within a few feet in our canoe. Possibly the Black Ducks were forced into using tree holes because this area is flooded by melting snow and early rains each spring to a depth of three to five feet or more, and hence all suitable nesting cover is under water at that time.

A Black Duck was found incubating eight eggs in a nest built in an old Crow's nest about fifteen feet up and overhanging the water of Loder Creek, near Sheffield, Sunbury County, New Brunswick, on May 26, 1938. This may be another adaptation resulting from flood waters. It is believed that these constitute the first recorded instances of Black Ducks nesting in tree holes and old Crow nests.

Col. H. H. Ritchie, chief game warden of New Brunswick, and John Campbell, game warden, were with me when the above observations were made, and movies were taken of the adult bird flushing in each instance.—HAROLD S. PETERS, *U. S. Biological Survey, Charleston, South Carolina.*

Snow Geese near Philadelphia.—The apparent paucity of records for Snow Geese in Pennsylvania, especially in spring, prompts me to submit the following observation. On the morning of April 27, 1935, while returning from a walk along Naylor's Run, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, I chanced to glance directly overhead and was astounded to see a small flock of eight Snow Geese (presumably *Chen hyperborea atlantica*), winging their way northward in V-formation at an altitude of about 800 feet. The birds were silent, uttering no sound while within my hearing. The brightness of the morning sun and blue depth of sky as a background, seemed to accentuate the snowy plumage and contrasting black wing-tips of the birds in a clear-cut and unforgettable picture.

While I can find only one published *spring* record for the Greater Snow Goose in Pennsylvania (Auk, 30: 336, 1913), several observers in the neighboring State of New Jersey have noted large April flocks: Carter near Boonton (Auk, 41: 472, 1924), Nichols at Troy Meadows (Auk, 50: 352, 1933) and Eynon at Union (Auk, 54: 532, 1937).

Nichols in an interesting discussion of the Snow Goose, comments on the rarity of records for a bird so easily recognized and suggests that this may be due to their passage at such great altitudes as seldom to be seen. In addition to this factor, Dr. D. J. Elliot (in Bent's 'Life Histories of North American Wild Fowl,' Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 130, p. 167, 1925) says that the Snow Geese "usually fly silently," which, if characteristic of their high migratory flights would make them still less conspicuous to the observer.—J. KENNETH TERRES, *Soil Conservation Service, Ithaca, New York.*

Homing instinct and prolificacy in the Duck Hawk.—During the spring of 1939 it was my good fortune to be able to make several trips into eastern Pennsylvania for the purpose of collecting nesting data on the Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus anatum*). I have often wondered what would be the effect of removing one or the other of the adults from the eggs. Would the other parent continue to incubate them? If a captured bird were released at some distance would it return to the same nesting site, and if so, how soon? In other words, I was curious to find out how strong and lasting is the nesting urge in a species which is usually so fearless as the Duck Hawk in the protection of its eyrie, and to find out how pronounced is the homing instinct in this species. In the experience described below it must be remembered that only one bird was involved, the female. It is quite probable that the male would show a different reaction under the circumstances described. Though no conclusions can be definitely drawn from this single incident, it is, I believe,

worthy of record as a clear example of the homing instinct in the Duck Hawk, and an indication of the dominance of a periodic instinct over that which may cause a bird to shun an environment which has been detrimental to its welfare, at least in the particular female described.

On May 6, 1939, I descended to an eyrie on a cliff near Towanda, Pennsylvania. I had already visited this eyrie a week earlier, and found four eggs in the same location as last year. In most of the nesting places with which I am familiar the eggs are laid on open ledges affording a clear view in all directions. At the present site, however, the eggs were deposited in a shallow cleft in the cliff wall. This cleft is roughly three feet by three feet, and about fifteen inches high. Beneath it is a ledge wide enough to stand on and running for fifty or more feet along the face of the cliff. The opening of the nesting cleft is at the breast level of a person standing on the ledge.

On the date mentioned, May 6, I descended to the ledge about ten feet to the side of the opening of the cleft. The day was heavily overcast and a very strong wind was blowing. This is certainly the reason that the female bird which, as it turned out, was incubating at this time, had not been alarmed by my descent. Her first intimation of my presence and mine of hers was when I appeared before the cleft blocking her way to freedom. I grasped her quickly, and taking off my sweater, bundled her up in it so that she could neither move nor see. Before leaving the ledge I noted carefully the position of the eggs (they were individually marked) in the nest. I then returned immediately to Cornell University where I confined my captive in total darkness to prevent her injuring herself.

On May 10 I returned again to the nest and noted that the eggs were warm and that their position had been changed, evidence that the male had undertaken incubation. On May 13, I visited the eyrie and found the eggs cold though their position had again been changed. Another visit on May 17 found the eggs cold, their position unchanged. Apparently the male had deserted the eggs in the absence of the female. I determined to release the female, and in the event that she would find her way back and perhaps attempt to incubate her spoiled eggs, I removed the set. This was to allow her to lay a new clutch if she so desired.

I banded the female and broke the second primary in the left wing so that I could identify her if I saw her again before the fall molt. She was released at Cornell University at 6 p. m. on May 18. She made off immediately in the direction of Towanda and did not turn or deviate during the time she was within the range of my field glasses. The distance between Towanda and Cornell is sixty miles over mountainous country. The hawk was hooded when I took her from the nesting locality, she had been kept in total darkness for nearly two weeks, and yet the moment she was released she set off unerringly in the direction whence she had been brought.

I made a visit to the eyrie on May 24, but saw no Duck Hawks. On May 28, Mr. James Fox of Washington, D. C., visited the nest and informed me that it contained one egg. I returned to the site on June 3 and found four fresh eggs, not in the old spot, but in a similar cleft just ten feet away from the old spot. At this time I had a clear view of the female; it was the same bird I had released, the broken primary in the left wing was easily seen, and even the band on the leg was occasionally visible. Only a week after her harrowing experience the female had returned to lay another set of eggs. It is interesting to note that these eggs were fertile, for three of them hatched on June 30. The fourth failed to hatch.

It is my opinion that the hawk found her way back to the home cliff on the day she was released or the day following, in order to enable her to lay fertile eggs within

a week of her release. It strikes me as phenomenal that the bird should return and lay a second set under these circumstances, particularly at such a late date. The first set of eggs was only slightly incubated.—WILLIAM A. WIMSATT, *11 Grafton St., Chevy Chase, Maryland.*

Early nesting of the Duck Hawk in Maryland.—In 'The Auk' for April 1939, was published my note concerning an early breeding record of the Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia (nest is on Maryland side of the Potomac River). In the spring of 1939 the record was even more unique. Three 4-weeks-old fledglings were removed from the nest on April 10 by Washington falconers. Allowing a period of 28 days for incubation and four days during which the set was being completed before incubation began, I might reasonably conclude that the eggs were laid about February 12, a full two weeks earlier than last year. Other nests in this region did not have eggs until the end of March and early April.—WILLIAM A. WIMSATT, *11 Grafton St., Chevy Chase, Maryland.*

Ruffed Grouse budding on western serviceberry.—On January 3, 1939, while driving down a narrow country lane in the woods along the South Branch of Park River, I observed a Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) budding on the western serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*). The bird fed on the buds for ten minutes at a distance of about fifteen feet from the observer before it flew away. Dr. Wm. R. VanDersal in his book 'Native Woody Plants of the United States' (U. S. Dept. Agric. Misc. Publ., no. 303) in summarizing food-habit records for *Amelanchier alnifolia*, reports stomach records for the Sooty Grouse and Richardson's Grouse; observations for Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse and Blue Grouse. He reports stomach records of the Ruffed Grouse feeding on the serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*). The portion of the plant eaten is not indicated in the above records.

The U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey recently informed the writer that "we have no records of Ruffed Grouse feeding on *Amelanchier alnifolia. Amelanchier canadensis*, of course, is an important grouse food. It has been recorded in 43 stomachs examined by the Biological Survey."—ADRIAN C. FOX, *Park River, North Dakota.*

King Rail breeding in southern Ontario.—Although apparently uncommon everywhere throughout its range along the southern edge of Ontario, the King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) does breed sparingly in a few of our marshes from Lake St. Clair east to Toronto. The earliest account of its nesting was published by the late J. A. Morden and Mr. W. E. Saunders (Canadian Sports. and Nat., 2: 193, 1882) who stated that it was common at St. Clair Flats (in the extreme southwestern corner of Ontario) and bred there. A female with a set of thirteen eggs, taken at St. Anne's Island, Lake St. Clair, Lambton County, in May, 1882, by Mr. Saunders is still in his collection (Baillie and Harrington, Trans. Roy. Canad. Inst., 21: 32, 1936). Information on its present status at St. Clair Flats has not come to the attention of ornithologists, so far as we are aware.

On May 30, 1894, a second set containing ten eggs was discovered in Ontario at Point Abino, Welland County, near the eastern end of the north shore of Lake Erie, by Edward Reinecke (Oölogist, 12: 45, 1895) but no further light was thrown on its breeding range in Ontario for nearly thirty years.

During the summer of 1921, and again in 1926, the late Charles K. Rogers observed a female with her family of young near the 'cottages' on Long Point, Norfolk County, on the north shore of Lake Erie (Snyder, Trans. Roy. Canad. Inst., 18: 163, 1931) and thus a third breeding station became known.