



Red-phase birds are less common

I HAD an opportunity to see a red-phase screech owl the other day. Red-phase birds are not as common in Michigan as the gray-phase birds. In general, red-phase birds make up only one-third of the population.



nature
Timothy Nowicki

It reminded me that there are many examples of variation in the natural world. Ermine, or the three species of weasel found in Michigan, change color during the winter.

They have adapted to the seasonal change in weather by growing a coat of white fur. A white coat of fur against white snow helps camouflage them from potential predators.

PTARMIGAN, a bird found in the far north, also changes from a summer brown to a winter white.

Most animals, however, do not change color from season to season, but are born a different color from other individuals in their brood or family.

Screech owls are born either red, gray or an intermediate brown color. Studies have shown that in the northern part of its range, the gray color predominates.

In the southern part of its range, the red phase predominates. Intermediate brown birds make up a very small portion of the population.

Red-phase birds require more energy than gray birds and thus are less likely to survive when conditions are harsh in the northern cl-

mats.

Ruffed grouse, sometimes known as a partridge, also has a red, gray and a mixed-color phase. Like the screech owl, gray-phase grouse are better able to survive the colder temperatures and are more common in the northern states.

VARIATIONS such as these, and many others in the natural world, help to ensure that some individuals will survive when conditions change.

A classic example of this survival occurred during the 1950s in England.

Peppered moths occur in a white and gray phase and rest on tree trunks during the day. In the industrial period of the '50s, white-phase moths that were once the most common began to decline, while the dark-phase moths increased.

As the trees in the country became darkened with soot, white-phase moths were being eaten by predators more often than the camouflaged dark-phase moths.

Chefs honor Enright

Kevin Enright, Oakland Community College culinary arts instructor, has been selected "De Cuisine chef of the year" for 1988 by the Michigan Chefs de Cuisine Association.

The head chef at Double Eagle restaurant in Troy, Enright has taught since 1984 in the hospitality program on OCC's Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills.

Enright has been in the business since 1969 when he started as a short-order cook in a Clock restaurant in Detroit. He received an associate's degree in culinary arts in 1977 at Schoolcraft College and was certified in 1980 as a working chef by the American Culinary Federation.

He has worked in restaurants in Detroit, Southfield and Franklin.

Author due twice at OCC

Dr. Andy LePage, author and family therapist, will deliver two talks at Oakland Community College on "The New Three T's of Education: Reverence, Renewal and Responsibility."

He will speak at 1 p.m. Friday, March 25, in the theater on Royal Oak Campus, 735 S. Washington, and at 8 a.m. Monday, March 28, in the theater of the Orchard Ridge Campus, Orchard Lake Road at I-96, Farmington Hills.

His appearance was arranged by OCC's Futures Institute.

Author of "Transforming Education," LePage says public education can't be improved until Americans realize how society has been fragmented and compartmentalized.

OU picks Kessler for science project

The Oakland University Board of Trustees has selected the firm of William Kessler and Associates of Troy as architects for its new Science and Technology Center.

The board action last week included a recommendation that Kessler be selected by the Michigan Department of Management and Budget for preliminary planning studies of the approximately \$30 million project.

OU officials say the winning firm has a strong record with comparable science and engineering building projects including the Industrial Technology Institute in Ann Arbor, the School of Public Health at Har-

vard University.

OU has been authorized by the state to proceed in this very preliminary stage in the process. The new building will be adjacent to the Hannah Hall of Science and Dodge Hall of Engineering.

The classroom-laboratory-service facility will house the department of mathematics, School of Health Sciences, select operations of the departments of biological sciences, chemistry and physics.

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