

Byrd's Eye View
A Public Service Column by
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BIRDS IN THE NEWS

News-conscious Americans may well be forgiven befuddlement when, in tuning in radios and televisions to daily newscasts, they hear reports on the activities of doves, hawks, owls, ostriches, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, and the like. Bewilderment justly may arise as to whether a news account has reference to ornithology, foreign affairs, or sporting events when one hears: "A fiery confrontation between doves and hawks shook the Nation's Capitol yesterday."; "Steps were ordered to save the American Eagle."; "The hawks and doves have now been joined by the owls."; "Fouling by the Hawks proved costly."; or "The Falcons will suffer next season from this latest freeze."

A glossary of terms would thus appear helpful to have on hand before attempting in-depth deciphering of current news. The following pocket-sized translations are therefore offered, as partial aids to finding one's way through the political aviary:

A HAWK--currently applicable to persons who advocate all-out efforts for victory in Viet Nam. Originally used in reference to those who counseled the late President Kennedy to bomb Cuban missile sites;

A DOVE--applicable to opponents of the hawks. Generally considered to refer to those who favor withdrawal of American forces from Asian mainland, and sometimes categorized as "fluttering" or "twittering." This term also was sired during the Cuban missile crisis;

AN OWL--refers to one who gives unswerving support to the Administration's Viet Nam policy but is capable of solemnly assessing the future. This is a new bird term hatched during recent heated debates on Viet Nam crisis;

AN OSTRICH--a bird who traditionally sticks his head in the sand without regard to his exposed derriere, or, in American

parlance, he who cannot yet locate Viet Nam on a map of Asia and is more interested in putting a third car in his garage;

A YELLOW BELLIED SAP-SUCKER--anyone too stubborn to agree with an orator's own analysis of U.S. policies;

AN EAGLE (BALD OR GOLDEN)--used frequently by opponents of continued U.S. foreign aid, who claim: "Foreigners have picked the American eagle bald."; or "Those natives must think the American eagle is a solid golden one--made of nothing but money." (Listed on ornithological family tree of eagles as rich uncle of West Virginia eagles.);

OTHER BIRD TERMS--i.e., Atlanta Falcons and Baltimore Orioles--for the present these may be safely assumed as referring to American sports teams encountering their own vicissitudes with no assistance from Hanoi, Peking, or Moscow;

STILL OTHER ORNITHOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS--whooping cranes and starlings--noteworthy by wide variance in attitude of Federal government towards these feathered creatures. All-out efforts are being made to help along the whooping crane propagation, while (by great contrast) research is being heavily underwritten to contain the starlings' population explosion, distastefully noted because of adverse effects on the appearances of public buildings in Washington, D. C.