

These incidents rather typify the southern Wisconsin observations to date, with respect to Marsh Hawk-upland game relationships. In general, the evidence indicates that the Marsh Hawk is too weak to kill game of appreciable size; i. e., adult pheasants, and that he is ordinarily too slow to catch healthy alert birds like Bob-whites, especially if the latter are well fed and have suitable cover for refuge.

It is particularly significant to note, in this connection, that corn shocks, properly constructed and open at the base, may serve a double purpose in northern conservation or game management by making available both an excellent food and a fair emergency cover at the same time.—PAUL L. ERRINGTON, *Madison, Wis.*

**The Nesting Habits of the Baltimore Oriole.**—Of all our beautiful summer residents the Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) is the most handsome. This statement applies to both form and coloration. Migration records covering twelve years show that these birds come to southern Iowa on dates ranging from April 26 to May 6, and that the last of them usually disappear about September 1. Thus they remain with us about four months in each year.

Orioles are most conspicuously useful in their food habits, living as they do, almost exclusively on caterpillars, bugs, beetles, and grasshoppers (nearly all of them harmful species), and merely tasting ripe fruit, such as cherries and mulberries occasionally, in the most dainty manner.

The song of the Baltimore Oriole, though not the most elaborate, is yet quite distinctive and cheerful and is given in short whistled phrases, all day long, even while the singer is searching among the tree tops for its favorite food. When alarmed, however, it utters a rather harsh penetrating "perk" and chatters. During the mating season the males are quite gallant and pugnacious. I have observed one of them fighting with his own reflection in an upstairs chamber window, intermittently for several days, in a fierce combat with a supposed rival. Mrs. Oriole meanwhile was quietly weaving her nest but a short distance away.

This oriole's nesting habits are of especial interest. For the purpose of acquiring more information about the matter I have recently made some careful observations in regard to this phase of their home life. The much traveled street in Sigourney, Iowa, upon which I live, is paved throughout with concrete. I kept nine blocks between my residence and the Legion Park under observation during the season of 1927. There are about six residences to the block fronting upon this street. The street is well provided with shade trees of the following named varieties: soft maple, hard maple, elm, cottonwood, catalpa, ash, boxelder, and some species of evergreens.

The purse-shaped nest of the Baltimore Oriole is a remarkable structure, taking into consideration the materials the bird has to work with and the tools with which she does the work, for it is Mrs. Oriole that usually constructs the nest. She receives no help as a rule from the male at this work, excepting his songs of encouragement and chirps of approval. To make a structure like this, a human being would not only require two hands with ten deft fingers and a darning needle, but also a select lot of materials and plenty of time. Mrs. Oriole hunts and gathers the materials from a thousand places, both far and near. She weaves and quilts her nest without any other tool than her bill. She works as a rule with her head downward while she holds fast with her feet to the twigs above, and she finishes the job in two or three days!

During the season of 1927, there were nine nests of this species in the trees by the side of the street above described, averaging one nest to each block of the street. Although only about one-half of the trees along this street are elms, yet eight of the nine nests were suspended from the elms. The ninth nest was on a soft maple. In elevation they were placed from nine to fifty feet from the ground or pavement. Four were placed directly over the pavement with hundreds of automobiles and other vehicles passing under them daily. Three of the nests were above the sidewalk and the other two between the pavement and the walk. Two of the nests were suspended from ascending limbs of small size. One hung from a horizontal limb the size of a walking cane. The other six were all suspended from the thin swaying, pendant, outer switches of the elms. Some of these were hanging at a distance of twenty-five feet or more from the main stem of the tree. One of the nests was not only situated directly over the center of the pavement but also a distance of only fifty-five feet from a railroad track over which trains pass every few hours both day and night. Whenever the wind blew from westerly points of the compass, this nest was enveloped by great clouds of coal smoke from every passing train. But this did not seem to deter the birds in the least for they were always to be seen near their nest tree during daylight hours, singing and hunting for food,

From the facts as above related we may safely draw the following conclusions: The Baltimore Oriole in this locality prefers the elm among all our native trees for its nesting site. It does not object to the presence of humanity, or their structures or mechanical contrivances near its nest. It appears to prefer to make its home near human habitations, for its nests are rare in the forest and away from human abodes. When, however, the elm is not present or near the place where it wishes to make its home, it will readily adopt some other tree, for in the season of 1926 I noticed a large wide spreading cottonwood standing alone on another street, which had three of these nests upon it.

Observations extending over thirty years lead me to the conclusion that the enemies of this oriole are not very numerous. Because of its wonderful agility and the fact that the nest is usually pretty well concealed and on a very flimsy and unsteady support, the hawks and owls do not molest it much. But on several occasions I have seen the Blue Jay robbing its nest and once I observed a Fox Squirrel taking a young bird out of an oriole's nest, running over the branches of the tree for a short distance, then dropping it to the ground. This was perhaps mostly mischievousness on the part of the squirrel, for it made no effort to devour the bird. So far as I am able to state none of the nine nests under especial observation during the season of 1927, were robbed. But after all the painstaking work of nest building and the patient brooding and carrying of food for the young performed by the parent birds, all that one of these nests yielded was just an ugly Cowbird.

Thus it is, that in every grand Symphony of Nature there must be at least one discordant note, else it would not be natural. But no one who is acquainted with the facts will deny that among all the beautiful and beneficial summer residents of the northern United States, which so richly earn and deserve our gratitude and admiration, the Baltimore Oriole stands at or very near the head of the list.—E. D. NAUMAN, *Sigourney, Iowa.*