

## BIRD'S NESTS, NO. 1.

### YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO.

Although there seem to be a great many of us who are interested in bird's eggs, it is only during the past few years that special study has been made of the nests, and it has been surprising to me that so little in regard to the composition of the nests and the comparative amount of material used has come to my notice in the natural history papers.

The following are a few notes I made this spring on the nest of a Cuckoo: I found this nest on May 21. The old one stayed on the nest till I was within three feet of her, and then she dropped to the ground and fluttered away among the weeds. When I went back to look at the nest on the 29th it was vacant. The nest was placed as firmly as the material would permit upon a slightly drooping bough on the south side of a box elder (*Negundo*) tree, which was growing on the bank of a small stream. The nest was so placed that it was almost impossible to see it from the ground, and was twenty-four feet up. This is evidently much higher up than usual for these birds, as in Chapman's book on N. American Birds,\* he says, "four to ten feet up" only. The nest was four inches in diameter inside and five inches outside. The depth inside was one inch, and the depth outside, at the rim, was two and one-half inches. The weight of the nest was only one and three-fourths ounces. The bottom layer of it was mostly of dead, lichen covered, wild crabtree twigs, together with a few box-elder, willow and plum twigs. Upon this was a layer of box-elder twigs, still covered with green leaves. These were evidently used more for the twigs than the leaves, for the leafy end was invariably turned outward. Upon this was a layer of the dry pedicels of last years growth from the box-elder and a few of this year's seeds. The rim of the nest contained one piece of the inner bark of box-elder and one of elm, a few choke-cherry twigs with green fruit and leaves still on them, also a few crab-apple leaves.

The exact list of material found in the nest is as follows: fifty-three crab-apple twigs, total length sixteen feet four inches; one of willow, eight inches; eight of plum, total length, three feet one inch; fourteen of box-elder, total length, six feet four inches. The longest piece was nine inches, and the total length was twenty-six feet five inches. made

\*Handbook | of the | Birds | of | Eastern | North America.

up of eighty-one pieces. The dry box-elder pedicels measured ten feet and the live ones two feet and contained twenty-two pairs of seeds. So the total number of pieces in the nest was one hundred and twenty, and the total length of these pieces was thirty-eight feet. In addition to these there were eleven crab-apple leaves, ten of choke-cherry and fifty-three of box-elder, making a total of seventy-four and a grand total of one hundred and ninety-four pieces, which the bird had brought together for the nest; and it was not such a remarkable nest either. There was nothing in the construction of this nest that might not have been procured within fifty feet of the tree upon which it was built.

Although it is not always possible to tell just what each piece in a bird's nest is from, it usually is, particularly if one has studied the botany of the locality somewhat.—VIRGINIUS H CHASE, *Wady Petra*, III.

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## GENERAL NOTES.

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NOTES FROM MINNESOTA.—EGGS OF LE CONTE'S SPARROW.—On June 18 I took a set of four eggs with nest of Le Conte's Sparrow in Otter Tail County, Minn. The nest was in a meadow near running water, in a clump of weeds, and was composed of weeds, lined with fine, dry, yellow grass. The female was sitting and the eggs were very slightly incubated. They were pinkish-brown, dotted and streaked with dark-brown and black, and measured as follows: .80 x .56, .80 x .54, .78 x .52 and .76 x .50.

AN ALBINO ENGLISH SPARROW.—While driving on a country road near St. Paul, on July 3, I saw an English Sparrow nearly all white, among a flock of twenty or thirty other Sparrows. The bird was white, or more of a cream color, speckled on the wings, breast and tail with brownish-black.

A LARGE SET OF CUCKOO.—Mr. Oliver V. Jones, of Minneapolis, took a set of eight Black-billed Cuckoo last May. The eggs were all of normal size and varied greatly in incubation as usual, and were undoubtedly laid by one bird, as a careful watch was kept to discover more than two birds. The eggs were piled up in the form of a pyramid to keep from rolling off.—WALTON I. MITCHELL, *St. Paul, Minn.*

NESTLING DOWN.—Mr. Howard P. Mitchell, who has in charge investigations relating to "Nestling Down," sends the following for publication:

On the 16th of May, 1894, I observed two young Horned Larks with nest-