

I find in an old notebook for 1906, under date of May 9, in Georgetown, the story of a Blue Jay's nest (with five eggs of the beautiful buffy style) which was built out in the open, away from the woods, in a willow tree near a house. Another rather unusual situation was in May, 1910, in Plymouth, where I found a Jay's nest in a hedgerow close to houses on Summer street, just over the fence, in fact, from the sidewalk where people were continually passing. Miss Frances Vibert, writing in June, 1911, from Hartford, Conn., describes a Jay's nest "with young birds about big enough to fly" on Beacon Street in that city, which was built "on the turn of the gutter pipe just below the eaves of the verandah roof." Aaron C. Bagg writes from the western part of our state (Holyoke, April 18, 1925) that "a pair of Blue Jays are nesting across the street in a neighbor's yard, high up in a cutleaf maple." In Ware, in the west-central section of Massachusetts, I have known of Jays nesting in the street trees or in yards close to houses; and Mr. F. C. Moulton, of Ware, tells me of a Blue Jay that built in a small tree close by the open window of the noisy loom-room of one of the large local mills. In the Dorchester section of Boston a Jay nested a year or so ago in the ornamental vines just over the front door of an occupied house. But why prolong the tale? Similar reports of the familiarity of the Blue Jay, in and out of the breeding season, come from New Bedford, Brockton, Quincy, Malden, Newton, and other places in thickly-settled eastern Massachusetts.—J. A. FARLEY, 52 Cedar St., Malden, Mass.

Changed Habits of Blue Jay at Philadelphia.—Mr. Farley's note prompts me to publish my similar experience in Germantown, one of the northern suburbs of Philadelphia. When studying birds in Wister's woods and vicinity from 1880 to 1897, the Blue Jay was a very wild species occurring only during autumn flights, but upon returning to reside in the old neighborhood after some twenty-five years absence I found the bird's habits totally changed. I was surprised to find a pair of Jays present about the end of May, 1922, acting as if they were located for the summer. Later, I detected them constructing a nest in a beech tree close to the railroad station about ten feet above a path along which hundreds of persons passed to and from the trains, and not over fifty feet from the tracks. Next year and the year following they nested again in the same spot but in different trees once only thirty feet from the railroad tracks, and showed no apparent fear of trains or passing passengers.—WITMER STONE, *Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia.*

The English Starling at Chicago, Illinois.—On December 21, 1925, Mr. Roderick Van Trump described to me four "strange" birds that he and his brother had seen in Oak Park the day before. The birds in question had been observed feeding on the ground at close range and the size, actions and *yellow bills* placed them beyond doubt as English Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). These boys are enthusiastic Boy Scouts and I know them to

be familiar with our common birds and also fairly keen observers. However, since Mr. W. I. Lyon has trapped and banded two Starlings at Waukegon, Ill. on December 27, 1925, there seems to be no doubt whatever about my Oak Park record being correct. For some years past we have been on the lookout for the Starling to reach Chicago, but we hardly expected them to first appear during a winter of much snow and sub-zero temperatures like the present.—CHRESWELL J. HUNT, *Chicago, Ill.*

Foster Parentage.—Wishing to learn whether the Cowbird had any inherent adaptability for foster parentage not possessed by other species we tried an experiment involving three kinds of birds.

In one of our nesting boxes, ten feet up on a stake, a Bluebird was sitting on four eggs; a Song Sparrow had her nest with four eggs in a rather exposed position on the ground in a cranberry bog very near our house; in some pine woods nearby a Veery was incubating three eggs; her nest well secreted from any observer, human or otherwise.

We knew that the Bluebird was due to hatch her eggs in a few days and thought that the Sparrow was well along in incubation, the Thrush we were uncertain about; however, on July 6 we took three eggs from the Bluebird, and, using water colors spotted them lightly with brown and gave them to the Sparrow in exchange for three of her eggs.

The remaining Sparrow egg was given to the Thrush.

This last move was made principally to check up on the hatching, it not being convenient to examine the Bluebird's nest.

On the 7th, much to our satisfaction, the Bluebird's eggs were pipped and the Sparrow sitting tight; we immediately examined the Thrush's nest and were surprised to find all the eggs in it at the point of hatching; from this data we knew that the Bluebird's complement must also be coming out.

This was a very fortuitous culmination, as all coming out together not only reduced the liability of neglect or abandonment on the foster mother's part, but also made it much easier for us to keep tab on what happened.

On this day (7th) a hard rain was falling and we only visited the Sparrow and Thrush once. The latter was excessively shy, so much so that never once could we observe her leave the nest.

On the 8th at 7 A. M. the Sparrow had one Bluebird hatched, and both of the remaining eggs pipped clear around their shells. In common prudence no further examinations were made that day beyond driving a stray cat from the vicinity; and right here is where we neglected a most necessary precaution, we should have put a screen of chicken wire net over the Sparrow about a foot above the nest.

On the 9th all was progressing well, the Sparrow sitting close and leaving her little charges with reluctance, the Thrush with four callow young, but so timid that we thought it best not to visit her more than once per day.

A cat that persisted in hanging around the cranberry bog near the Sparrow was eliminated, and later, three more cats were put out of commission.