

moribund as at first suspected. With this maneuver, the bird flew and lighted on the snake pecking it ferociously several times, and then it flew to the myrtle. Almost immediately, it approached again and alighted on the snake near the neck region which it pecked repeatedly. The snake made writhing motions but did not attempt to move away. The bird then began making its back and forth path before the snake, but now running in and pecking the snake's head, then jumping back about a foot. At no time did the snake strike at its opponent. It always moved towards the bird, but it seemed as though it were trying to pass rather than to attack. The bird repeated its vicious head attacks for about 12 minutes and then flew into the pine tree.

The snake, apparently none the worse for its experience, moved swiftly away. I attempted to collect it, but was hindered by the most unusual aggressiveness of the Mockingbird. This individual flew at my head several times, while the snake disappeared into a clump of saw palmetto (*Serenia repens*).

The fight from the time observations began, lasted 33 minutes, and it is quite possible that it would have continued for a considerable length of time. Courtship posturing occurs in early February, but breeding somewhat later. No nest was found, and the bird was not collected.—THOMAS W. HICKS, *University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida*.

**Apparent Copulation of Baldpate in Central Massachusetts.**—On March 13, 1954, we observed a pair of Baldpate, *Mareca americana*, in apparent copulation on North Hadley Pond, North Hadley, Massachusetts. As we approached the pond four Baldpate flew off. We remained quiet as the birds circled overhead several times. One pair landed in open water about 300 yards from us, giving us an excellent view with 7 × 50 binoculars and a 20× spotting 'scope. While we watched, the male bird swam up behind the female, pumping his head and neck up and down in a manner similar to the Gadwall's action described by Wetmore (Auk, 1920, 37: 241). He quickly mounted her, forcing her entire body and head under water. Her head appeared above the surface two or three times during the brief period in which we assume copulation took place. This observation differs from the unusual action described by Hambleton (Auk, 1949, 66: 198) in that the male did not grab the female's tail in his bill and the female was completely submerged for two or three short intervals during the activity. Further, the date of our observation is a full two months before the May date on which Hambleton's observation was made in Toronto.

In view of the statements in Kortright (The Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America, 1942, p. 187), Bent (U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 126: 90), and several of the better-known "state" works to the effect that Baldpates arrive unmated on their breeding grounds, this observation of apparent copulation in Massachusetts is of interest. Our observation might be interpreted in one or more of five ways: (1) that it was merely a behavioral pattern associated with the courtship performance but not culminating in actual copulation; (2) that at least some Baldpate are paired on arriving at the nesting site; (3) that the Baldpate copulates over a long period of time and may be more promiscuous than other anatids; (4) that this pair may be preparing to nest nearby; (5) that it was an abnormal reflex set off by our disturbing influence. It is of course apparent that all five of these possibilities are in the nature of very tentative hypotheses.—I. M. BARTLETT (*Dept. of Zoology*) and GERRY ARWELL (*Dept. of Wildlife Management, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts*).