

## MOURNING DOVE NESTING PERSISTENCE

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On 22 March 1994, I received a call from Conner Maynard reporting an unusual Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) nest at a site in Starkville, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi, where a new apartment building was under construction. I went to the site and discovered that what was unusual about the nest was that it was within about one foot of the building that was under construction and the birds were tolerating all of the activity. The birds had built their nest in a loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) on a horizontal branch about 15 feet above the ground. Construction activity apparently had already begun when the birds chose the site for their nest, although during incubation construction activities were primarily at or near ground level.

As the first floor walls of the building went up, they reached to within about 3 feet of the nest, yet through the construction the birds continued to incubate and later brood and feed their two young. Since the nest branch extended towards the building under construction, when the second floor was added, the workmen had to saw the limb off within about 6 inches of the nest (Figure 1). Throughout the construction an adult often remained on the nest, even allowing workmen to pet it. On 25 March as the exterior of the building was nearing completion, the chicks fledged.

Mourning Doves are known for nesting near humans, occasionally nesting on structures such as window ledges, rain gutters, and abandoned vehicles (Sayre and Silvy 1993). They are also rather tolerant of human activity near the nest (Willoughby and Krebs 1986, Mirarchi and Baskett 1994), but not usually so tolerant as the birds at this site.



Figure 1. Morning Dove nest with two young, inches from the framed up window of an apartment building under construction. Note how the limb had to be sawed off just distal to the nest. Despite the construction activities and sawed off nest limb, the birds were successful in fledging these young.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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