

pierced with a bill-sized gash in the soft throat or near the eyes. None of these frogs exceeded eight centimeters in length.

June 23 found three birds at the pool, but one flew at my approach. I observed one bird eating a frog in a small oak above the pool and noted that the other was actually in the water and that the belly feathers were wet. This bird repeatedly stabbed at frogs and missed, but I later found two dead frogs floating in the pool; both had been pierced through the head. Here again the frogs measured about eight centimeters in length and though there were larger frogs available, these smaller ones were apparently easier to catch and handle. The last bird was seen at the pool June 24; one frog was taken into the small oak and eaten. The grackle held the frog across the branch in hawk-like manner with one foot, and tore the flesh with its bill. All birds observed were adults.—STANTON GRANT ERNST, *Dept. of Forest Zoology, New York State College of Forestry, Syracuse, N. Y.*

**Nestling House Wrens hatch a foster egg.**—The ability of young birds in a nest to incubate and hatch eggs by their own body warmth was tested and proved by a family of House Wrens (*Troglodytes aëdon*). In my yard were two families of nesting House Wrens. The parent females were banded 139-72379 and 41-98935. For convenience, they shall be called no. 79 and no. 35. No. 79 laid her five eggs July 7 to 11, 1943. On July 17, when no. 79's eggs had been incubating six days, no. 35 laid her first egg. This was marked and left in the nest. On July 18, the second egg was laid before 8 A. M. and was immediately removed, marked on each end with a single painted dot, and placed in the nest of no. 79. The next day, before 8 A. M., the third egg was marked with two dots and placed in the other nest. Later eggs were treated in like manner. The evening after the fifth egg was removed, the mother bird, no. 35, was caught and found to have another egg ready to be laid the next morning, but that sixth egg was not deposited in this nest and the mother was never seen again. Then no. 35's first egg was removed and placed in the nest with the others. These foster eggs seemed to remain in the positions in which they were placed, and surrounding the eggs properly belonging to that clutch. I enlarged the cavity slightly, to make a base large enough to hold the ten eggs without over-rolling. On July 24, three of the eggs of wren no. 79 were hatched and two more were hatched early the next morning, the 14th day. With five young birds to feed, the parents had little time to brood them and to warm the foster eggs. Numerous observations showed that the adults spent only enough time within the box to feed their young, which grew rapidly. On August 2, one of the foster eggs was hatched; it had been laid July 17. This young bird was scarcely larger than the heads of the older birds, and although I would place it upon their backs and it held its mouth open, I do not believe it received any food. It died the next day. The other eggs were not hatched, but three of them were advanced in incubation; one was not fertile. After the brood of wren no. 79 left the nest on August 9, I examined the remaining foster eggs and found well-developed feathers in one, progressively less developed features in the others, showing that had the foster eggs been added to the second nest earlier possibly all might have been hatched and reared.—HAROLD B. WOOD, *Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.*

**Age of a Red-vented Bulbul.**—"Billy," a Red-vented Bulbul (*Molpastes cafer*), long-time resident of the Los Angeles County Museum, escaped through an open window, February 20, 1944, during a very heavy rainstorm. He was picked up dead six days later, probably a victim of the inclement weather. The writer has

been acquainted with the bird for seventeen years past, and the following additional information was furnished by Miss Irene Tillinghast. The bird was hatched in Kandy, Ceylon, in May, 1925, and arrived at the museum early in 1927. Therefore, his age at the time of his death was eighteen years and nine months.—G. WILLET, *Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles, California.*

**Nesting of a Song Sparrow on a salt marsh.**—Coastal salt marshes are very favorable feeding grounds for song birds because of the abundance of insects and seeds to be found there. Such marshes make treacherous nesting territory, however, because they are periodically inundated, for the most part, with the spring high-tides which occur bimonthly. Notwithstanding, an Eastern Song Sparrow, *Melospiza melodia melodia* (Wilson), built her nest on a salt marsh where it was found on July 3, 1936, along the Annisquam River (tidal inlet) in Gloucester, Massachusetts. It was a typical nest, placed on the ground and hidden under an overarching tuft of the marsh grass *Spartina patens* (Ait.), resembling greatly that of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow. It contained five eggs. At the time of discovery, it was eleven days after one inundation and thirteen days before the next one was due. A daily watch was made to determine if nesting would be completed before the next period of spring tides. After several days, however, the eggs disappeared with only fragments of shell remaining, and the nest was abandoned. If timed properly, such nesting could be completed successfully between inundations, but otherwise the nest would be flooded out.—RALPH W. DEXTER, *Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.*

**A fishy bird story.**—In the spring of 1940, I was working as a fire guard on the Shasta National Forest in northern California. My station was located on a mountain stream called Shovel Creek, which is heavily stocked with trout fry each year by the California Division of Fish and Game.

A few days after several cans of fish had been planted a few hundred yards below my station, a fisherman came to me with a strange story. He said a Robin was hopping around in the shallow water catching the young trout. Having been trained that forest guards should treat the sportsman and camper with respect, I gave a courteous answer but felt like telling him that he was abusing the fisherman's license to exaggerate. However, being much more interested in wildlife than in forest fires, I chanced leaving my telephone to ring unheard and went in search of the outlaw but resourceful Robin.

I didn't have to search. The first thing I saw upon reaching the spot was a brightly-colored Robin hopping from stone to stone and picking something out of the stream. I ran back to my station and in a few minutes returned with my eight-power binoculars. For the next half hour or more, telephone and forest fire were out of my mind, for I was watching a male Robin very deftly catching young trout and taking them to young in the nest. He would stay on the dry stones most of the time but occasionally hopped into the water deep enough to cover the tarsus. He did not return to the nest with each fish but would usually catch two or three, holding them crosswise in his bill, before leaving the stream.

The red-breasted fisherman continued his activity for at least a week, during which time several people were taken down to observe the spectacle. I started to build a blind in hope of photographing the bird with fish in his bill, but was called to help fight a forest fire and did not return for several weeks. The Robin was no longer catching fish when I returned.

This is admittedly a most unusual observation but, for the sake of my reputa-