

Breeding of the American Merganser in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.—Recent summer observations of the American Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) in the vicinity of Bridgewater, Rockingham County, Virginia, have been noted with sufficient frequency to warrant comment.

On May 30, 1953, I saw a female American Merganser with a brood of six half-grown young on Dry River, a rocky, moderately swift stream with occasional deep pools. The location was about a mile and three-quarters above the town of Bridgewater, near the village of Montezuma. The female and the entire brood swam rapidly down stream at my approach. Later on the same day a female, probably the same one, and an adult male were seen in flight over the river, one of the birds giving the rough, croaking quack typical of the species. The next day, May 31, adults and young were also observed in the same place by Mr. Max M. Carpenter.

I saw mergansers twice more in the summer of 1953. An adult female or young bird, was noted on Dry River about a half-mile above the first location on June 20. On July 18, a similar individual was seen on North River, half a mile above Bridgewater and about a mile and a half, air line, from the point of the first observation.

In conversation with Mr. A. S. Huffman of Bridgewater, a sportsman of long experience and with a good knowledge of waterfowl, I learned that in late June of 1947 he saw a female American Merganser with a brood of young on North River about two and one-half miles upstream from Bridgewater. I considered this to be a reliable record.

On July 6, 1954, I encountered a female American Merganser with a single downy duckling, certainly not over a few days out of the egg, on Dry River at Montezuma. The birds swam within fifteen feet of me.

Apparently there are no other published records of broods of the American Merganser in Virginia. Bent gives the nesting range of the species as "South formerly, and perhaps casually now, to the mountain regions of western Massachusetts, central Pennsylvania and in Ohio." (Bent, A. C., "Life Histories of North American Wild Fowl," Bull. U. S. N. M. No. 126: p. 12, 1923.) However, a nest and five young are reported from Chowan County, North Carolina. (Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley, "Birds of North Carolina," Raleigh, 1942, p. 84.)

The location at which the Virginia observations were made is in the center of the Shenandoah Valley. A bench mark of the U. S. Geodetic Survey, with an elevation given as 1220 feet above sea level, is located where Virginia Rt. 257 crosses Dry River at Montezuma.—HARRY G. M. JOPSON, *Department of Biology, Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Virginia.*

Red-headed Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) Feeding on Carolina Locusts.—During the last two weeks of August, 1954, I had an opportunity of observing the habits of Red-headed Woodpeckers in the vicinity of a beach on Lake Erie in the southwest corner of Dunn Township, Haldimand County, Ontario. A male bird was noticed first on a sunny afternoon. It was perched on a pole about twenty feet tall and would fly rapidly from this perch to snatch up insects passing over the beach and then swing back to its perch and devour its prey after snapping off the wings. The most conspicuous insects taken were adults of the Carolina locust (*Dissosteira carolina*). It was their habit on warm days to frequent the sandy beach and to make flights of a few yards from one spot to another in this area. The locusts would also hover in the air with rapidly beating wings or dance up and down in flight above a particular spot. This activity is considered to be involved in the courtship of the locusts (W. S. Blatchley, 1920, Orthoptera of north-eastern America. Nature Publ. Co., Indianapolis). During this hovering flight the locusts were easily snapped up by the foraging woodpecker.