

decoration. In this latter case the tree was charred to quite an extent and the nest was very similar in appearance to the limb on which it was built. Nests are very difficult to see unless the bird is watched as he carries material and deposits it on the nest. Both male and female do the work of building. Of all the nests I have observed, four seems to be more common than five as a set of eggs, though five is not at all unusual.

The variation in eggs lies principally in the ground color, some sets being much paler than others. Rather than take up time here in giving a detailed description of bird and eggs I refer to Coues or Ridgway, especially since I have limited myself to nests in this article, and have made little attempt to cover other phases on the subject.



A Word in Behalf of the Boy.

I have recently been impressed with certain expressions occurring in the writings of prominent ornithologists concerning the relation of the downy young of the genus *Homo* to the nests and eggs and downy young of our feathered friends. Two facts are self-evident: "Boys will be boys; all men were boys once." You may elaborate as much as you please on these two points, but do not forget to ask yourself how much you owe these same boys in the way of instruction and enlightenment and then ask how much you have done for their elevation into and encouragement in right ways of thought and action.

Next to *men* who collect birds' skins and eggs for sale, boys are probably the birds' worst enemies. But do not blame the boys until you have heard their case and have done your *duty* by them. Most children receive no instruction at home in the study of the animal kingdom and very little in the common school, both on account of the lack of time and incompetency of the instructors. I am not now placing blame upon

the parents or teachers; neither do I seek to excuse the shocking cruelty of boys I have known; but I simply state what seems to me to be true.

A boy stands accused of wantonly robbing and destroying a bird's nest or of trying to collect more eggs than any other. Who will cast the first stone at him? Don't throw any stones but take the boy to your home, show him your collection of nests and eggs, explaining many things which, up to this time, he has had no opportunity to learn, because he has been considered an outlaw and no one has taken enough interest in him to speak kindly to him and ask where he lived etc. Make him feel that he is at least as important as a bluejay or an English Sparrow. Open your insect cabinet and show him the difference between a bee and a fly—between a bug and a beetle. If he asks a question answer him fully and respectfully. Shake hands with him, bid him goodbye and tell him that if he will be on hand next Saturday morning at 8:30 o'clock, you'll take him on a collecting trip with you. And don't forget to put in lunch enough for two.

In short,—stoop to entertain a thoughtless, careless boy, for *any* boy is of more value than many sparrows. If you really wish to see the birds protected, make friends with the boys and seek their cooperation for they can help more than you think. For nearly two years I have conducted a "natural history class" in my home and have been greatly pleased with the results. We meet on Tuesday and Thursday evenings of each week and go afield whenever the opportunity offers. Several of my class have mastered the work outlined with most commendable thoroughness and alacrity. Thus I have directly influenced the boys and girls to a greater or less extent. Why cannot a hundred other members of the Cooper Ornithological Club do as much or more? Wouldn't the birds be glad?

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