

SHELTER: Some forms lost a portion of their natural cover, but in most cases the problem was reversed, with ample or added winter roosts. The forest dwellers had a portion of their area destroyed, but in Europe dead trees suitable for Tits and Woodpeckers are not found. These birds used nest boxes put in various places. They immediately moved into destroyed towns and villages. The hedge-dwelling varieties suffered, as hedges were methodically destroyed because snipers and tanks could use these hedges for concealment.

A great many forms took advantage of partially destroyed buildings during the winter months. It was no uncommon sight to see several birds perching on the dangling electrical fixtures in a windowless house. Picture frames and mantles were also frequently used. The accumulated droppings gave ample evidence that these perches had been used for some time.

MIGRATION: While we were on the Rhine in March, 1945, several flocks of migrating waterfowl were fired upon by both enemy and Allied anti-aircraft batteries. On several patrols at that time, mortar fire was called down upon suspicious noise that later proved to be migrating birds, as referred to in an earlier paragraph. In general, shell fire had little effect upon bird life. However, in the fall and early winter the effect was in reverse. Varieties that should have left remained in considerable numbers. Goldfinches (*Carduelis c. carduelis*) and Chaffinches (*Fringilla c. coelebs*) were present all winter in larger numbers than usual. I was not familiar with the migration in this area and had to take the word of the local inhabitants for this, but it seems reasonable, due to the extra amount of food that was exposed from the snow by the shells.

BREEDING: Adult birds remained on their nests and with their broods even when high-velocity shells were tearing their nesting trees apart. At Polsum, Westphalia, Germany, I noted three nests of some variety of *Corvus* in trees along both sides of a highway. PZVI tanks were firing up the highway, scoring tree bursts all along. One nest was cut out of its tree during the fighting. After the shooting was over I noted that the adult bird of this nest was still in the immediate vicinity and the other two brooding birds were more interested in the men below than in the burning building near by. This was the only case where nestling birds were noted in shell fire.

SUMMARY

This study is general and not on specific forms or areas. Data indicate that bird life is almost immune to blast and shrapnel. The relative small size reduces the chances of a shrapnel hit, but further study could be carried on as to the lack of blast effect. Shell fire aided bird life in securing food, especially during the winter months while snow covered the ground. In general the bird life benefited by concentrated artillery fire.—ROBERT R. TALMADGE, *Eureka, California*.

An unorthodox nest of the Rose-throated Becard.—While observing birds on the outskirts of Linares, Nuevo León, México, on June 13, 1946, the writers were attracted by the sharp call note of a nestling bird. Investigating further for the source of the note they were led to a bulky, nondescript nest in a small orange tree. The nest was approximately four feet from the ground with one end against the trunk of the tree and the bulk of the nest extending out along a main horizontal branch. A mass of dead leaves, grasses and even a few strands of small hemp rope constituted the nest, a structure measuring approximately two feet horizontally across the front, one foot high, and one foot from front to rear. The entrance was a hole near the center of the long side of the nest and was littered with droppings. Below on the leaves and ground other droppings were noticed.

The nestling, whose calls had attracted the writer's attention was found sitting on top of the nest near the trunk of the tree. Its feathers were just emerging from their sheaths. Within the nest were two more nestlings of the same species in the same stage of development.

Retiring to a point about 100 feet from the nest the writers watched an adult female Rose-throated Becard (*Platypsaris aglaiae*) come and feed the young, while the male becard moved about in a tree overhead, uttering its peculiar piercing cry from time to time. The male was not seen feeding the nestlings. One item of food being fed the young was a green insect, appearing to be some kind of orthopteron.

The day after the original discovery of the nest, the writers returned to the nest site and again observed the female parent feeding the young. One of the nestlings was found on the ground in a much weakened condition, and was presumably the one which had been perched on top of the nest the day before. It had been attacked by ants while still alive, and some of its flesh had been eaten in a small area around the base of the tail. This nestling was preserved in formaldehyde as a specimen. The two young within the nest were apparently in good condition and were left undisturbed.

The unusual location of the nest led the writers to consider the possibilities—first, of its having fallen from a branch of the large pecan tree above; and secondly, of its having been picked up by someone and placed in the orange tree. The nest location, however, was perfectly screened from above by stout branches, and the nest was fastened directly to the horizontal branch and crotch on which it was placed.

Because of the fact that the Rose-throated Becard has been generally noted to nest in a pendent structure the above-mentioned nest was considered to be worthy of record. Other nests of this species were seen by the writers in this general area and they were more typical, each hanging from the end of a slender limb a considerable distance from the ground. In conversations with other observers and by a perusal of the literature the authors have been unable to find that such a radical departure from the usual nesting habit has been previously noted.—STEPHEN W. EATON AND ERNEST P. EDWARDS, *Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.*

First winter observance of the Yellow-breasted Chat in South Carolina.—As has doubtless been the case with other localities during the unprecedented warmth of the fall and winter of 1946-1947, coastal South Carolina has exhibited some remarkable instances of delayed migration, or unusual wintering of avian species. One of the most outstanding of these was the observance, on January 11, 1947, of the Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria v. virens*) in Clarendon County, S. C., about 70 miles from Charleston. This appears to be the first winter record of this bird in the state and one of the very few from the entire southeast.

Accompanied by his wife, Mr. E. B. Chamberlain of the Charleston Museum, and three young and enthusiastic bird students, the writer was investigating parts of the Santee Wildlife Refuge (U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service) near one of the huge lakes created by the hydroelectric development known as Santee-Cooper. In an open, bushy area close to the side of one of the lakes, a bird flushed from low cover, and crossed our path. The vivid greenish cast of the upper plumage, the flash of white underneath and a fleeting glimpse of a white eye-ring and stripe, all immediately suggested a chat, but since this was all but unbelievable at this time of year, search was at once made to find the bird again. This was done without trouble, and in the next five minutes excellent views were obtained at close range, in the complete open, from various angles. The identification was as certain as though the bird had been