

Nesting of Crossbills in Nova Scotia.— During the past winter, which was very mild and open, numbers of American and White-winged Crossbills were found nesting in the vicinity of Wolfville, Kings Co.

The first nests discovered were those of the American Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra minor*) Jan. 31, three in number. Of these, two contained young, just hatched. The others held three eggs, advanced in incubation. These nests were not far apart, in a small, open grove of spruce, fir, and hemlock, and were similarly placed on horizontal limbs of spruces, from twenty to forty feet from the ground and well out from the trunk. Some fifteen or twenty of the birds were constantly feeding about this grove, and by their noisy chatterings and restless movements attracted my attention to them.

Though hardly expecting to find them nesting at so early a date, I nevertheless watched them closely. Soon I saw a single bird leave the feeding flock. Darting away through the trees he disappeared among the lower branches from which he soon emerged and joined his companions. A careful search among the branches into which this bird had flown, revealed a nest, well concealed amid clustering sprigs of the evergreen. The sitting female carefully watched my movements as I approached the nest and upon my reaching out to touch her raised the feathers on her crown, opened her bill, and in short made herself look quite ferocious. Finally sliding off the nest, she flitted about within a few feet of me, keeping up an angry chirping, in which she was soon joined by her mate. This nest was some twenty feet up, and fully ten feet out from the trunk, saddled on the horizontal limb among clusters of the foliage and protected from above by overhanging branches. The other two nests were discovered in the same way — by watching the feeding flock, and noting the movements of birds leaving it from time to time.

During the following months, many other nests were found. Great diversity in choice of nesting sites among individuals of both species was noticed to exist. Nests of the American Crossbill were found in spruces, firs, and hemlocks at elevations ranging from ten to eighty feet. Most nests were found in spruces of large growth and with thick, spreading branches in open woods. Others were found in dense groves of evergreens in the little bunch of foliage at the extreme top of otherwise denuded firs, while still others were found concealed in dead trees of the same kind among the hanging moss and twigs, close to the trunk. A few nests were found in young hemlocks in the little clusters of twigs that sprout out at the junction of the branches and trunk.

The character of the woods did not seem to affect the choice of the birds much, provided that cone-bearing trees were near at hand. Thus nests were found in dry open upland woods as well as in the low dense growths of the swamps, and in woods of mixed growth as well as in evergreens alone.

Nests of the White-winged species (*Loxia leucoptera*) were found in

spruces only, though some were in trees of large growth and seventy feet from the ground, while others were placed low in small bushes.

During the period of incubation the sitting females were observed to be fed by the males, in the same manner that the young are fed by their parents — that is by the disgorging of the contents of the crop into the open mouth of the bird to be fed. When bringing his mate food in this manner the male crossbill would announce his coming by loud pipings, and perching upon a near by tree would continue his excited chirpings some minutes and then fly direct to the nest. Often after having thus fed his mate, he would circle in the air about his home on outstretched flapping wings, giving vent to a perfect ecstasy of song.

The nests of both species are composed chiefly of twigs and beard-moss. Sometimes feathers, strips of decayed wood and bark, grasses and plant down, were added. On the whole the nests are fairly well built and compact, though quite a difference in this respect is noticeable in different cases.

The nesting period of these birds seems very extended. Thus on Jan. 31, nests were found with young. The birds have been nesting ever since, and at this date (May 7) flocks of full fledged young can be seen feeding about the woods, while nests with eggs are still to be found. Some years ago a nest of the American Crossbill was found on August 4 containing newly hatched young.— HAROLD F. TUFTS, *Wolfville, Nova Scotia.*

Breeding of the Savanna Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis savanna*) in Southern New Jersey.— On July 8, 1903, while on a short trip along the coast of southern New Jersey, I was surprised to find a pair of Savanna Sparrows breeding at the extreme lower end of Seven Mile Beach, Cape May County. The nest was situated on the ground in a dry, sandy, open space back of the sand dunes, and was concealed by weeds and drift. It contained three young birds a few days old and one infertile egg. The old birds were seen excellently at close range through a field-glass and thoroughly identified. Being without a gun neither of them was secured, but the nest, egg and one young were taken, the remaining fledglings being left in an improvised nest. The young bird was kept alive for a day or two longer and then preserved in formalin. His plumage is sufficiently developed to show its general coloration, and this, and the form of the feet, together with the nest and egg, aside from the observations made in the field, are sufficient to render the identification certain.

The southernmost limit of the breeding range of the Savanna Sparrow on the Atlantic coast is given by Ridgway (1901) as Connecticut, but there are specimens in the Museum collection taken in summer on Long Island, New York, as follows: Centre Moriches, May 30 (four adults); Good Ground, July 1 (one adult); Gardiner's Island, Aug. 12 (1 young). The species has also been recorded by E. C. Thurber in his List of Birds of Morris Co., N. J., as breeding in the vicinity of Morristown, in northern New Jersey, an inland locality. The present record carries the known breeding range about 120 miles still further south.— W. DEW. MILLER, *Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., New York City.*