

Nighthawks migrating south now

By Timothy Nowicki
special writer

FROM mid-August to mid-September, common nighthawks, which nest in northern Canada, migrate through the Detroit area on their way to South America.

Nighthawks are not actually hawks, as we commonly refer to large birds of prey, but are nighttime insect eaters.

As with many birds in the fall, nighthawks tend to flock together. Alice Kelly reports in her book, "Birds of Southeastern Michigan and Southeastern Ontario," that 5,420

nature

birds were counted on Sept. 7, 1974, from three stations.

NIGHTHAWKS are about 10 inches long, gray-brown, with long pointed wings, which have a noticeable white spot not far from the tip.

They have very wide mouths with rictal bristles, or whiskers, protruding from the base of the mouth, which help them detect insects. Active in evening hours.

nighthawks can be seen flying overhead near business districts, feeding on insects attracted to the lights.

Often they are heard before they are seen. While flying, they emit a nasal sound that is characteristic.

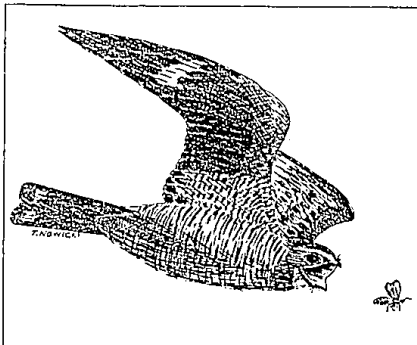
WHILE RETURNING home from work the other day, I noticed a group of about 15 birds feeding by my neighbors' house.

It was a rewarding experience, because the birds were flying only 10 feet off the ground, allowing my wife, daughter and me to approach within a few feet. We could see the white spots on the wings very clearly and even the barred pattern on the breast.

This group was attracted to ants emerging from the lawn. Large, winged, fertile female ants were flying in the air, soon to be followed by smaller winged male ants, who will mate with the flying insects.

During this season, female ants that successfully mate will find a suitable nest site to start a new colony of ants. They will lay eggs, feed the young and care for them until they mature. Then the workers they produce will tend to most of the nest duties.

A casual observation of some birds flying about had turned out to be a double treat. We saw nighthawks flying and feeding close up, and we experienced an interesting phase in the life cycle of an ant.



Nighthawks have wide mouths with "whiskers" to help them catch insects.

SEMTA expands Oakland routes

Effective Tuesday, the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority will operate two new trips in Oakland County: General Manager Albert A. Martin said.

A new trip on Route 470 between downtown Detroit and Berkley will leave the Renaissance Center at 5:38 p.m. and head north on Woodward, arriving in Royal Oak at 6:22 p.m. It will turn west on 12 Mile, halting at Lahser at 6:41 p.m.

A new service will be operated in the afternoons from Marian and Brother Rice high schools in Bir-

mingham to Pine Lake Mall in West Bloomfield.

Routing for the new service will be north on Lahser Road, west on Maple Road and north on Orchard Lake Road to Pine Lake Mall. Buses will stop at intermediate stops where there is a SEMTA sign. Fare is 75 cents.

It will leave Marian at 2:30 p.m. and arrive at Pine Lake Mall 3 p.m.

The new service will be reviewed after two months to determine if ridership is adequate to continue operation, Martin said.

Additional schedule information is available from SEMTA at 962-5515.

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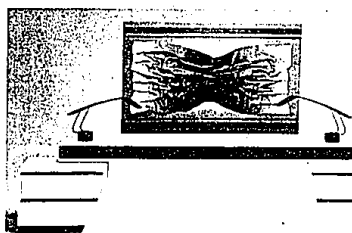
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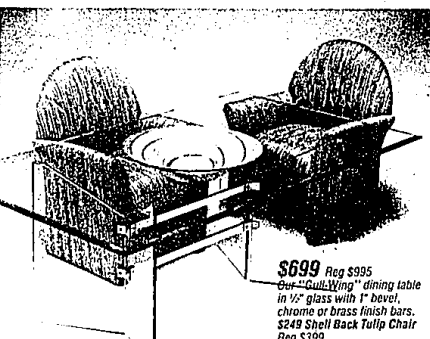


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