

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:

UNUSUAL GROWTHS ON A TREE SPARROW

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During a routine fat check on a Tree Sparrow on Feb. 16, 1973, a number of unusual growths were noticed. The growths were cream-colored irregularly shaped thick patches 2 to 8 mm. in diameter, and with the general appearance of a raft of mosquito eggs. They were 1 to 1.5 mm. thick with columnar separations visible on the edges and with irregular tiny whitish spots on the surface.

About a dozen such patches were on the skin of the breast and upper sides; none were on the other parts of the body.

The bird was recaptured on February 18 and 24, 1973. No change was noticed in the growths. An attempt was made to remove a portion, but it was found that they were very firmly attached to the skin. The growths were hard - not soft as eggs might be expected to be.

The Tree Sparrow, originally banded Jan. 5, 1969, was apparently healthy. It struggled in my hand and flew strongly when released.

I would very much appreciate information regarding the nature of these growths.

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SALVAGED ALIVE: MORE ON CARE OF INJURED BIRDS

HANNAH BONSEY SUTHERS

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A roadside victim still alive has an urgency to it that cannot wait for a compilation of information, based on years of experience, to come out in one article. The information is needed often before it is learned. We bird banders, now permitted to pick up and send on to some institution the roadside kills, are going to find ourselves increasingly in the situation of finding something alive. Along with every other Grackle or Catbird, or insect eaters killed regularly on that stretch of road wooded on both sides, or along with the Baltimore orange peels and Scarlet filter kings, Rufous-sided brewer's and Yellow-bellied film boxes, are going to come other surprises. Alive.

A Kestrel standing only 6" off the pavement? Something is wrong. We pull over as soon as possible and put on the 4-way blinkers. We rummage through our kit under the seat: pampers and plastic bread bags for small birds (dead). Assorted paper bags to enclose the live ones for quiet keeping. A burlap bag for dangerous beaks and claws. I grab the burlap bag for the Kestrel. The eye on the hit side is swollen shut. I approach on that side, and it is oblivious until it feels the bag wrap around it and lift it up.

That pheasant's wings aren't just blowing in the wake of straddling cars; that bird in the middle of the lane is flapping in terror. Bare hands will suffice. It is slipped into a grocery bag, head first.

Down at the bay a Laughing Gull lies on the dried washed up sea grass. It does not seem to notice the rising tide, nor our presence. The lightest person steps along the spongy grass and decisively places hands around the gull's body. The only resistance is a stretching of the neck as though the body should follow. A patch of missing feathers on the side of the head tells a possible story.

A child waits at the door, with an orphan Barn swallow, feathered, but too young to fly. Somehow the nest was knocked