

stantly during the inattentive period off the nest, but the male regularly fed her while she was on the nest. When the young hatched the male almost immediately stopped feeding the female when she was off the nest but continued to feed her during her brooding periods. In several cases the female continued to beg to some extent while off the nest, but the male usually ignored her and fed the young instead. After brooding stopped, all traces of the feeding-begging behavior between the adults disappeared.

To summarize, the feeding of the female by the male and the begging by the female seems to have little if anything to do with the formation of the pair in the Black-capped Chickadee. The behavior apparently may start gradually during nest construction or egg laying (which is at least one to three weeks after definite pairing), then reaches a peak during incubation, and gradually stops after hatching when the male transfers his feeding activity to the young.—EUGENE P. ODUM, *University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.*

**Snow Buntings burrowing into snowdrifts.**—During the severe sub-zero weather experienced in New England on February 15–16, 1943, a flock of 150–200 Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax n. nivalis*), wintering at the Graves Brothers' Farm, Williamsburg, Massachusetts, sought shelter from the 35°-below-zero temperatures and the bitter northwest winds by digging themselves into soft snow under the steep southeast (or leeward) edges of several shallow drifts in an open field. On February 19, when my father, Aaron C. Bagg, and I visited this farm, we saw countless oval depressions still remaining in the snow just under these small 'snow-cliffs,' and Dwight Graves told us that on February 15, when the temperature did not rise above –20° F. all day, the Snow Buntings remained huddled in these holes, leaving only occasionally to feed on a nearby chaff pile. The snow around these depressions was littered with droppings.

According to Forbush ('Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States,' 3: 35, 1929), "when the snow is soft, these birds are said to dive into it . . . and there pass the night. When the snow is frozen hard, the flocks sleep in the open, protected from the north wind only by some slight rise in the ground, by sand dunes, or by a stone wall." (See also Thomas S. Roberts, 'The Birds of Minnesota,' 2: 454, 1932.) In the case described above, however, the Snow Buntings sheltered in the snow during daylight hours as well as at night. Nearby were stone walls, an extensive, thick, pine grove, farm buildings, and apple trees (in which we saw over 100 of these birds perching on February 19, a milder day). Is it not fair testimony of both the weather's severity and the birds' basic instinct that in Massachusetts the Snow Buntings did as they must do in the extreme Arctic regions where there is no shelter but that afforded by snow and ice? Is it not the same procedure which must be followed by such Snow Buntings as those seen by the Nansen Polar Expedition between 84° and 85° North Latitude (about 90° East Longitude in May, 1895, and 15° East Longitude a year later)—both points being considerably north of any known land?—AARON MOORE BAGG, *Holyoke, Massachusetts.*

**Swimming ability of young Robin.**—The interesting observation of George A. Petrides, concerning the swimming ability of a young Catbird (Auk, 59: 584, 1942) leads me to report a somewhat similar happening experienced by my friend, Miss Edith McL. Hale, who wrote to me as follows, under date of June 3, 1942:

"I was seated beside Willow Pond at Mt. Auburn [Cambridge, Mass.], when a little bird fluttered low over the pond at some distance from me and dropped to