



Tropical screech owl, *Otus choliba*, subject of the enclosed article. Note difference of this species and the eastern screech owl.

fluttering around. Although I never heard this owl call back, the eastern screech owl has perched about ten feet away from me in the state of Maryland, and has begun to call.

Whether or not the birds are defending their territory from an intruder, or merely responding to their mating call, I am not sure, for I have never been divebombed by these birds.

OBSERVATIONS IN CAPTIVITY

The tropical screech owl has fascinated me in the period of time that I have kept him. Having been hit by a car, his wing is broken, and has mended in the wrong way, making him an unreleasable subject. Although he can fly for some distance when I release him in a large room, he is not capable of a sustained flight or hunting on his own.

The plumage of owls is incredibly suited for night life, since they are

endowed with specialized barbs on their flight feathers, making their flight noiseless. I have noticed this adaptation when releasing the owl for exercise. The plumage is also very soft, and one characteristic that I have noted is that the eyelids are independently maneuvered, being able to open one eye to view its surroundings, while keeping the other one closed. Another interesting aspect about the eyelids is that they are feathered; a very unique feature.

Since owls have binocular vision, like humans, they are able to move their heads in any direction. Much to the surprise of many people, owls can see just as well during the day as during the night.

In one instance, when I had placed the food inside the owl's enclosure, I noticed how similar he appeared to the burrowing owl, *Speotyto canicularia*, of the drier areas of the United States. With legs extended and ear tufts suppressed, he was most reminiscent of this northern bird.

I find owls to be extremely interesting avicultural subjects, and much can be learned about their behavior in the wild by studying them and their habits in captivity. Since breeding most owls in a captive environment is relatively simple, increased effort should be placed in rearing these most fascinating creatures of the night.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Eastern screech owl, *Otus asio*, taken in a wooded section of Maryland.

New Zealand Holds Its First National Avicultural Convention "Birdword '86"

The Queen's birthday weekend—1986
 Friday, May 30 - Sunday, June 1

"Birdword '86" will be held at the Avondale Race Course, Auckland. Lots of variety of activities are scheduled: local and foreign guest speakers, videos, films, workshops, displays, aviary birds, photo contest, bird auction, food, fun, entertainment, and tours of aviaries throughout the beautiful Bay of Islands and Rotorua.

Come visit New Zealand, and attend our "Birdword '86"! Write or call for reservations and information NOW! "Birdword '86" Conference Makers, P.O. Box 3719, Auckland, New Zealand. Phone 31-149 or Telex 2478 "Newcoach." ●

Symposium Planned For March 1987

To honor the memory of Dr. Jean Delacour and Rocco Sanducci, the IFCB (International Foundation for the Conservation of Birds) is planning a memorial symposium on breeding birds in captivity March 11-14, 1987.

Approximately forty speakers from around the world will be addressing avian subjects concerning: ecology, conservation, field work, aviculture, nutrition, husbandry, medical research, etc.

Mark your calendars and plan ahead. We invite you to become part of this experience.

This symposium will be held at the Sheraton Premiere Hotel in Universal City, California (Los Angeles area). For more information please write: IFCB Symposium 1987, 11300 Weddington, North Hollywood, CA 91601, or call Dale Thompson, (818) 980-9818. ●

NOTICE

Loyl Stromberg, Pine River, Minnesota 56474, is looking for a contact in Russia who can tell him about the breeds of poultry kept in Russia.

If you have contact with a Russian poultry fancier or know anyone who does, please relay that information to Mr. Stromberg. He wants to include Russian poultry in an upcoming book *Encyclopedia—Poultry of the World* to be published in 1988. ●