

White-throated Sparrow breeding in downtown Buffalo, New York.—The White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) is a rare summer resident in western New York State. Although occasionally recorded here during the breeding season in or near bogs or other damp wooded areas over the past two decades, definite evidence of this sparrow's breeding was not obtained until 24 July 1960, when R. C. Rosche, H. D. Mitchell, and party found two adults feeding two young in Java Lake Bog, Wyoming County. Since then the species has been recorded in summer more frequently in Wyoming and the three southern counties. On 21 June 1970 near North Java, Wyoming County, the senior author, H. D. Mitchell, and W. Wightman collected the first nest with eggs (3) verified in western New York.

On 19 June 1969 the junior author heard a White-throated Sparrow singing as she climbed the steps on the west side of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library at Broadway and Washington Street in the business section of downtown Buffalo. She found the sparrow in the dense shrubbery that borders each side of the sloping esplanade at the library entrance (Figure 1). This little triangle is about 50 m long and 35 m wide at maximum, and is paved except for a partly grassed central plot, a grass lawn near the building, and the bordering shrub sections. These shrubs vary in height from about 0.3 m to slightly over 2 m and consist mainly of yew, honeysuckle, forsythia, privet, viburnum, and euonymus. A dense pachysandra ground cover grows in the central plot under a 2.5-m tall English hawthorn, below a similar but shorter hawthorn and in front of the yews bordering the building. The earth below the shrubs is mostly bare except for some flowers along the front of the building, scattered sparse grass clumps, and a few ferns here and there. Downtown Buffalo (reported city population in 1960—532,759) is completely dominated by buildings, streets, and other paved surfaces. The only other shrubs in the vicinity are a few low and sparsely distributed ornamentals about monuments and central squares.

The junior author and a few others saw the male White-throated Sparrow many



Figure 1. Nesting site of White-throated Sparrow in downtown Buffalo, New York.

times through the rest of June and July, and heard it singing to 18 August. Its preferred singing perch was one of the highest branches of the hawthorn in the central plot. In early afternoon of 30 July she saw a second White-throated Sparrow fly into the shrubs followed by the male. The next morning the senior author visited the site and almost immediately saw the female fly with a large insect into the hedge at the corner of the library. Upon close approach to the hedge after the female emerged without the insect, first one and then a second stub-tailed fledgling flew out. Both showed the head striping and other characters of White-throated Sparrow. At this time the adults were greatly excited and called continuously. A short time later the senior author and R. Byron once again saw the female carry food to the young which appeared to have been out of the nest 2 or 3 days. Later the same day the junior author found both adults and young. The adult male had a white-striped and the female a tan-striped crown. Both authors visited the place sporadically in August, and saw the adults and only one young on 8, 11, 13, and 15 August. The last date the two adults were noted was 21 August, and one adult was seen on 27 August. The senior author searched the area rather thoroughly but could not find the nest.

The choice by these White-throated Sparrows of a nesting site so different in character from their usual breeding habitat is certainly remarkable. The nearest known summer record is about 50 km distant. Actually, the library esplanade seems to offer good conditions for such a nesting because insects are attracted to the building lights set in wells about the perimeter, water is usually available from precipitation and sprinkling, and there is enough relatively undisturbed cover and probably no predators. Except for a few library employees and birders, the many persons entering and leaving the building were largely unaware of the birds' presence. For courtesies rendered the authors thank Joseph B. Rounds, Director of the library, and members of the institution's maintenance department.—ROBERT F. ANDRLE, *Buffalo Museum of Science, Buffalo, New York 14211*, and FRANCES M. REW, *129 Arbour Lane, Buffalo, New York 14220*. Accepted 9 Jan. 70.

Cloacal sexing of raptors.—At the season when raptors are prone to copulate some can be stimulated to prolapse the vent, thus making accurate sexing possible. As this is the time when breeders of raptors urgently need methods of sexing and as the technique may also be useful to raptor banders, it seems worth publishing our experiences even though the sample is small and the method does not always work—we have been successful only during the breeding season, and not always then.

The procedure was first discussed by Quinn and Burrows (*J. Heredity*, 27: 31, 1936). Hochbaum (*Trans. North Amer. Wildl. Conf.*, 7: 299, 1942) described somewhat similar methods used in sexing waterfowl. These methods were outlined in detail by Skinner and Arrington (*Univ. Wisconsin Fact Sheet*, No. 31, 1969) in response to the demands of poultry fanciers and aviculturists for a simple explanation of artificial insemination techniques.

It is helpful to have an assistant to hold the bird by the feet, breast down and facing away. If alone, use your knees as a vise to hold the feet. In either case it is simpler, if the bird weighs over about 600 g, to kneel and let the bird's breast rest on the ground. The breasts of smaller birds may be held in the palm of a hand. First palpate the bird's abdomen to feel for an egg. If you are sure of an egg's presence you need not proceed further to determine sex, but if you still want to make the bird prolapse—as for artificial insemination—take care not to break the egg lest damage to the bird result. Birds with markedly enlarged vents are females that have recently laid.