

**Nesting of the Red Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra minor*) in Essex County, Massachusetts.**—Our part of Cambridge is not without keen-eyed lads who devote spare hours to watching birds. To have them call on me every now and then with eager questioning or fresh report concerning things of local interest, is always pleasing and may also be instructive—as happened only the other day when Lovell Thompson and Charles F. Walcott came, bringing a nest of the Red Crossbill obtained by them last spring at Marblehead. Just how it was found and taken is explained by the following statement, written out, at my suggestion, by Lovell.

"During the winter of 1916–1917 I visited Marblehead, Mass.; with my friend Charles Walcott, several times. Each time we saw a flock of Red Crossbills there. On April 22, 1917, we noticed two in pitch pines near a house. Looking closer we found their nest, on a pine branch about eighteen feet above the ground. The male Crossbill flew from the tree but when I climbed it the female was on the nest and I got my hand within two feet of her before she left it to fly away. There were two eggs in it, both whitish with some dark markings. About a month later we visited the place again. There was then nothing to be seen of the Crossbills and only one broken egg shell remained in the nest which we took and have since given to Mr. Brewster."

The nest above mentioned somewhat resembles that of a Song Sparrow, being similarly bulky and deep-cupped, with thick walls mostly composed of bleached grass-blades and weed stalks. But it has also a bristling outer fringe of stiff twigs six to ten inches long, such as no Song Sparrow would thus be likely to employ. Moreover its neat lining of fine, soft grasses includes a few Crossbill feathers at least one of which, brick red in color, must have come from an adult male bird. Their presence affords, of course, convincing evidence as to the original ownership of the nest, thereby, indeed, it is "self-identified."

Two nests of the Red Crossbills in my collection from New Brunswick, both accompanied by sets of eggs and skins of parent birds, are, unfortunately, not well enough preserved to afford satisfactory comparison with the Marblehead specimen. From it they differ conspicuously in general coloring because abundantly garnished with grey-green *Usnea* moss of which it has none. They are also less shapely and almost devoid of coarse outer twigs but as a few of these remain in place their comparative absence may have resulted from careless handling on the part of the collector. In other respects all three nests seem essentially alike—at least as regards their general plan of construction.

In these days of innumerable bird watchers and voluminous bird literature it is difficult to make sure as to whether this or that is, or is not known and recorded. But to the best of my recollection and belief no nest of a Crossbill has ever before been found anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. Hence my boy friends are entitled to much credit for discovering the Marblehead one, while I am grateful to them both for so generously contributing it to my collection.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, Cambridge, Mass.