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FEVOLD, PFEIFFER RECEIVE GRANT TO STUDY PHALAROPE BIRD

MISSOULA-- H. Richard Fevold, associate professor of chemistry and E. W. Pfeiffer, professor of zoology at the University of Montana, have received a \$25,000 grant to be used over a two-year period from the National Science Foundation, Fred S. Honkala, director of research for the UM Foundation, announced Monday, (Sept. 18).

The title of their study is "Synthesis of Androgens and Estrogens by the Gonads of Wilson's Phalaropes."

The grant is a continuation of work which was begun several years ago. The purpose of the study will be to explain the phenomenon of sex reversal in the Phalarope, a species of shore bird.

Past studies have revealed an almost complete pattern of sex reversal. The female role is carried on by the male and the male role is carried on by the female. Dr. Fevold and Dr. Pfeiffer have shown that this is the result of unusual hormone relationships.

We are very lucky to have these birds nesting in Montana, the researchers said. The birds nest in the Flathead Valley and on the east side of the Continental Divide, along the slope of the Divide. They winter in Argentina.

Dr. Jerry Johns, who did his Ph.D. at UM on the Phalarope, showed that the brilliant plumage of the female is due to male hormones. It appears that at a certain period in the breeding cycle the female produces an abnormal amount of male hormones. The present studies will concern the way the ovary makes male instead of female hormone.

"We hope that these studies will lead to further understanding of hormone control of sexual characteristics in animals, including man," the professors said.