

In the Toledo area it became apparent in the following spring that Phoebes were greatly reduced in numbers. Whereas in 1939 as many as 20 individuals were seen on a four-hour trip during migration time, in 1940 the maximum was one. This condition continued throughout the breeding season; in fact, I saw but three Phoebes during the entire year.

Having heard much of the rapid recovery made by birds after disasters, I watched this species closely. During 1941 and 1942, however, the increase was very slight, as the following tabulation indicates (the trips were made during the period when the species was present in the Toledo area):

Year	Phoebes seen	Trips made	Phoebes per field trip
1934	115	64	1.8
1935	114	63	1.8
1936	90	60	1.5
1937	87	59	1.5
1938	55	46	1.2
1939	57	48	1.2
1940	3	26	0.1
1941	7	30	0.2
1942	7	34	0.2

The gradual reduction in birds per trip from 1934 to 1939 is probably due to the fact that I became progressively more interested in water birds, and more trips were made to marshes and mud-flats in those years.

Breeding birds were reduced correspondingly. Normally an observer could expect to list a few nesting Phoebes on every field trip into suitable territory. My records show a maximum of six in the course of an afternoon's hike. During 1940 and 1941 I did not encounter a single breeding Phoebe. Inquiries made of other local observers resulted in the following compilation of supposedly nesting Phoebes in Lucas County: 1940 (6); 1941 (7); 1942 (7).

If this condition is widespread, this species must have suffered far greater storm losses than early reports indicated.—LOUIS W. CAMPBELL, 4531 Walker Avenue, Toledo, Ohio.

A Technique for Confining Nestling Crows in Food-Habit Studies.—The Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos brachyrhynchos*) and its relations to other animals and to agriculture constitute an important part of a farm-game research program in progress at the Rose Lake Wildlife Experiment Station in Clinton County, Michigan. To obtain specimens of the food brought to nestling Crows by the adults, the following technique was evolved.

A number of the Crow nests on the Experiment Station area were found in the spring, and four nests with young were selected for the study. When the nestlings were three to four weeks old they were removed from their nests and confined in cages made from nail kegs. The solid top and bottom of each keg were removed, and the keg sawn in two, crosswise, to make two cages. Each cage was covered on the top with 2-inch mesh chicken wire, and on the bottom with one-inch mesh fox netting. The larger mesh top permitted the confined birds to stick their heads through the openings, to be fed by the adults. The smaller mesh bottom seemed to afford the nestlings a comfortable perch, but did not hinder the food items and droppings from falling through to the ground. Each cage was wired to the base of a tree near the nest at a convenient height. I found that one of the cages less than three feet high was vulnerable to depredation. The birds in this cage were killed and pulled partly through the mesh bottom of the cage

by a mammal, evidently the skunk whose den was within 50 feet of the cage. When the young Crows were about two months old, or after they had been confined for four or five weeks, they became too large and active for their cages and were released. Even at five weeks the adults were still feeding the young regularly.

Pellets and food items were collected from a sheet of heavy wrapping paper spread on the ground beneath the cage. When it rained, the paper, as well as the pellets and food, became wet. This made collecting a little more messy, but did not seem to affect the material, which was thoroughly dried within a few days by exposure to two 500-watt bulbs in a wooden-frame oven. From the four cages 52 collections, totaling 3,225 grams of dried material, were gathered for examination.—PHILIP BAUMGRAS, *Game Division, Michigan Department of Conservation, Lansing, Michigan.*

Swainson's Warbler in Webster County, West Virginia.—From June 13 to 20, 1942, the Brooks Bird Club held its annual field trip at Holly River State Park, Webster County, West Virginia. On the afternoon of the first day I identified there several singing Swainson's Warblers (*Limnothlypis swainsoni*), a species with which I had fortunately had several months' experience in Nicholas County. Subsequently Swainson's Warblers were observed by Mr. and Mrs. John Handlan, Russell West, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Conrad, Pete Chandler, Maxine Thacker, and other members of the club and were found at all suitable habitats visited in the park. This extends about 60 miles northward the known breeding range of the species in West Virginia.—WILLIAM C. LEGG, *Mount Lookout, West Virginia.*

Variable Nesting Habits of the Parula Warbler.—There seems to be a widespread belief among bird students that the breeding distribution of the Parula Warbler (*Compothlypis americana*) depends strictly on the presence of *Usnea* or *Tillandsia* beard "mosses." R. T. Peterson, for example, in a recent paper (*Audubon Magazine*, 44, 1942: 25) states that "the Parula Warbler is an especially good illustration of association with a particular life form. The northern race is a bird of the cool coniferous forest biome or Canadian life zone. Its ecological niche is where the *Usnea* lichen, or bearded moss, hangs from the trees. The southern race of this bird is found in a totally different biome, the more humid parts of the warm Lower Austral zone. There it is dependent on the Spanish moss" (*Tillandsia*). Clumps of these "mosses" furnish pendant nest sites for the parula warbler.

At Washington, D. C., where neither *Usnea* nor *Tillandsia* is present, Robert S. Bray and I, during May, 1936, found two nests in bunches of dead leaves and debris caught, during a flood earlier that spring, in low branches of deciduous trees bordering the Potomac River. Arthur A. Allen, in June, 1942 (personal letter), examined a similar nest found by Mrs. York along the Chemung River near Elmira, New York; and Florence Merriam Bailey mentioned this type of nest site in her "Handbook of Birds of the Western United States."

A nest collected by Ned Hollister at the National Zoological Park in Washington, D. C., on July 28, 1921 (U.S.N.M. 36282), is composed almost entirely of heavy brown wrapping cord and a small quantity of wool. It is scantily lined with horsehairs and rootlets and, apparently, hung pensive with the opening at the top, vireo-fashion. According to the label, it was found 6 feet, 8 inches from the ground in a Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) on a lawn near buildings. W. Howard Ball in May, 1934, at Washington, D.C., observed a similarly suspended parula nest about 60 feet up, in one of the topmost branches of a sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*). Its materials could not be determined.

According to E. H. Forbush (*Birds of Massachusetts . . . etc.*, 3, 1929: 227), "Dr. Anne E. Perkins records that about three pairs come yearly to Collins, New