

THE WILSON BULLETIN

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOL. XXXIII

MARCH, 1921

NO. 1

OLD SERIES VOL. XXXIII. NEW SERIES VOL. XXVIII

NESTING OF BACHMANS SPARROW

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Throughout middle Tennessee, the Bachmans Sparrow (*Peucaea aestivalis bachmani*) is a fairly common summer resident, where suitable habitat occurs. The habitat to which it is most partial consists of wooded pasture lands, in which there is a good growth of long grass, or tree bordered edges of old fields where grass rather than weeds predominate. Here its song may be heard from its arrival early in April until its departure in October. The surprising sweetness and clearness of its song has brought forth many published descriptions, among which might be mentioned one from this section, by Dr. R. M. Strong, which appeared in *The Auk* for April, 1918, page 226.

The nest of this sparrow is quite difficult to locate, due to the terrestrial habits of the birds and the difficulty of flushing them while incubating. The nest figured as the frontispiece of this issue was found by myself on July 20, 1918, when it held four fresh eggs. The lateness of the date was surprising. It was located in an extensive wooded pasture, about a mile south of the limits of Nashville, and the immediate environment is shown by the small photograph. The nest was found by flushing both birds from it. They flew only a yard and then began to run through the grass like mice. I walked after one for a distance of 100 feet before it took wing. On returning to my handkerchief, which I had left behind to mark the spot, I found the nest well hidden in the midst of thick grass. It much resembled a nest of the Meadowlark in that it was arched over and completely hidden from above. The nest was sub-



NEST AND EGGS OF BACHMAN'S SPARROWS

stantially built of coarse grass and was lined with fine grass, and a few long horse hairs. There was no depression in the ground under the nest. The half acre adjacent to the site was low and damp and covered with long grass. A prolonged drouth had no doubt driven the birds from their usual habitat on higher ground to this relatively damp spot. The parent birds did not assert their presence while the nest was being photographed.

A week later, and within 50 feet of the nest site, I flushed a Bachmans Sparrow which feigned crippledness as it fluttered off through the grass. A search revealed two young birds just learning to fly and which were captured. The one parent bird present remained near and most persistently endeavored to lure me away by fluttering through the grass, sometimes coming to within five feet of where I held the young in my hand.

Nashville, Tenn.

COMPARATIVE PERIODS OF NESTLING LIFE OF SOME NORTH AMERICAN NIDICOLÆ

BY FRANK L. BURNS

The term *Nidicolæ* (*Altrices*) as defined by Dr. Newton indicates the species or groups of birds having the young born in a more or less helpless condition, unable to leave the nest for some time and fed directly by the parent. Little reliance, however, can be placed upon the mere fact of direct feeding of the young by the parents as a diagnosis of *Nidicolæ*, since the young of many *præcocial* groups (the Grebes, Loons, Murrelets, Gulls, Terns, Flamingoes and Cranes) are also heterophagous; therefore the distinction is better expressed by Dr. Gadow: in a condition in which the development of the sense, tegumentary and locomotory organs are shifted on to the post-embryonic period; in distinction to *Nidifugæ* (*Præcoces*), in which the development of the same organs are far advanced, enabling the young to leave the nesting site almost immediately after birth.

Modern systematists place little reliance on the con-