

August. Mr. J. Edward Hyde of Springfield, a professional motion-picture photographer, who happened to be spending the week-end at this Berkshire village on August 14-15, 1948, was able to record on color-film what skeptics would otherwise feel was "unproven." He built a blind in an adjacent tree and photographed the fitting in of stick after stick. The nest-builder was still wearing nuptial plumes at that very late date, but the partner who found and carried the sticks had shed these plumes, and one can only wonder what induced the latter bird to undergo this labor. The nest was to all appearances completed, but no eggs were ever laid. Incidentally, the film also shows a Snowy Egret, *Leucophoyx thula*, still richly plumed—the first indubitable record of occurrence of that species in Berkshire County.—SAMUEL A. ELIOT, JR., *Smith College, Northampton, Mass.*

The Black Duck, *Anas rubripes*, in North Dakota.—On August 3, 1948, the writers saw a female Black Duck with a brood of six half-grown young on the Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge about two miles west of Grano, North Dakota. A search of the available literature disclosed that the brood was a first record for the state. This and two records in 1949 from the same locality are described here.

Although formerly of very rare occurrence (Wood, 'A preliminary survey of the bird life of North Dakota,' 1923: 16), the species has in recent years been frequently seen in North Dakota (Griffith, *Auk*, 64: 470-471, 1947) and also through the prairie provinces (Wright, 'The black duck in eastern Canada,' Unpubl. Master's Thesis, Dept. Wildl. Manag., Univ. Wisconsin, 1947). We believed that an inquiry into its migration, distribution, and relative numbers might explain the absence of prior observed nesting and certain vagaries of its appearance during the year.

Acknowledgment should be made to the following for their contributions: Brandt Hjelle and Roy Bach made available field transect data obtained by North Dakota wardens and Federal Aid men in 1948; Donald Vogtman, Jerome H. Stoudt, and Edward G. Wellein furnished waterfowl survey records of the Missouri River Basin Studies (1948), Research (1948), Game Management, and Refuge Branches of the Fish and Wildlife Service (1946 through 1948); the personnel at several National Wildlife refuges supplied banding and botulism records and observations from their respective localities dating back to 1936; William Marshall, William H. Longley, and Joseph J. Hickey reviewed and commented on the manuscript.

MIGRATION AND DISTRIBUTION

The information from all sources shows that Black Ducks are rarely seen with Mallards during spring migration in March, April, and most of May, but they become fairly common in some localities and widely scattered over the state about June 1.

They are usually first seen with small bands of male Mallards, and they appear with Mallards on the larger marshes during the flightless period. All of 39 Black Ducks sexed as botulism victims or in banding operations between 1936 and 1949 were males (including three flightless birds taken in a corral-type trap on the Lower Souris Refuge, July 13, 1948). It seems quite probable that the summer population may largely originate in eastern breeding areas. There must be a wide wandering of males, as there is of male Mallards, prior to the postnuptial molt. The scarcity of females explains the relatively few breeding records.

Fall movements have been discussed by Wright (*loc. cit.*, 106-108), who suggests that considerable distances are "traveled by flying young in their wanderings prior to the southward migration." This would ordinarily explain the occasional immature bird recorded at banding stations in September and through the fall. The autumn

population includes the summering males augmented by wandering young and adults that may have arrived from both the north and east.

RELATIVE ABUNDANCE

The numbers seen in the fall and winter have varied somewhat from year to year, due partly we believe to one or more conditions: (1) population changes on the eastern breeding grounds with corresponding changes in the numbers of birds involved in post-breeding movements; (2) variation in number of fall wandering birds and in the direction traveled because of weather or other factors; and (3) in some years an earlier or later exodus of summer birds from North Dakota marshes.

Ratios of Mallards to Black Ducks were broadly between 500 and 900 to 1 in the combined refuge records covering the summer and fall periods, 1936 to 1940, and between 100 and 300 to 1 for the combined refuge and state records covering the same seasons between 1941 and 1948. This suggests an appreciable increase through the latter period, since Mallards were likewise as abundant, or more so, during the latter period on the areas sampled.

For those who at some future time may wish to compare relative numbers with those present during the period sampled, these Mallard-Black Duck ratios are given.

Counts during April and May, covering the state mostly between 1946 and 1948, gave a ratio of 1345 Mallards to 1 Black Duck seen (5381 Mallards: 4 Black Ducks). During spring migration, 1949 (April and May) no Black Ducks were seen while the senior author and Grady Mann counted 2260 Mallards on and near the Lower Souris Refuge. In June the ratio was 150 to 1 (3610 : 24), counted on samples across the north-central portion of the state (1936 to 1948). With many females on the nest the Mallards seen were high in the proportion of males, but the real ratio would have been less than 300 to 1. July and August figures, largely from botulism and banding records on refuge marshes that served as gathering areas for both species, were 65 to 1 (2000 : 31). Male Mallards again predominated in the latter sample. For September, October, and November we will cite only the senior author's counts on Lower Souris and Upper Souris refuges, since the fall banding data were somewhat selective for Black Ducks. September ratio, 417 to 1 (5000 : 12); October ratio, 705 to 1 (7752 : 11); November ratio, 768 to 1 (13,059 : 17); November 15 to 21 ratio, 353 to 1 (3529 : 10). The November 15 to 21 increase in relative abundance of Black Ducks was due to a perhaps disproportionately high number remaining with those Mallards using the scattered winter open-water holes after the final freeze-up.

BREEDING

The brood of Black Ducks referred to in the first paragraph was under our binocular observation from a boat for about ten minutes at distances of less than 40 feet. The plumage characters of both female and young were typical of the species. The site was again visited by Hammond on June 6, 1949. Four Black Ducks were seen: two flew away from the shore together, possibly a pair; another, from its behavior, was a female mated with a male Mallard; and the fourth was a single bird. Carl Fermanich, Refuge Manager of the Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge, Kenmare, North Dakota, recorded broods of seven and nine half-grown young, the first in the same locality and the other about four miles south, on July 29, 1949. It will be interesting to follow the success of this small breeding population through future years.

We learned that toward the last of May, 1940, Stanley Saugstad (Corres., 1948) saw a pair of Black Ducks on a 3 to 5 acre *Carex* marsh less than a mile from Lake Washington, an open-water lake about 20 miles east of New Rockford.

Of particular interest was a local gathering twice observed by Donald Vogtman (Corres., 1948 and 1949) at the channel separating the middle and east portions of Devils Lake. Here he counted 125 birds in November, 1948, and 150 on September 21, 1949. We believe that this was only a fall flock, but a breeding population may possibly be using the locality.

We do not know whether the rare breeding female migrates from southern wintering grounds in the spring or moves in from the east about June 1 when the males appear.—MERRILL C. HAMMOND AND EDWARD J. SMITH, JR., *Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of Interior, Upham, North Dakota, and Germfask, Michigan.*

On *Accipiter striatus suttoni* van Rossem.—In Number 4, Part 1, 13, of the 'Catalogue of Birds of the Americas' recently published, the name *Accipiter striatus suttoni* van Rossem was placed in the synonymy of *A. s. velox* with a note (p. 71) stating that none of the Mexican material in the Field Museum showed the characters of this race except an immature from Michoacan. At the request of Dr. George M. Sutton, I have just examined the type and four topotypes of this form. These birds are very different from anything in our collections except one specimen from the Huachuca Mountains in Arizona which is very like *suttoni*. They bear out Dr. Sutton's belief that the race is a very good one. Evidently all our Mexican examples, except the Michoacan specimen, are migrants.—BOARDMAN CONOVER, *Chicago Natural History Museum (Field Museum), Chicago, Illinois.*

Sparrow Hawk Pursued by Chimney Swifts.—As noted by Bent (U. S. N. M. Bull., 176: 284, 1940), the speed and erratic flight of the Chimney Swift, *Chaetura pelagica*, renders it almost immune to attacks by birds of prey. He cites one report of such an attack, however; a swift was seized by a Sharp-shinned Hawk just as it was about to drop into a chimney (Musselman, *Bird-Lore*, 33: 397, 1931). In view of the rarity of such occurrences any evidence that Chimney Swifts regard hawks as enemies seems to me to be worth reporting.

In downtown Washington, D. C., shortly after sundown on October 3, 1949, my attention was attracted by 40 or 50 Chimney Swifts pursuing a Sparrow Hawk, *Falco sparverius*. My first thought was that possibly they just happened to be going in the same direction, but then the hawk reversed its course and they promptly turned to follow, swarming around the hawk like mad bees. I was unquestionably observing a genuine pursuit which ended only when the hawk abruptly descended to land on the ledge of a building. It seems unlikely to me that the swifts would have taken after the hawk if they had not been molested or had not recognized the species as an enemy.—FRANK C. CROSS, 9413 Second Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland.

Red Ant Predation on Bob-white, *Colinus virginianus*, Chicks.—During nesting studies of the Interior Bob-white, *C. v. mexicanus* L., in southeastern Iowa, evidence was found of red ant, *Monomorium pharaonis* (Linne), predation in a newly hatched quail nest. This ant was identified by Dr. H. H. Knight, Department of Zoology and Entomology, Iowa State College. On July 5, 1946, a Bob-white nest containing 13 eggs was revisited six hours after the first egg had been found pipped. The clutch had hatched and there was no evidence of the new family at the nest or in the near vicinity. While recording the necessary data, a weak chick call was heard. Examination of the nest revealed a single egg at the bottom beneath 12 discarded shells. The cap of this egg had been partially pipped, so that the chick, which was still alive, could be seen. Several red ants were not only in the nest but were also moving in and out of the egg opening. Upon removal from the shell, the chick had no sense of balance but continued to *peep* when held in the hand. The ants