

pair of White-breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta c. carolinensis*). Both birds were busily engaged in the construction of a nest in a knothole in a partially decayed limb about eighteen feet up in a soft maple tree. The male had just delivered to the female within the nest cavity a small amount of material that appeared to consist of the frayed vane of a delicate feather when the proceedings were interrupted by the presence of a prowling Northern Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis leucotis*).

Slowly and somewhat hesitatingly the squirrel ascended the limb toward the nest but at once the male nuthatch uttered a low alarm note and forthwith fluffed out his body feathers to their full extent. Still the squirrel came on. Then the male nuthatch, with all the contour feathers elevated and spread, and the wings extended as completely as possible, began a steady, rhythmic, side-to-side swaying movement, the while advancing toward and retreating from the now irresolute squirrel. Neither the bird nor the squirrel uttered a sound audible to the observer a few feet away. Presently the female nuthatch emerged from the nest-opening and joined her mate in the feather-elevating and rhythmical swaying of her body.

Both nuthatches remained close together on the limb, the female more or less completely covering the opening to the nest-cavity with her body and extended wings. This performance was continued for three to four minutes. The sight of these two suddenly enlarged birds with contrasting black and white coloration, rapidly vibrating wings, and threatening demeanor brought the squirrel to an uncertain halt; then a well-directed peck from the still quivering male nuthatch prompted the intruder quickly to take his departure from the scene.

While the birds themselves may have been in no acute peril from the squirrel, their mutual assumption of this unique oscillating attitude, similar to that sometimes employed in mating performances, obviously was effective in discouraging the presence of a larger, unwanted animal, which *threatened* real or at least imaginary danger.—DAYTON STONER, *New York State Museum, Albany, New York*.

**Canada Geese perching at Malheur Refuge.**—On April 30, 1940, while locating and recording data on waterfowl nests in the southern part of the West Swamp Field, in Unit 4 of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon, assisted by a crew of C.C.C. enrollees, the writer and the enrollees noted a Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) perched on top of a fence post at the south edge of the field. The bird was observed for some time at a distance of 100 yards. It was facing a fairly strong wind which did not seem to affect its perching ability. The post was measured after the bird was flushed, and was found to be 65 inches high, the roughly diamond-shaped top being 10 inches by 7 inches. A C.C.C. foreman reported seeing a similar occurrence, on two different occasions, in Unit 2 near the old P-Ranch buildings of the Malheur Refuge, about ten days previously. This was about six miles south of the Unit 4 observation, and in all probability was not the same bird.

The following year, on April 24, while locating Canada Goose and Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis tabida*) nests in the Unit 4-area mentioned above, the writer again observed a Canada Goose perched on a fence post. It appeared to be on the same post that the goose was noted using the previous year. There was no wind blowing that day. The goose remained on the post only a few minutes before flying away.

During the evening of April 27, 1942, at Malheur Refuge, another observation was made of a Canada Goose on top of an 18-foot telephone pole. When approached, the goose flew away and was accompanied by its mate. There is no way of determining whether this is the same goose as that noted perched on a fence post in 1940 and 1941. While Canada Geese are commonly seen perched on high rock ledges bordering portions of the Blitzen Valley of the Malheur Refuge, their perching on fence posts and telephone poles seems quite unusual.—CLARENCE A. SOOTER, *U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Burns, Oregon.*

**Kingbird housekeeping.**—We know that many birds are good housekeepers in that, after the young are hatched, they keep the nest scrupulously clean by removing the droppings. A pair of Kingbirds (*Tyrannus t. tyrannus*) have a nest in the spruce tree in the side yard of my country home in Vermont. In the front yard, enclosed by a picket fence with the grass carefully mowed, flower borders on all sides and a handsome bird bath, I like to serve tea to my friends; in fact, that part of the grounds has always been known as the 'Tea Garden.'

Now, what did these Kingbird parents do but use the bird bath as a depository for the nestlings' droppings? I watched one or the other come there, probably four or five times an hour, perch on the side of the bath and drop the excrement into the water. Occasionally the bird would take a sip or two of water before flying away, but not often. I cleaned out the bath every day and estimated that during each twenty-four hour period about fifty droppings accumulated.

Personally I had never heard of such a case before, nor had the bird friends with whom I discussed the incident. Later, however, another friend sent me a copy of an article by Edward C. Raney in 'The Auk' for January 1941, on 'Feeding and Disposition of Nestling Feces by the Kingbird.' In this case, however, the feces were deposited in a row on a boat dock as well as on the back seat of a rowboat fastened to the dock.—LILLIAN S. LOVELAND, *River Road, Norwich, Vermont.*

**Predation upon Wilson's Phalarope by Treganza's Heron.**—While driving from Boulder, Colorado, to Fort Collins on May 9, 1942, the writer observed a Treganza's Heron (*Ardea herodias treganzai*) standing a few feet from the shore of a roadside pond. Fifty feet beyond it eleven Wilson's Phalaropes (*Steganopus tricolor*) were swimming, one of them some distance from the others. Suddenly the heron flapped over the pond, alighted on the water and seized the lone phalarope by the neck. After shaking the smaller bird violently and plunging it beneath the water several times, the heron carried it to shore. There it dropped the phalarope on the ground, pecked it a number of times and again immersed it in the water. Finally, it tore the wings from the phalarope and rapidly swallowed the remainder of the carcass. Great Blue Herons are known to capture smaller birds occasionally, but no such predation by them upon phalaropes has come to my attention.—FRED MALLERY PACKARD, *University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.*

**A generally unrecognized habit of the Florida Burrowing Owl.**—Though having had much experience during the past seven years with *Speotyto cunicularia floridana* in the Kissimmee Prairie region of Florida, it was not until this past winter that the writer witnessed a habit of this bird of which he can find little mention in the literature. All observers of this interesting owl have been impressed with the undulating character of its flight, the low elevations at which it is usually performed and the relatively short distances covered.