

opening in the wall used by the Ravens as their entrance, and we were indeed surprised to find that an approach to the nest had been constructed by laying sticks of sage-brush across the two parallel timbers uniformly bridging the space between, and forming a walk-like approach from the opening in the wall back to the nest. One might question whether this was accidental, but there was not the slightest appearance of careless dropping of nest material en route during the period of construction. We believe that any observer would have concluded that this walk-way was constructed with deliberate intent. Quite possibly the accidental dropping and lodging of a few sticks may have given these crafty birds a hint which they were keen enough to follow up.

In all, we have made this observation of a pair of Ravens nesting in an old cabin on five different occasions.—R. T. CONGDON, M. D., *Wenatchee, Washington*.

Green Heron captures flying dragonflies.—On July 31, 1946, while watching birds in Harrison Park, Owen Sound, Ontario, I saw a Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*) capture two small, blue dragonflies while the insects were in flight. The heron was perched on a branch of a sunken log, about eighteen inches above the surface of the water, with its neck folded. Suddenly it darted out its head to capture one of a group of dragonflies which were flying about over the water. After eating the insect, the bird opened and closed its beak slowly several times, then 'froze' until another dragonfly came within reach, when the performance was repeated. A. C. Bent (1926) describes a case of the Great White Heron (*Ardea occidentalis*) capturing moths hovering about flowers, and calls the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) "an expert flycatcher," but I have been unable to find any other case of the Green Heron catching flying insects.—FRED WARBURTON, 444 Second Ave. East, Owen Sound, Ontario.

Triangle spike rush as waterfowl food.¹—During field investigations in connection with the waterfowl studies of the Maine Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, several observations were made of ducks feeding on triangle spike rush (*Eleocharis robbinsii*). Although this plant is distributed over much of the eastern United States, there seems to be no specific record in the literature of its use as waterfowl food.

Frequent observations at the Davis-Holbrook Marshes in East Eddington and Holden, in central Maine, revealed that the majority of the ducks seen were flushed from areas in which triangle spike rush was growing. Seventy-nine separate observations totaling 621 ducks, chiefly Black Ducks (*Anas rubripes*), but including a few Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) and Ring-neck Ducks (*Aythya collaris*), were recorded during August, September, and October, 1946. Thirty-eight of these observations (385 ducks) were of birds among beds of triangle spike rush. At a typical observation recorded at 6:25 A. M. on August 16, thirty-one Black Ducks and two Wood Ducks were flushed from the emergent vegetation consisting of pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*), duck potato (*Sagittaria latifolia*), horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*), and triangle spike rush (*Eleocharis robbinsii*). The site was littered with the freshly uprooted plants of spike rush from which the tubers (thickened portions of subterranean stems) and the more fleshy parts of the root had been stripped, leaving only the fibrous, tougher sections of the roots.

During October, 1946, four Black Duck stomachs were collected at the Davis-Holbrook area. Stomach analyses were based upon dry material. Food items found

¹ Contributions from the Maine Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Orono, Maine; Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game, University of Maine, Wildlife Management Institute, and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, cooperating.

were recorded according to the percentage-by-bulk method as practiced by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Assistance in the identification of food items was given by staff members of the botany and zoology departments at the University of Maine.

Tubers and fibers of triangle spike rush were found in each stomach, although only three seeds of this plant were recorded. Each of the four stomachs was nearly full of food and the major items of these, expressed as percentages, are as follows: triangle spike rush (*Eleocharis robbinsii*) 40.4; water bulrush (*Scirpus subterminalis*) 25.6; three square bulrush (*Scirpus torreyi*) 11.9; pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*) 6.7; yellow water lily (*Nuphar variegatum*) 3.1; insects and mollusks 7.8. Based upon both stomach analyses and field observations, the tubers are the portions of this plant that are most frequently taken by ducks.

It would be interesting to determine whether parts of this plant are taken at seasons other than late summer and autumn. Since triangle spike rush does not seem to exhibit undesirable dominance tendencies, and does produce tubers, its propagation might be desirable where management plans call for the encouragement of waterfowl food plants.—MALCOLM W. COULTER, *Maine Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Orono, Maine.*

Subspecific identities of some winter and transient birds from Virginia.

—Examination of the bird collection of the Virginia Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit revealed several forms not previously reported for Virginia as well as others new to the respective collecting localities. Most of the specimens listed were collected by C. E. Addy, C. O. Handley, Sr., or C. O. Handley, Jr., and except where otherwise indicated, the specimens are contained in the collections of the Virginia Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at Blacksburg, Virginia. Identifications were verified in all instances either by Dr. John W. Aldrich or Allen J. Duvall, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C.

Parus atricapillus praticus (Oberholser).—Specimens from Alleghany Mountain (Highland Co.), Dec. 31, 1943, and Crabbottom (Highland Co.), June 9, 1938, are probably representative of local breeding populations, while specimens from Blacksburg (Montgomery Co.), Nov. 29, 1941, and Deerfield (Augusta Co.), Sept. 21, 1939, are transients. This subspecies has been infrequently recorded in Virginia away from its breeding grounds. All these specimens are typical of *praticus* which has not been recognized by the A. O. U. Committee on Nomenclature. *P. a. atricapillus* Linnaeus, has been recorded as a winter visitor in northern Virginia.

Troglodytes troglodytes pullus (Burleigh).—A transient specimen from Ironto (Montgomery Co.), Mar. 24, 1939, is new for the county.

Turdus migratorius nigrideus Aldrich and Nutt.—Blacksburg (Montgomery Co.), Feb. 27, 1939; a second record for the state. This specimen is a partial albino and has the breast white, with only a few traces of red. The back is dark, however, as in typical *nigrideus*.

Hylocichla guttata faxoni Bangs and Penard.—Specimens from Price's Fork (Montgomery Co.), Dec. 20, 1938, and Blacksburg (Montgomery Co.), Oct. 15, 1946, are typical *faxoni*, while a specimen from Haysi (Dickenson Co.), Feb. 20, 1940, is as pale as the western race *auduboni*, though not approaching it in size. Another specimen from Blacksburg, Oct. 22, 1938, is dark and like specimens from Newfoundland.

Hylocichla fuscescens fuliginosa Howe.—A specimen from Laurel Fork (Highland Co.), Sept. 22, 1943, is the first of this race to be recorded for Virginia. A specimen from Blacksburg (Montgomery Co.), Sept. 14, 1938, is typical *fuscescens*.