

as 20 sites before finally bringing nest material to one. It is impossible to predict which crotch will be used for the nest since the bird often builds in one that she tried only infrequently as compared to the others. Although in some individuals the site inspection period lasts 1½ days, in others only a few hours ensue between the first trying of sites and the bringing of nesting material.

After trying a number of sites the female starts tugging at plant fibers. This behavior is usually brief and ineffectual at first and the female soon tries more sites. During the next stage she picks up and drops plant fragments. Finally, a strip is brought to one of the nest sites that has been tried recently (not necessarily the last tried). Although the female may try a few more sites even after she has brought several loads of material to one, there is usually no further trying of sites and nest building commences.

Nest-site selection is a behavioral sequence: there are many separate acts which are more or less dependent on the preceding ones. The usual sequence is: (1) exploration of the whole territory, (2) exploration of specific areas, (3) standing in crotches, (4) site "trying" by performing shaping movements in crotches, (5) tugging at plant material, (6) picking up plant fragments, and (7) carrying them to a site.

The first stages involve primarily visual exploration; later ones, such as shaping, are primarily tactile. Visual "screening" of possible sites eliminates the necessity of "trying" large numbers. Lorenz (Group Processes, N.Y., 1955, p. 188) suggests that the site finally chosen by certain European passerines is one in which there is a maximum of tactile stimulation on all sides. The restart that once tried a two-pronged crotch and fell out subsequently went to species-typical sites. She seemingly underwent an "unsatisfactory" tactile experience and immediately learned to avoid this type of site. The biological significance of rapidly learning to select sites which give the proper tactile sensations seems obvious when we consider that the only female which built in a two-pronged crotch had her nest swept away by a mild wind storm which destroyed no other nests.—MILLICENT S. FICKEN, *Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York* and *Department of Zoology, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 30 December 1963.*

Predation upon flightless ducks.—From 5 June to 29 August 1961, I studied the postbreeding activities of waterfowl at Camas National Wildlife Refuge, Hamer, Idaho. During that time, I did not witness the capture by a predator of any duck capable of flight. On the other hand, several flightless birds were caught by predators. On 6 July, for example, I noticed a flightless drake Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) splashing desperately. I then saw a mink (*Mustela vison*) atop the duck, biting into its neck. A furious struggle took place both above and below the water. The bird's flapping gradually lessened, and finally ceased. The mink and the Mallard submerged for about 15 seconds during which time I saw no struggling. Surprisingly, the duck surfaced and swam off in one direction, the mink in another. The bird appeared to be injured, swimming very slowly and quite low in the water.

On 23 August I saw two adults and a young coyote (*Canus latrans*) walking near a large group of flightless ducks. The pup had an unidentified duckling in its mouth. As my boat approached the flightless gathering, about six American Widgeons (*Mareca americana*) and two Gadwalls (*Anas strepera*) ran onto land directly toward the motionless coyotes. A commotion followed; several ducks reached the water flapping furiously, and the coyotes scampered off with at least one adult duck. The following day I saw a coyote catch another duck in the same manner.—LEWIS W. ORING, *Department of Zoology, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 22 August 1963.*