

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.*

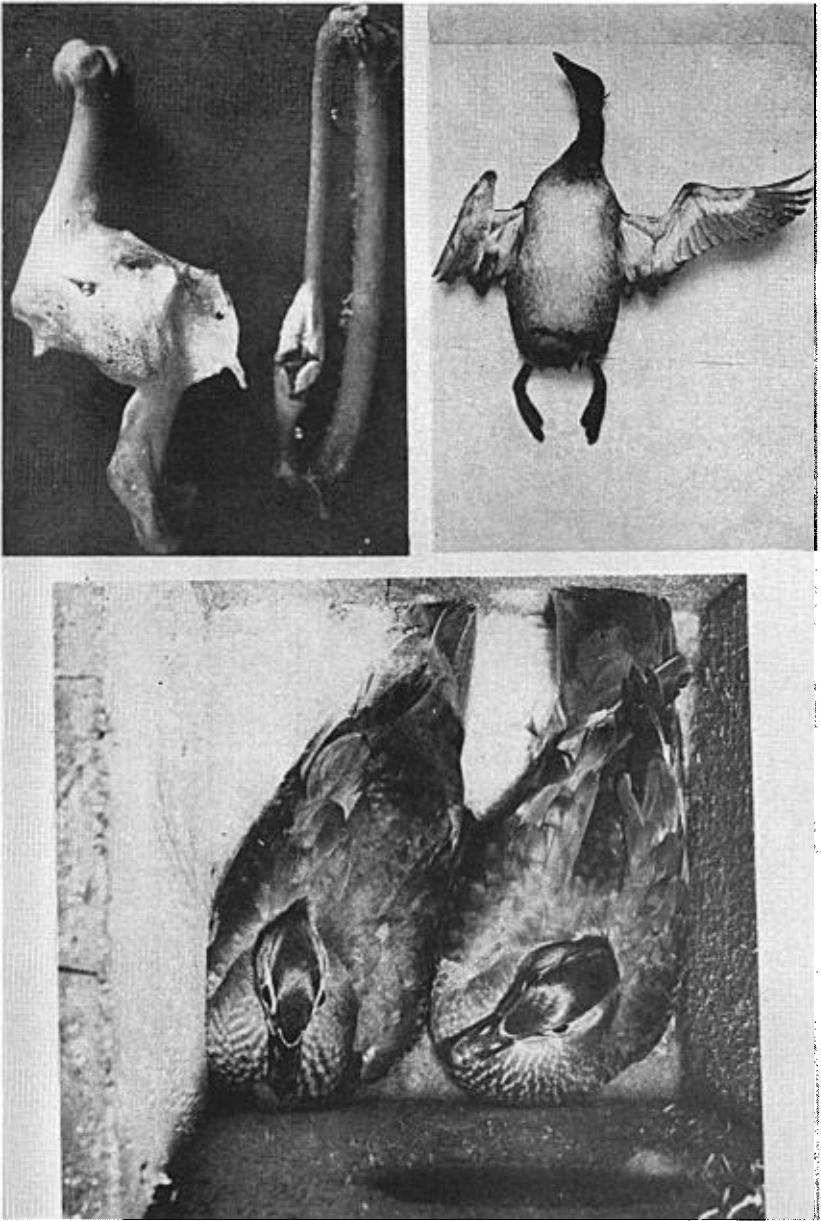
**Two Wood Ducks incubating in the same nesting box** (Plate 12, lower figure).—It is rare indeed to find two non-colonial birds of the same species incubating their eggs side by side in one nest, and it is all the more unusual when the species happens to be a cavity-nester. Two female Wood Ducks (*Aix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



(Upper left) ABBOTT: BONE REPAIR IN DUCKS. (Upper right) ERNST: DEFORMATION IN THE WING OF A PIED-BILLED GREBE. (Lower) BELLROSE: TWO WOOD DUCKS INCUBATING IN THE SAME NESTING BOX.

Dr. Hurst Shoemaker of the University of Illinois informs me that frequently two female canaries may lay and incubate their eggs in the same nest. Under domestic conditions, morals of wild birds often break down. Wild birds under captivity may display this trait more commonly than birds in the wild.—FRANK BELLROSE, JR., *Illinois Natural History Survey, Urbana, Illinois.*

**Bone repair in ducks** (Plate 12, upper left figure).—The paper by Otto W. Tie-meier in the issue of 'The Auk' for July, 1941, reminded me that several years ago a young man presented me with the mended wing bones of two ducks which were shot, so he told me, in flight. I am not certain as to the species, but believe both were Mallards. In one specimen the radius had been fractured, and had mended without any distortion save a prominent callus. In the other specimen the humerus had been broken in the middle, the broken ends separated, and later fused through a flat bridge of bone. It is remarkable that a bird so handicapped should be able to fly.—CYRIL E. ABBOTT, *Searcy, Arkansas.*

**Deformation in the wing of a Pied-billed Grebe** (Plate 12, upper right figure).—A Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps podiceps*) of great interest was received at the Zoology Laboratory of the New York State College of Forestry on October 15, 1942. The bird was one of ten brought to the laboratory by Game Protector Charles Hunter; the birds had been shot by duck hunters at Dalton Beach, Oneida Lake. This lake is frequented each fall by a great number of hunters from the nearby city of Syracuse, and the supposition is that a great number of grebes are mistaken for ducks and killed.

With a view to preparing the skins for the Roosevelt Wildlife Station museum, I closely examined each bird. The last bird to be examined was found to have a deformed and stunted wing. It was the belief of the staff that the bird had never flown; the wing and feather area were far too small to support the bird's body weight. Further examination showed the bird to be an immature. Having no power of flight, the grebe had been forced to rely on its swimming and diving prowess to escape predators and secure food. Oneida Lake is lined with summer cottages, and the summer human population is great. This fact plus the number of the bird's natural enemies (large fish, muskrats, snakes, and certain birds of prey) would lead me to believe that 'the survival of the fittest' should be modified to 'the survival of the luckiest.'

Except for the wing deformity, the bird was in excellent condition. Body weight was as heavy as, or heavier than, some of the others examined, plumage was in fine shape; internal organs were sound. There was a noticeable under-developed condition of the pectoral-muscle tissue as would be expected in a non-flying bird. Measurements showed the normal right wing extended to be 20.2 centimeters, while the stunted left measured only 8.5 centimeters. These measurements were made from the point of attachment to the body to the first primary feather, with the wing extended as shown in the photograph. Measurement from tip of bill to tail was 31.3 centimeters.

It is supposed that the bird was hatched with the deformed wing, for the bone structure at the carpal joint showed complete fusion; it was this malformation which made normal extension impossible. The bird must have led a solitary life—a life fraught with danger and hardship. It is probably just as well that this bird was quickly killed by a hunter's gun, for winter ice covers the largest part of Oneida Lake and the bird's problems would have been increased two-fold.