FREMONT, OHIO
NEWS-MESSENGER
D. 15,000

MAR 4 1976

Bald eagles to have smorgasbord of carrion under Sandusky nest

A pair of bald eagles will soon discover a smorgasbord of carrion under its nest tree near Sandusky — compliments of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The pair has not raised young for many years. By supplying the birds with large quantities of relatively clean food, researchers hope to reduce pesticide levels in their eggs, reports staff wildlife biologist Carl Madsen with the Service's regional office, Twin Cities, Minn.

The supplemental feeding program will cater to the scavenger-like palate of eagles with offerings of roadkill deer, hatchery fish, laboratory rats and mice, slaughterhouse meats, and a few muskrat and raccoon carcasses.

Chemical toxicants found in eagle eggs are indicative of pesticide residues that are stored in body tissues of adult birds. Project leader for the supplemental feeding program, Leonard E. Schumann, a federal biologist assigned to the service's East Lansing Wildlife Enhancement Office, said the objective of the feeding program is to "try to determine whether or not the reproductive success of the pair can be increased through supplemental feeding during egg production, incubation and fledging."

The biologists said it is well documented that the reproductive success of the bald eagle has been greatly reduced where high residues of DDE, DDD, DDT, dieldrin and PCB's are present in eagle eggs.

Hard pesticides are present in food items eaten by eagles because of widespread use of the compounds in the past. However, application of hard pesticides has been largely discontinued because of current state and federal regulations prohibiting their use.

Madsen described the feeding program as a "long shot." A similar experiment was tried in Sweden, and on a limited scale last year in Maine without results.

Last year five pairs of breeding eagles in Ohio produced three young, according to Madsen. "That's the best success we've had in Ohio for many years," he offered.

"In the Great Lakes states we had at least 325 breeding pairs of eagles last year, and of course, others we were not aware of," Madsen said. USFWS records disclosed the 325 pairs produced 340 young. Generally, most eagles in the Great Lakes region begin nesting in March, the biologist continued.



THE BALD EAGLE

MONS 037076