

ment may be lacking, a simpler method may be desired. An estimate of the proportion of time spent on the nest may be obtained merely by observing the nest at random times and determining the proportion of times the bird is on the nest. By this method it is possible to visit a number of nests serially and record presence or absence of the incubating bird. Some precautions are necessary. The visits obviously must not alarm the bird. Also, as in all such studies, the visits must be made at various times of the day if a detailed study is being made. Obviously the duration of the attentive periods can not be obtained by this method.

A test of this method is possible with some data on Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*) obtained at the Montana State University Biological Station (Davis, Auk, 71: 167, 1954). Nests were actually observed for 1159 minutes and the female was incubating 77 per cent of this time. Long after the data were collected "pretend" visits were made to the nest at 15 minute intervals. The procedure was to go through the original notes which recorded consecutive observations and note whether the bird was on or off the nest on the hour and at 15, 30, and 45 minutes after the hour. These data give a random sample of the observations. A total of 87 "visits" were made, and the female was present on 73.2 per cent of them. Since two times the standard error is 9.6 per cent, the value (73.2 per cent) is not significantly different from the actual 77 per cent. Furthermore it should be remembered that the 77 per cent is also an estimate (since only a sample of incubation observations was made) and so there is some variance there.

Dr. S. C. Kendeigh generously permitted analysis of the original records of incubation for three other species of birds. The detailed data for one female of each is as follows:

Species	Actual time (in minutes)		Per cent of time on nest	Pretend visits. Number of times female was		Per cent of time on nest
	On nest	Off nest		On nest	Off nest	
Bluebird (<i>Sialia sialis</i>)	5883	5558	51.4	377	353	51.6
Catbird (<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>)	4780	2446	65.9	299	155	65.9
House Wren (<i>Troglodytes aëdon</i>)	7860	5345	59.4	521	327	61.4

The "pretend" visits were made by recording at 15 minute intervals whether the bird was on or off the nest. The differences in percentages by the two methods are obviously not significant.

This simple method should be useful to obtain data on a large scale without undue expenditure of time.—DAVID E. DAVIS, *The Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, Baltimore 5, Maryland.*

Black-crowned Night Herons Flying with Retracted Feet.—The observation recorded by Lawrence H. Walkinshaw (Auk, 70: 204, 1953) in regard to the Sandhill Crane flying with retracted legs during cold weather has prompted me to offer an observation.

To the rear of the bird house at The National Zoological Park, Washington, D. C., there exists a nesting colony of the Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) consisting of approximately one hundred nesting pairs. When the winters are open many of the herons remain in the vicinity of their nesting site and fish by night in nearby Rock Creek and the Potomac River.

I have observed these nocturnal birds returning singly in the early morning to their roosting area. At 7:45 on a February morning in 1952 when the temperature was twenty-five degrees F., I observed two herons flying with retracted legs toward the trees in which they spend the day.—MALCOLM DAVIS, *The National Zoological Park, Washington, D. C.*

Notes on Western Grebe in British Columbia.—In 1941, information on the Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) in British Columbia was published by J. A. Munro (Occ. Papers B. C. Prov. Mus. No. 3). Some recent observations of migration and records of breeding are reported here.

The only records of autumn migration given by Munro (*op. cit.*) are for the Okanagan Valley and points near or on coastal waters. Johnstone (Occ. Papers B. C. Prov. Mus. No. 7, 1949) gives a number of records of records of autumn migration of Western Grebes in the southern Kootenay area. Six records between October 18 and November 12 of various years involve seven birds or fewer, whereas on October 13, 1948, he recorded 51 Western Grebes on Crow's Nest Lake.

During early October, 1951, I counted considerable numbers of Western Grebes at various points in the Kootenay region. Some of the records follow: Moyie Lake, October 2, 210; Spillimacheen, October 3, 250; Golden, October 4, 300; Kinbasket Lake, October 6, 1400; and Columbia River near Boat Encampment, October 6, 21. At the point where the latter observation was made, the Columbia River is a rough and rapid stream flowing through a narrow rocky channel, a habitat hitherto considered most unattractive to aquatic birds. All the points mentioned are adjacent to the western slope of the Rocky Mountains and presumably are the first resting points encountered by Western Grebes on their westward movement from the prairies. It seems apparent from a comparison of the above records with those given by Johnstone (1949) that the Western Grebe migration is at its peak in early October.

Only one nesting colony, that at Williams Lake in the Cariboo region, has previously been recorded in British Columbia (Munro, 1941). An isolated breeding record mentions downy young found at Swan Lake, in the Okanagan Valley, in 1933 (J. A. Munro, *Condor*, 37: 178, 1935).

On June 7, 1950, I visited Swan Lake with J. A. Munro. Two groups of Western Grebe nests were found in round-stem bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*) marsh on the east side of the lake. Seventeen nests were located: of these, five nests contained two eggs, ten contained three eggs, and two contained four eggs. There were approximately 85 adult Western Grebes on the lake at this time.

On June 7, 1951, we again visited Swan Lake but did not search the marsh area for Western Grebe nests. One nest and one newly hatched young were seen during the course of a circuit of the lake. Approximately 75 adult Western Grebes were observed.—DAVID A. MUNRO, *Canadian Wildlife Service, 150 Wellington St., Ottawa, Canada.*

Prairie Falcon "Playing."—On August 2, 1951, while conducting a waterfowl survey of rangeland sloughs in the Nicola area some 40 miles south of Kamloops, British Columbia, my attention was drawn by the behavior of a Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*). The bird was first noted soaring upward against a moderate wind; several times it rose to a height of about 70 feet and then swooped down to within four or five feet of the ground. After a moment it became apparent that the falcon held an object in its talons; soon the bird dropped to the ground with the object, and I approached it in order to identify its prey. As I drew close to the falcon it took wing, but since I was carefully marking the object it had previously