

The bird could give the typical call of a young meadowlark and had all of the mannerisms of a normal individual.

The bird is now mounted at the University Museum in Lincoln, Nebr.—H. ELLIOTT McCLURE, *Ord, Nebraska*.

**Red-shouldered Hawk caught in mink trap.**—On November 24, 1941, I examined a live adult male specimen of a Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) that had been caught in a mink trap in Avon, Connecticut. The details of the incident were given to me by a local trapper. In the dark of early morning while he was 'working his trap line' along the bank of a small stream he found a hawk desperately trying to lift a mink trap, in which it was caught, off the ground. The bird had been caught directly above the base of the toes on the tarsus. The trap used was an Oneida Victor two-jaw spring trap, size 2, which was set in three inches of water, unbaited. Over the center trigger there was a piece of sod to aid in the concealment of the trap.

Since the bird was caught on the tarsus it might well have been pursuing (by wading) some form of aquatic life, possibly batrachians.<sup>1</sup> It seems unlikely that the bird was hovering over its prey when it was caught. The trap was entirely inconspicuous, even to men, when seen in the daylight. The bird was not exhausted but was vivacious and alert. This might lead to a supposition that it was caught in the early hours of morning and had not been in the trap all night. It was released later as it was practically unharmed.—DAVIS W. PRATT, *The Avon School, Avon, Connecticut*.

**Berberis bealei as a spring food of songbirds.**—The probable great value of *Berberis bealei* as an ornamental plant attractive to birds in the eastern United States was forcibly brought to my attention while walking through the Capitol grounds in Washington, D. C., on May 27, 1942. Passing within ten feet of a clump of this Chinese species, most of whose relatives in the western United States are known as hollygrapes, I was surprised to observe a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Hedymeles ludovicianus*), several Olive-backed Thrushes (*Hylocichla ustulata swainsoni*), and a Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) so intent upon securing the fleshy, blue, grape-like fruits that they did not flush upon my close approach. During the period from 1:30 to 2:00 p. m., at least five Robins, eight Olive-backed Thrushes, one Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*), one Rose-breasted Grosbeak and six House Sparrows (*Passer d. domesticus*) were seen avidly eating the fruits. Excepting the grosbeak, which chewed the fruits and discarded the skins, and the House Sparrows, which took bites, all species swallowed the berries whole.

When first seen, about 50% of the original crop of fruits was present. When again visited on May 29, only about 30% remained. Between 10:00 and 10:15 a. m. on the latter date, three adult and two fully-grown juvenile Robins and a Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) were seen taking *Berberis* fruits. One adult Robin carried two away, apparently to its nest. A female Black-poll Warbler (*Dendroica striata*) nibbled at a berry and a male Black-poll, a female (or immature male) Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), and a Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), flitted about in the spiny foliage. The grosbeak and Olive-backed Thrushes seen previously had evidently continued their northward migration as they were not observed during the second visit. On both occasions, many Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) were seen nearby but they did not appear to be attracted to the

<sup>1</sup> The bird may possibly have been bathing.—Ed.

fruits. On June 2, a friend reported all the berries eaten and a Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*) biting at one of the red pedicels.

Although the attractiveness of the *Berberis bealei* clump under observation was undoubtedly enhanced by an adjacent water spray, its value as a late spring food supply for migratory and resident songbirds was strikingly evident. These observations seem to indicate that the many related species of evergreen barberries that are normally grown in this country, both native and foreign, should receive greater attention in food and cover plantings for songbirds.

[*Berberis bealei* (Fort.) DC. is synonymous with *Berberis* (*Mahonia*) *japonica* of horticulture which, in turn, is not to be confused with *Berberis thunbergii* DC. known as *B. japonica* by some authorities.]—GEORGE A. PETRIDES, *National Park Service, Washington, D. C.*

**Fulvous Tree-duck in Louisiana.**—Louisiana is so famous as a wintering ground for waterfowl that the importance of her nesting ducks often is overlooked. The Mottled Duck is the principal breeding duck of the Louisiana coastal marshes, and the Wood Duck is produced in large numbers in her extensive, wooded swamps. The Blue-winged Teal is an occasional nester, but not in significant numbers, whereas the Mottled Ducks and Wood Ducks produced in the state represent a considerable increment to our continental waterfowl population.

The Fulvous Tree-duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor fulva*) proves to be another nesting species for the state, although its importance has not been recorded heretofore. Oberholser states in 'The Bird Life of Louisiana' that the bird is fairly common in southern Louisiana, but is of irregular and local occurrence in summer, autumn, winter and spring. He suggests that it possibly breeds in the state, although no definite nesting records had appeared at the time of publication of his book in 1938.

Recent studies show this tree-duck to be a very common summer resident in southwestern Louisiana. Its range includes the coastal marshes from Morgan City to Sabine Lake, and virtually the entire Louisiana rice belt including Acadia, Vermilion, Jefferson Davis, Calcasieu and Cameron parishes. The species may be found throughout this region in summer and early fall, although concentrations tend to be localized. Occurrences east of this range must be considered occasional, while the bird is abundant in the Texas rice belt to the west. Winter records for the state are infrequent.

Tree-ducks appear in Louisiana early in summer. By the middle of July small flocks can be seen here and there in the rice fields, but at this time of year the birds are secretive and widely dispersed. Rice farmers reported that the ducks nest during this season. Federal game management agents have verified these reports, finding many instances where rice farmers had picked up tree-duck eggs and hatched them under hens. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service investigated these reports further during the summer of 1939. Several nests were found in Acadia Parish south of Crowley on August 13, marking the first definite nesting record for the state.

Further study showed that the Fulvous Tree-duck nests almost entirely in rice fields. Nesting occurs late in the season, usually after the middle of July, probably because the young rice does not offer sufficient nesting cover before that time. Nests are built on low rice-field levees or along dikes of larger canals. Not infrequently floating nests are built in standing rice. Floating nests are well-con-