

The above data appear to show, among other things, that even some of our most highly organized birds, the *Turdidae*, have the habit of maintaining a family organization which may exist through the nesting and molting seasons and the fall months in part, a period of about six months, and that, as such a group, they started southward to their winter home.

In the matter of nest-building a considerable variety of material was used in the three nests built. Nest No. 1 was composed mainly of the inner bark of a dead chestnut tree. Nest No. 2 was made of grass, lined with a finer grass, and the last nest was constructed of white pine needles and grass, lined with feathers. All these nests were placed within one hundred feet of my house and within one hundred feet of one another.

SEMI-COLONIZATION OF VEERIES

BY KATHERINE C. HARDING

LAST summer I stayed at a camp near Lake Asquam, New Hampshire, (five and one half miles from the town of Meredith) from June 7th until the 12th of July. Part of the time Mr. Harding was there and worked with me in banding fledgelings and in studying the birds nesting in our vicinity. During this period a large number of nests of the Veery (*Hyllocichla fuscescens fuscescens*) were found, and an attempt was made to locate all their nests in a limited area of approximately three acres.

This area is generally tree-covered, hillside land, with occasional openings, sloping gradually northerly to the lake. Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) occurs well distributed over the tract, but much more plentifully on about one third of the area which is heavily wooded with deciduous trees, among which the beech is prominent, with large pines occurring occasionally. Beneath these is a nearly continuous growth of mountain laurel through which it is most difficult to force one's way. The laurel averages from eighteen inches to twenty-five inches in height. Certain patches of it are three or four feet high. As a whole the three acres are fairly dry and well-drained, but close to the water a narrow zone parallel to the shore occurs that in a wet season is doubtless somewhat swampy.

My experience with localities favored by this species when nesting did not lead me to anticipate finding their nests under the conditions existing, although William Brewster reports these birds as abundant in the North Carolina mountains along brooks overhung with a thick growth of rhododendrons.* Neither have I been led to expect that this species exhibits the social habits found to prevail here, where in this small area twelve nests containing eggs or young were found, seven of the twelve nests occurring in a tract of less than one acre, and six of these nests being found in the laurel bushes, which, as already mentioned, were here particularly abundant and thick-growing. While the region as a whole has not been thoroughly studied, it appears probable that tangles of laurel, so abundant in the South along the mountains, are especially favored by Veeries for nesting purposes.

As far as I could determine, all twelve pairs lived together in perfect harmony. Encounters between Veeries which would appear to indicate that each male jealously ruled a territory on which others of the same species were not allowed to enter, were in no case observed, and in this connection it should be noted that the food supply was in maximum demand during my stay, for young birds were being fed in the nests.

As each nest was located, it was numbered and recorded on a map and it was revisited frequently. The number of eggs in each was listed, the date the young birds appeared, the day they were banded, and the time they left the nest were carefully noted.

There seemed to be two favorite types of nesting-sites. Five nests were built upon the ground, three of them at the base of large clumps of ferns, and two in open spaces with no protecting foliage of any kind. The other seven nests were built in the thick growth of laurel which covered the hillside. The highest nests were built fourteen, fifteen, seventeen, eighteen, and twenty inches from the ground, and the lower ones were only eight and six inches above it. Four nests were built within fifteen yards of the lake's edge and the other eight ranged from fifty yards to one hundred and twenty-five yards from the water.

Our records of these twelve nests show that six broods were

* *THE AUK*, Vol. III, 1886, p. 178.

apparently raised successfully and left their nests in due season. A seventh brood hatched out and disappeared before the birds were half grown, and the eggs unexplainably vanished from the other five nests. Sixteen young Veeries were banded while in their nests, which represented two broods of four each, one brood of five, one brood of two (with two sterile eggs), and one brood of three (two of which left the nest before we could band them).

MATERIAL USED IN NEST-BUILDING

The loose structure of the nests gave them an exceedingly bulky appearance. They were built principally of strips of dry, shredded birch-bark and dried beech leaves interwoven with fine twigs. In two instances, where dried oak leaves were in great abundance close by, these leaves were used instead of beech leaves. The inner cups of the nests averaged about one inch and a half in depth and two inches in diameter. They were lined with pine needles and fine rootlets.

RECORD OF VEERIES IN NEST NO. VI

June 17th—Found by Richard B. Harding, Jr., at the base of a clump of ferns at the edge of a clearing. It contained four eggs.

June 22nd—Eggs not hatched yet.

June 23rd—Three fledgelings hatched at 5 P. M.

June 24th—The fourth fledgeling was hatched at 8 A. M.

June 25th—The young birds were well-grown and the flight feather tips had burst from their sheaths. Banded all four fledgelings.

July 2nd—Young birds were still in the nest and fully feathered.

July 3rd—They had left the nest at 8 A. M., being ten days old.

Nest No. VIII contained four well-grown young when found on June 17th. These left the nest on June 23rd, bearing numbers 128245, 128246, 128247, 128270.

On July 5th I flushed a Veery from this same nest, which contained three eggs. Unfortunately methods of trapping adult Veeries were not perfected, so that it is not known whether this nest was used twice in the season by the same pair of Veeries.

When the identity of each parent can be established, as well as of the fledgelings, far more accurate and detailed nesting-records

may be secured. Bearing this in mind, I hope to continue the study of this group of Veeries next summer and to develop some method of trapping the adults successfully.

ARE WE MAKING THE MOST OF OUR BANDING STATIONS?

Not all our banders are taking notes on a scale to get the best results. Not all realize that it is perfectly feasible to maintain a banding station on a very small scale—perhaps not more than a shelf trap at a window—and yet secure scientific information about birds of importance.

Two of the most necessary and at the same time pleasant phases of the bander's work are careful observation and note-taking. Notes should be made daily of even seemingly trivial things about the birds at your station and wherever you see them in the vicinity or elsewhere. By so doing you may in time add important facts that will

- (1) Help solve existing problems;
- (2) Bring about a reconsideration of accepted views regarding some ornithological matters;
- (3) Best of all, open up ornithological problems of your own.

In fact you may do all three of these things, which include amassing needed information regarding the life-histories of many of our commonest birds.

Not a few of you have Dr. Allen's lectures that were delivered last winter. We hope you will reread them with a view of refreshing your memory on the many problems still awaiting satisfactory explanations, at the same time seeing if some of your own observations do not assist in bringing nearer the solutions sought. The constant effort should be to discover the bearing that the observations you make have on some existing problems. The amount of interesting work to be done by the field ornithologists is incalculably great. Any day, at your station or during a walk afield, you may stumble upon an observation or a series of observations that will open up a wide vista of possibilities. May we illustrate what we mean by citing a few recent observations by some of our members?