

Polygyny and other notes on the Redwinged Blackbird.—These observations were made on a one-acre cattail marsh at Itasca State Park, Minnesota, from June 19 to July 16, 1958, in connection with my studies at the University of Minnesota Biological Station. The somewhat isolated marsh is located in the southeast corner of the cross-roads of Route 92 and the north boundary road of the park. Dr. John T. Emlen, Jr. found four Redwinged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) nests on June 19. Nests A, B and C contained young birds and Nest D was almost completed. Nests A, C and D were in a triangle almost in the center of the marsh and about 25 feet from each other. Nest B was almost 100 feet south of the southernmost nest in the triangle. I observed the nests 27 times with each visit lasting from ½ to 3½ hours and distributed through the day from 4:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

In his studies of the Redwinged Blackbird in Wisconsin, Nero (1956. *Wilson Bull.*, 68: 35) states that "polygyny was common, but no more than three females were ever observed with one male; two was average." The population of unbanded adults in the area which I studied consisted of a single male with a bald white spot on his forehead and four females, one with an unusually light face, two with almost identical markings, and a fourth with half of her tail feathers much shorter than the others. I found, as did Nero, that the females were "out of phase" in their breeding cycles; the young left the nests on June 23, 27, 30, and July 15, at Nests A, B, C, and D, respectively.

I observed that the adults fed and gathered food for the young only outside the nesting area, usually in the marsh across the north boundary road. The male did not help feed the young; each female fed her own brood until the young from Nest C were destroyed two days after fledging. During the next 10 days on 12 occasions I saw both Females B and C feeding the two fledglings from Nest B, and this entire group left the marsh on the same day.

The resident male defended his territory by "song spread," "bill tilting," and attack, when necessary, from male Redwinged Blackbirds (apparently unmated and immature birds who sometimes entered the area) as well as from a pair of Baltimore Orioles (*Icterus galbula*) nesting nearby. When one of these intruders entered the territory, the resident male first gave a warning call, which sent the females into the willow trees to the south of the nests, and then he chased away the intruder. On one occasion when two males (one immature) were being chased away, one of the females flew into view and perched on a cattail. Immediately the resident male abandoned his pursuit of the intruders and chased her back to the willows. The area was not defended against other nesting species including a Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) and two Yellowthroats (*Geothlypis trichas*). Once when a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) circled high over the area the male displayed, gave an alarmed call, exposed his epaulets, and flew over the territory. Nero (*op. cit.*: 125-130) found that "nearly all Redwings on the marsh sat quietly on their perches with concealed epaulets when hawks were soaring overhead." Each female defended a small area around her nest, particularly against other females. On three occasions I saw the females band together and chase an immature male from the territory.

With three exceptions the observations of this brief study corresponded closely with those of Nero. A single male appeared to have a harem of four females, all with nests from which young fledged. On at least 12 occasions over a ten-day period two unbanded but easily identified females fed the fledglings from a single nest after one of these females had just lost her entire fledged brood. When a Red-tailed Hawk appeared over the area, the male made himself conspicuous.—RUTH STROSNIER, *Woodrow Wilson High School, Washington, D. C., April 27, 1959.*