

PHEASANTS FREED FOR BREEDING ON RANCHO SANTA FE

Release 312 Young Birds in First Experiment of Kind in San Diego County.

A shipment of 312 ringed-neck pheasants, specimens of one of the most beautiful game birds in the world, was released yesterday morning at Rancho Santa Fe by the state fish and game commission. The introduction of the birds here is an experiment for San Diego county and the result will be watched with great interest by sportsmen, as well as by naturalists.

The pheasants were taken by trucks to Rancho Santa Fe from Los Serranos state game farm at Chino by E. D. Platt, superintendent of the farm.

A preliminary survey of conditions in various parts of San Diego county was made by Platt and C. S. Donham, deputy state fish and game commissioner at present stationed at Escondido. The survey resulted in the choice of Rancho Santa Fe as the best location for release of the birds. Many residents of the rancho attended the affair to watch the pheasants as they were released from their cages.

The pheasants immediately sought refuge in the underbrush and soon the cries of the young birds were the only thing to indicate their existence.

MALE IS GAUDY

The ringed-neck pheasant, so called because of a white ring around the neck of the cock, is a large bird. The cock has bright, iridescent plumage and its weight averages between two and three pounds. The hen bird has drab-colored plumage, which serves as a protection at times of nesting and against enemies.

Pheasants feed on weed seeds and insects, with such green food as is available in grass and succulent plants. The grasslands are the native haunts of the bird, although they are said to adapt themselves readily to new environment.

The birds released yesterday were three months old. In about six weeks the cocks will acquire their brilliant plumage.

Hunters are warned that the pheasants are under the protection of the fish and game commission and severe penalties will be given to persons caught shooting them.

The mating season is in February and the young hatch in April, May, and June. The worst enemy of the pheasant is the hunting house cat.

When the Rancho Santa Fe flock has multiplied to a sufficient number to insure perpetuation, a short open season will be announced. This may be several years. Residents of Rancho Santa Fe prize game birds exceedingly, according to report, and every effort is being made to protect quail, doves and other game birds. Recent requests have been made to have the rancho declared a game preserve, it was reported yesterday.

Game Birds Make Ranch Debut

Introduction of ringed-neck pheasants in San Diego county is one of the most recent attempts of the state fish and game commission to propagate wild life in this section of the country. The picture shows a shipment of 312 birds that were released yesterday at Rancho Santa Fe. Mrs. Constance Clotfelter is shown holding one of the pheasants before letting it fly to the brushlands.



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