

Conclusions

The data presented here illustrate that under controlled conditions, quantitative information on food consumption can prove to be useful in augmenting banding data to determine seasonal population changes of some species. Where applicable, banders should consider the use of the

scale or the balance at the feeder to gather these kind of data to take greater advantage of the many potential opportunities for study that exist at feeding stations. ♦

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An unusual nest site of the Mountain Chickadee

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The Mountain Chickadee, *Parus gambeli*, is a widespread and familiar bird of the western coniferous forests. It typically nests in natural crevices or cavities created in rotting stubs, or where limbs have broken off living trees. Nest sites are typically within 6 to 15 feet of ground level although some have been found within a few inches of the ground and others as high as 80 feet up (Bent, A.C. 1946. Life histories of North American jays, crows and titmice. Bull. U.S. Nat. Mus., 191:1-495). Bent (1946:361) also records a nest found by J.S. Rowley which was below ground level in a "squirrel hole underneath a dead pine stub." Mountain Chickadees have also utilized abandoned woodpecker holes, man-made structures and nest boxes. A further indication of their diverse choice of nest sites is a nest I found in a vertical drill hole in a lava boulder.

This unusual nest was found in June 1971 in the course of a visit to Sunriver Lodge in the cascade country south of Bend, Oregon. This visit was in preparation for our WBBA annual meeting held at Sunriver in 1972. While there, my attention was attracted to a lava rock boulder (fig. 1) on the edge of the parking lot at the Sunriver ecology center by the sequential visits of a pair of Mountain Chickadees. Further investigation revealed that the birds were actively feeding a brood in a nest located at the bottom of a vertical hole drilled in the rock.

The nest hole was at least 15-18 inches deep which must have placed the actual nest near ground level. The contents were not observable from the top. However, each arrival of the parents with a bill-full of food resulted in a noisy chorus from the depths of the hole. So busy were the adults that they allowed me to approach the rock and photograph their rapid comings and goings (fig. 2) My limited stay did not allow further observations

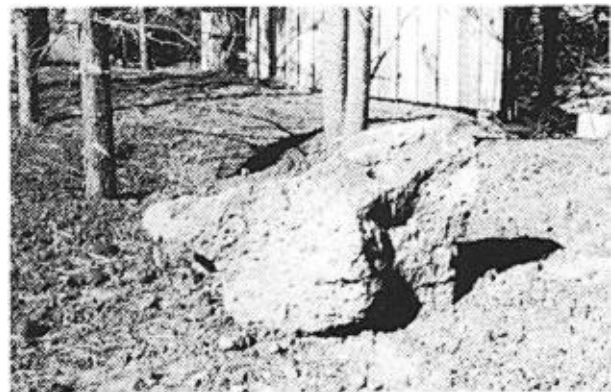


Figure 1. The rock containing the nest hole



Figure 2. Adult bird bringing food to the nest

or a determination of the final outcome of this nesting attempt.

The unusual location serves only to reinforce earlier conclusions as to the opportunisticness of the Mountain Chickadee in finding nesting sites in both natural and man-altered environments.

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