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Siberian White-necked Cranes

(*Megalornis leucauchen*)

By D. L. MOBLEY

Curator, California Zoological Gardens

N compliance with a request of Mr. Rudkin for a summary of the laying and rearing "to date" of a pair of Siberian White Neck Cranes under my care at the California Zoological Gardens.

The first egg was laid on June 21st, and two days later, June 23rd, the second egg was laid. Eggs were about the size of a Black Swan egg, bluish green with rather large dark spots. The nest was composed of a hand full of twigs and straw. Each day during incubation the parent birds moved the eggs, that is they rolled the eggs at least two feet and then rebuilt the nest around the eggs, both birds took turns upon the nest.

The first egg hatched on July 20th or on the 23th day of incubation. This was a fine big chick and very husky with a covering of beautiful red dawn. The second egg pipped very shortly after the first chick was out of the shell but seemed to have trouble breaking out; this was about 9:00 A. M. July 20th, at 6:30 P. M., the shell was pretty well broken away at one end and the white inner skin was slit for about one inch, it looked like the baby would be out any minute. The mother setting on the nest stopped any more observation that night. The next morning the 21st, I found that the youngster was still in the shell and the inner skin still intact with the exception of the one inch slit. About 9:00 A. M. I went into the pen and after a little argument with the male bird succeeded in picking up the egg; after a moments work I released the lady from her prison. During this little operation both parent birds stood with their heads and beaks within a few inches of my hand and watching very close and when the baby was released and started to chirp they threw their heads in the air and their wings up and what a serenade they gave me. I did not take the chick completely out of the shell but being sure that it was clear to kick out when ready,

replaced it in the nest. The mother rolled the eggs and baby over and back and straightening the chicks head out took hold of it back of the wings with her beak, pulled the baby out of the shell at which the male threw the empty shell out of the nest.

She sat on the baby the rest of the day while the male took charge of the other chick, caught flies and insects and fed it all day. The second baby was a little weak from being in the shell so long but snapped out of it the next day and was, and is, fine.

I started feeding these birds on boiled egg, No. 12 Spratts, chopped lettuce, meal worms and growing mash, to which I added pieces of meat the second week. These birds are nearly a month old now and are at least a third as large as their parents. They are 14 inches high now, a growth of 10 inches in less than a month; so far they still have their beautiful baby down and a pair of more awkward youngsters one will have to go a long way to find. These birds are on display every day in the week and I would be glad to welcome each and every member of the Avicultural Society to the California Zoological Gardens, (formerly Luna Park) Los Angeles.