

A NORTH AMERICAN NEST-RECORD CARD PROGRAM

Beginning in January, 1965, the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University will operate a nest-record card program on a continent-wide basis and would like the assistance of everyone.

Through the cooperation of Dr. David B. Peakall and the Onondaga Audubon Society, the Laboratory has carried on a nest-record card program on a local basis for two years. The aim of the program which is similar to one used in Britain (see Mayer-Gross, 1962, Bird Study 9:252-258), is to collect specific data on bird reproduction in a form convenient for statistical analysis. The results of this two-year trial have been so gratifying that we are encouraged to make the program continent-wide.

For this to be a success we will need the cooperation of all bird observers in all parts of the continent, particularly the United States and Canada. We will also need--because we are certain that regional centers can handle the distribution of data cards and their return to the Laboratory better than individuals--the cooperation of all bird clubs and other societies whose members make field observations of birds.

The Laboratory will provide bird clubs or individuals with cards. The observers will record the contents of each nest found on a separate card and make dated notations on the same card for each subsequent visit to the nest. Each card will then contain all the data from a single nesting. While one observation of a nest will be valuable, additional observations over a period of days or weeks will increase the worth of the record. Our goal is to have hundreds, possibly thousands, of cards containing data on each species from all parts of its range.

We are well aware that there are other local nest-record card programs in this country and in Canada (see Peakall, 1964, Audubon Field Notes, 18(1):35-38), and, naturally, we do not intend to infringe on them in any way. We only hope that they will cooperate with us and help broaden the scope of the whole endeavor. The net result should be the accumulation of far more data on every species than heretofore and the centralization of these data for comprehensive and intensive study, much as is true of the bird-banding program of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All of the information from our program will, of course, be available to anyone who is interested.

Clearly this is a program in which every person seriously interested in birds can participate, be he a seasoned nest finder or one who merely watches a nest from a window. Local organizations, or individuals not members of local groups, may address all inquiries and communications to the North American Nest-Record Card Program, Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14850. Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., Director.