in executing below standard birds as would take place in the wild. My mentioning this is premature as no doubt with proper conditioning of the adults, strong, vigorous offspring should result for several generations."

"It is hoped that this success will help sustain those many falconers, known and unknown, who have also been working to propagate the birds of prey. May they also have many successes. I guess I have been pretty lucky considering that I have only three birds to work with, 'Labrador,' 'Lokie' and 'Lady Audry.' This is only a beginning which must be continued through several generations to insure that the birds of prey do not become an example of extinction."