

Openings are normally covered with a luxuriant growth of weeds and various other annuals, many of which reach a height of seven to eight feet.

The Clay-colored Robin was most frequently seen in or near a section of ebony trees where there was dense undergrowth of small shrubs and large weeds. It was in a rather low-lying area near a shallow stream bed, in a habitat almost identical to ones in which I have frequently seen the bird in Mexico.

It apparently remained in the park for at least three weeks, being last reported by Mrs. McConnell about 8 June. During this time it was observed by a number of visiting ornithologists and was photographed by P. B. Myers of McAllen, Texas. A kodachrome slide of the bird provided by Mr. Myers has been sent to Dr. George H. Lowery and is now on file at the Louisiana State University Museum.

The only previous record of the Clay-colored Robin in Texas appears to be a sight record published by L. Irby Davis in "Bird Lore," vol. 42 (3), May-June Supplement, 1940, although there has been at least one unconfirmed and unpublished report of the bird in the same area within the last few years.—PAULINE JAMES, Associate Professor of Biology, Pan American College, Edinburg, Texas.

**Canada Geese Nesting on a Beaver Lodge.**—The benefit of a beaver (*Castor canadensis*) pond for nesting and migrating waterfowl has been reported in the literature and is generally accepted by most investigators. Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethica*) lodges have been reported by Williams and Nelson (Auk, 60: 341-345, 1943) as being influential ecological factors and add considerably to the nesting value for Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) of certain emergent environments, notably cattail (*Typha latifolia*) and alkali bulrush (*Scirpus* spp.). Beaver lodges may have a similar influence on the nesting value of certain areas for Canada geese.

On 23 April 1960 the author observed an unusual commensal interaction between a beaver colony and a pair of Canada Geese. A nest containing three eggs was observed on top of an active beaver lodge in the Conneaut marsh located in Crawford County, Pennsylvania.

On 28 May 1960 it was observed that the clutch was successful, and that the beavers had not interfered with incubation. The beaver colony and the Canada Geese shared the same lodge with no serious consequences resulting to either.—FRED J. BRENNER, Department of Zoology and Entomology, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania.

**Great Black-backed Gulls Killing Dovekies.**—On 16 November 1959 there was a Dovekie "wreck" on Cape Cod, which centered at Bodfish Park, East Sandwich, at the head of Cape Cod Bay. During the second day of a northeast gale observers there watched for two and a half hours as an estimated thousand Dovekies (*Plautus alle alle*) were driven ashore by a 50-mile-an-hour wind, which was directly onshore. The dramatic scene was described to me by the marine biologist, Colonel E.S. Clark, with whose permission I am recording the following details.

Flocks averaging about 25 Dovekies each were blown in, one after another, and, attempting to land on the six-foot waves crashing on the shore, were hurled to the beach. Here, on the sand or in small pools, they were pounced upon by the Great Black-backed Gulls (*Larus marinus*) hovering over the area. Picked up in a gull's bill, the Dovekie was carried high over the parking area and dropped directly on the black-top surface. The gull followed it down, tore it apart, and swallowed the pieces. If the Dovekie was able to break its fall by spread wings, the gull picked

it up and dropped it a second time, which insured its death. There were often 20 Dovekies struggling at the water's edge at one time, with the gulls fighting to get at them. On about 10 occasions a gull was seen actually catching a Dovekie on the wing, "picking it out of the air." Each time it was caught by the back of the neck and brought down to the ground, shaken hard until it became limp, and then eaten. Of the thousand or more Dovekies blown ashore here, Dr. Clark believes that few if any survived, "they were no doubt eaten at once as gulls were in the air everywhere."

No specific instance of this species catching Dovekies has been found in literature or through correspondence. The dropping of clams and other molluscs on hard surfaces by various species of gulls is well known. But Tinbergen ("The Herring Gull's World," Collins, 1953, p. 31) says: "I know of only one instance in which a gull was seen dropping something soft" (a Great Black-backed Gull dropping a rat).

The general features of this Dovekie wreck in eastern Massachusetts were described by Snyder, 1960, *Mass. Audubon*, 44 (3): 117-121.—DOROTHY E. SNYDER, *Curator of Natural History, Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.*

**Starlings Fed by Purple Martins.**—Observations made of a martin house on 4 July 1959, at Otsego, Michigan, revealed an incidence of foster parental care of a brood of Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) by a pair of Purple Martins (*Progne subis*). Such behavior was not recorded in the studies of the Purple Martin by either Bent (1942, *U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull.* No. 179: 489-509) or Nice (1952, *Am. Midland Nat.*, 47: 606-665).

Early in the afternoon a considerable commotion from within the compartment adjacent to the Starlings' attracted my attention, and close scrutiny with binoculars disclosed a female martin struggling with some unidentifiable object. Some time later, as the male martin approached the entrance of the compartment with food, it was greeted by the heads of two young Starlings, and a short time later the number had increased to three. About midafternoon a fourth Starling, apparently the smallest of the brood, was observed walking across the balcony from its compartment and entering the martins' compartment.

The male martin made at least 40 trips during the remaining part of the afternoon and readily presented the food it had collected to the young Starlings, making no attempt to enter the compartment other than to pick up fecal material dropped near the entrance. The female martin made less than half as many trips as the male and frequently attempted to force its way into the compartment but was usually unsuccessful as the Starlings blocked the entrance and met the bird's advances with open mouths. Once the female had gained entrance, it had great difficulty pushing its way back out past the young birds.

The feeding of the Starling brood was continued the following day. As it was necessary to leave the area and thus discontinue further observations, one of the young Starlings was collected and is now held by the Department of Zoology, Michigan State University.—WILLET T. VAN VELZEN, *Department of Entomology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.*

**Foot-Quivering by Foraging Hermit Thrushes.**—In his discussion of "hostile" behavior by Hylocichlid thrushes (*Auk*, 73: 313-353, 1956), Dilger interprets the foot-quivering that is done by some of these birds as a display indicating a very low general motivation of the attack and escape drives in balance (p. 331) and states (p. 332) that he has never seen it done by a foraging bird.