

GENERAL NOTES

A Banded Red-backed Sandpiper.—While collecting birds on Hog Island, Northampton County, Virginia, on April 2, 1941, the authors took a female Red-backed Sandpiper, *Erolia alpina sakhalina*, from a flock of at least five thousand birds. The bird was found to be banded with U. S. Biological Survey band number 36-229093. Mr. Frederick C. Lincoln, In Charge of Distribution and Migration of Birds gave us the following history of the bird: it was banded October 14, 1936 by Dr. Oliver L. Austin at North Eastham, Cape Cod, Massachusetts. So our bird was at least five years old.—WILLIAM MONTAGNA and WILLIAM A. WIMSATT, Laboratory of Ornithology, Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Descriptive Notes on a Catbird Nest.—Favorable circumstances provided an opportunity to observe the behavior of one pair of Catbirds (*Dumetella carolinensis*) throughout the nesting cycle. Since it is unlikely that I will be able to make additional observations "for the duration", it seems desirable to record these notes at this time. The pair of birds built a nest in the bushes near a house in Wilmette, a residential suburb of Chicago. The literature concerning catbirds contains little which duplicates these observations. Hence no attempt is made to correlate the literature or analyse the description. Neither bird was banded. The identification of sex was based on the presence of the brood patch in the female and also on behavior.

On May 21, 1941 two Catbirds flew back and forth across the yard frequently. Neither carried nesting material. A catbird had been singing vigorously for the past week. Nest building was observed on May 23. One bird (female?) carried and arranged the nesting material while the other (male?) followed and sat on the nearby porch. The nest was placed about ten feet above the ground in a dense bush. The back door of a house was about eight feet away; persons and a dog went in and out. The dog was fed on the ground about five feet from the nest bush. For four days, beginning on May 25, an egg was laid in the morning about 8 A.M.

The incubation period was twelve days. The female incubated exclusively; she remained on the nest for about 20 minutes and then was off for about five minutes. The identification of the female was made by the presence of the brood patch which was visible under favorable circumstances. The female appeared to be slightly larger than the male. After the birds had been observed for some time it became obvious that the male used certain perches and the female used others. While the female was on the nest the male watched from a nearby telephone wire or went off to feed. During the inattentive periods of the female the male always guarded the nest, perching a few feet away. The male drove off English Sparrows and continued to sing loudly but with decreased frequency. During the incubation period three behavior patterns are notable. (1) The male sings in the usual loud manner occasionally but frequently sings a weak warbling song. The notes are very similar to the usual song but the volume is greatly diminished. One must be near to hear the song. (2) Several times the male and female perched on the telephone wire and touched or rubbed bills. (3) Commonly the male and female fluttered or quivered the wings. This fluttering occurred when the birds appeared to be excited, as, for example, after I had disturbed the nest or when the female returned after feeding.

Two young hatched on June 8 during a violent rain and wind storm which lasted throughout the day. The fate of the other two eggs is unknown. No trace of eggs or young was found when the weather cleared. During the nestling period the female brooded the young when necessary, especially at first. The male began to bring in food at once and either fed the young directly or gave the food to the female. She apparently never ate it but passed it on to the young.