

A count of Bald Eagles summering along a shallow New England lake.—In view of the current concern over the spectacular decline in our eastern population of the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), the following observation seems worthy of record.

Several years ago I was told by a ranger who knew of my continuing survey of Appalachian eagles, that he had seen eagles regularly along the shores of a nearby lake. A hydroelectric project in the 1940's flooded a lowland stream running mostly through wilderness country. The resulting lake, irregular in outline, planimeters on my topographic map as some 25 square miles, and is bordered by roughly 90 miles of shore line most of which is of wilderness bogs, cut-over and burned-over forest lands, but with considerable forest along both the eastern and western sections. Stumps and snags line much of the shore and extend into the shallower bays.

On 13 July 1958, the ranger took me in his boat along some 30 miles of the shore line in the central, wilder section. We did not go into the western arms near a highway, where there are said to be no eagles, or into the deeper water eastern section which is also bordered by a road. We soon saw an eagle perched in a tall dead tree, and a mile away a second. Allowing for duplication of eagles recorded, I estimated that on our two-hour trip I had seen 14 eagles in 21 sightings, of which 10 were in adult plumage.

Three years later I repeated this count of eagles, but prepared with a map and a determination to try to make a systematic count. On 30 July 1961, the ranger took me on a boat trip lasting three hours and covering not only the central sections but also the eastern deeper water as well. During the trip of about 50 miles we passed approximately 60 miles of shore, but omitted the western half of a basin-like section on the north side because of poor visibility and many underwater stumps and logs, a section yielding four eagles in the 1958 count.

Each eagle sighted was marked on the map, and if it was flying or taking flight, an arrow was drawn to indicate both direction and extent of the observed flight. I estimated 23 eagles from the 29 sightings. Only two were not adults, of which one was a fresh-feathered juvenile and one an older sub-adult. Most of the eagles were seen singly, perched on trees or snags along the shore. In hot summer weather they seek out white pines where they must be searched for by looking for a white head or tail among the branches halfway up the tree. The ranger without binoculars spotted them on most occasions before I did with my 10× glasses. On one occasion there were two adults side by side in the dense pine foliage; the second was seen only when the first flew. At another spot, an adult and the juvenile were perched in a dead tree overlooking an old "burn." On two occasions there were four eagles flying ahead of the boat. Of the 23 seen, 13 were in the section censused in 1958, 5 more were along an adjoining shallow section, and the other 5 were scattered along 20 miles of the deeper lake.

I believe that the count must have included three-quarters of the eagles present, but this is not easily established. I think that most eagles are along the shore where they may be found by boat, and I also believe that some which do not fly are overlooked. Why the eagles come here is not certain. Dr. Joseph Howell told me last March that he had found that in Florida eagles liked shallow water, but not swamps. This is a new lake and, of course, the eagles are newly there. The fishing is not spectacular but sometimes good, according to the ranger. He had never seen the eagles feeding, nor did I, but we did count 11 Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) in the same region, and two active nests. No eagle nest was seen, but I was reliably informed of a nest active within the last few years some distance below the dam and along a boggy section of the stream.

An older nest, now fallen, was located in the swamp woods of the small basin referred to above, in the 1940's. We looked for it in 1958 without finding any trace.

It is interesting to speculate upon the origin of this eagle population. Perhaps it is most likely that a substantial part are Florida eagles summering in the north as suggested by H. K. Job (1908. "The Sport of Bird Study") and confirmed by Broley (1947. *Wilson Bull.*, 59:3-20), but this remains a speculation until more data are obtained. A study of arrival and departure dates for this eagle concentration may shed some light upon this question. Deep lakes nearby do not have eagles, I have been assured both by fishermen and guides, and the concentration described above is certainly seldom found anywhere in the northern Appalachian region.—WALTER R. SPOFFORD, *State University of N. Y. Medical College, Syracuse, N.Y.*, 6 September 1961.

Anting behavior of a Wood Thrush with a snail.—On 30 April 1961, in a wooded tract called Meeting of the Waters, owned by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I sat down on a foot-bridge at a small stream to watch and listen for warblers. A pair of Wood Thrushes (*Hylocichla mustelina*), foraging on the woodland floor only 30 feet away, were raking aside dead leaves with quick thrusts of their bills. As I watched, one of them seized an object in its bill and ran with it to the nearby woodland trail. There, on more solid ground, it began to hammer the object on the path in an obvious effort to break it. Through my binocular, I could see that the object was a snail, and a relatively large one. The glimpse I had of its flattened shell and spiral suggested that it belonged to *Polygyra*, a genus of land snails with which I am somewhat familiar, and which contains a large number of species.

Suddenly the Wood Thrush did an astonishing thing. Between moments of hammering the snail on the ground, it began in lightning-quick stabs to thrust the snail under its wings, along its flanks, and beneath its under tail coverts, just as a bird will do when anting. It dabbed the snail in its feathers a number of times before it finally broke the snail's shell into two parts and quickly bolted down the larger part, shell and all. Before I could move toward it to recover the remaining piece of shell, with a view to identifying the snail, the thrush ran to the smaller piece and swallowed it.

According to food-habits studies of birds (Junius Henderson, 1933. "The Practical Value of Birds," The Macmillan Company), all of our native thrushes, including the Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*), eat some snails. W. L. McAtee, former food-habits investigator with whom I discussed this experience, said that it is likely that many birds eat the shells of snails for their lime content, as well as the meat of the snail itself.

In a search of the literature, I could find no previous record of a bird anting with a snail, though the possibility of it may help to explain the transportation of snails by birds.—JOHN K. TERRES, *P.O. Box 571, Chapel Hill, North Carolina*, 3 May 1961.

A prolonged Starling fight.—On 23 May 1959, while in Spotswood, Middlesex County, New Jersey, I watched an unusually prolonged fight between two Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). The encounter took place between 11:00 AM and 12:15 PM DST on a flat, tar-papered porch roof about 15 feet above the ground. The following is a résumé of notes taken while watching the combatants at a distance of 5 to 10 feet from a window overlooking the roof:

11:00—two Starlings (males, based on length of the hackles on the breast and darkness of the eye) have been rolling around and fighting for two minutes—clawing, biting, and grasping. They finally assume the pose shown in Fig. 1, at 11:02,