

Wood Ducks versus squirrels.—Much is written regarding the interrelations between competitive species, but field observations of the actual contacts between individuals of these species are rare. I live in a wooded tract on the Mississippi bank, five miles north of Minneapolis. For the past five years one or two pairs of Wood Ducks have nested in hollow basswoods within easy observing distance of our windows. Here we have had excellent opportunities to watch the activities of the ducks around the nest cavities during the early part of the nesting season, before the leaves have fully grown. On March 20, 1946, while eating breakfast, I noticed a female Wood Duck alight in the old nesting tree, and a moment later the male settled in a near-by tree. They were obviously exploring for a possible nest site. A red squirrel in the tree near the female seemed irritated by their presence and immediately ran to the limb on which she was perched and dashed out toward her with all the confidence in the world. I had no doubt that the duck would fly, but to my surprise it did not; in fact, it sat calmly awaiting the onrushing squirrel, whose attack proved to be largely bluff. The squirrel, nonplused by her refusal to budge, stopped short a few feet away and, backing up, rushed at the duck a second and a third time with no better success. Then the squirrel changed its tactics, and slipping around underneath the three-inch limb, it attempted to attack the duck from beneath. Each time the squirrel showed its head around the limb, however, it was met by a determined peck from the duck and in a few moments the squirrel gave up, leaving the Wood Duck complete master of the situation. The squirrel then went directly to the tree in which the male was perched on a ten-inch horizontal limb. Here it attempted to dislodge the male with exactly the same type of attack, but met the same resistance and retired without in the least disturbing the ducks. Neither did the red squirrel's presence deter them from nesting, for a few days later the duck began laying in the old nest cavity and, perhaps aided by a second female, deposited twenty-five eggs of which nineteen appeared to hatch successfully.—W. J. BRECKENRIDGE, *Minnesota Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota.*

Rôle of male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in the care of the young.—Observations made at the nest site of a pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (*Sphyrapicus varius*) revealed some unusual types of behavior as well as a daylight attempt at predation by a weasel. Although, from one viewpoint, the record appears to give data on two different organisms, the resulting behavior of each in the situation described will be of interest to many. Therefore, it seems wise to report the story in detail.

The loud noise of the young of this bird often, as in this case, discloses the location of the nest hole. This one was situated in a dead sugar maple standing in an old sap orchard in central New York State. The nest hole was about thirty feet above the ground. There on June 24, 1945, when the study began, the young birds were estimated to be about half-grown. Detailed notes of the behavior of the adults were made on that date for one and one-half hours in the middle of the day and again on June 26 and 27, from 7:00 P. M. on the 26th, continuously through the night until 7:00 A. M. June 27. The most interesting findings of this study might be classified in three parts as follows: (1) Feeding behavior; (2) adult reactions and duties of the birds; (3) weasel predation.

FEEDING BEHAVIOR

During a ninety-two-minute period on June 24 the male fed seventeen times, never spending more than two minutes in the nest hole. During the same period the female fed eleven times, spending shorter periods at the nest than the male. Of the ninety-two minutes, the male spent fifteen inside the nest hole, the female eight and one-half minutes.