

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

the water. It turned and began to swim toward the land. After progressing a yard or more it stopped to rest. This was repeated again and again until I was sure that it was a land bird making frantic efforts to reach the shore. A group of men was raking the mown grass with long wooden rakes, and I asked the nearest man to please put his rake as far out as possible so that the bird could reach it. The baby Robin, for so it proved to be, made another frantic effort for a yard or more, flapped its little wings as fast as possible, reached the rake and was drawn safely to shore where it sat panting on its life preserver . . . The wings had white spots and natal down was in evidence."—MAURICE BROUN, *Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Route 1, Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania.*

Two Wood Ducks incubating in the same nesting box (Plate 12, lower figure).—It is rare indeed to find two non-colonial birds of the same species incubating their eggs side by side in one nest, and it is all the more unusual when the species happens to be a cavity-nester. Two female Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) were discovered engaged in this nesting procedure in 1942.

During the inspection of approximately 700 Wood Duck nest boxes (erected by the Illinois Natural History Survey as part of an intensive research program on the life history and management of the Wood Duck), the writer discovered the 'twin' incubators in a box on the premises of Dr. Frank Green, Chillicothe, Illinois, May 19, 1942. Dr. Green, who was away on vacation at that time, reported that on April 16, the box held two young fox squirrels. By April 26, the fox squirrels had departed and four Wood Duck eggs were in the box. On May 4, eight days later, the box contained nineteen eggs, which represented an average laying rate of almost two a day, indicating that two females were laying in the same nest. Community nests are of frequent occurrence with the Wood Duck; in fact seven of the eight Wood Duck nests located on Dr. Green's premises in 1942 were community or 'dump' nests.

Dr. Green removed five of the nineteen eggs, placing them in other boxes. On May 19, two hens were incubating thirty-four eggs; later two eggs disappeared. When I inspected the box on May 29, at 6 P. M., I found one female away, evidently feeding, while the other one continued to incubate one-half of the nest. This discovery led to the conjecture that perhaps the hens recognized a particular part of the nest as their own. Consequently, Dr. Green marked one hen. For several days thereafter the birds maintained their respective incubating positions. However, after that they frequently shifted positions, displaying no attachment for any certain part of the nest.

According to Dr. Green, the eggs were hatching on June 8. By June 10, one hen had departed with twenty-six ducklings, while the other remained in the box with three weak ducklings and three unhatched eggs. On the following day, the remaining hen left with two ducklings, leaving one weak duckling and three unhatched eggs.

It is remarkable that the maternal instinct of these two female Wood Ducks overcame the intolerance that individuals of most species generally exhibit toward others of the same species. Despite the facts that Wood Ducks often lay in community nests, that several pairs may associate together early in the breeding season and that several pairs may, through sociability, be induced to nest in the same vicinity, Wood Ducks have been observed to be intolerant of one another. On more than one occasion a male—perched on a limb near a nest box inhabited by his laying mate—has been seen to lunge and drive a newly arrived pair from the same limb.