

## GENERAL NOTES

**Wood Ducks nesting in chimneys.**—With the continuing decline of suitable tree cavities, Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) sometimes try to nest in house chimneys. While chimneys are probably often death traps for cavity-seeking Wood Ducks, I observed one successful nesting in a chimney near Columbus, Ohio, and the literature contains reports suggesting other such nestings.

On 12 June 1957 Alma Raduege of suburban Columbus, Ohio, saw a brood of Wood Duck ducklings on the roof of her house and watched through a window as the 11 ducklings jumped from the roof to the ground and were led away by the mother duck. I visited the Raduege home on 15 June and found one dead duckling still in the nest. The opening in the chimney was about 8 inches square, and its sides were quite rough with mortar squeezed out between the bricks. The chimney was closed 5.5 feet from its top, and the Wood Duck nest laid on the bottom of the chimney. Success of this nesting may have depended upon the fact that the chimney was closed relatively near its top.

Sutton (Ann. Carnegie Mus., 18, 1928, see p. 71) tells of a female Wood Duck entering a chimney repeatedly during the week of 14 May 1925, indicating that the female was not lost in this second chimney. Also Mayfield (Audobon Field Notes, 2: 208, 1948) reports T. E. Musselman finding a Wood Duck nest near Quincy, Illinois, 8 feet from the top of a cottage chimney. The presence of a nest and assumed clutch of eggs indicated that the female was successful at entering and leaving this third chimney.

There seems to be abundant evidence that Wood Ducks are sometimes unable to escape from chimneys after entering them to explore their suitability, and one such case came to my attention during the spring of 1949. The C. R. Grabill family in Westerville, Ohio, heard a noise coming from the inside of the chimney in the kitchen of their home, and upon removing the stovepipe at the bottom of the chimney a female Wood Duck flew from the chimney into the kitchen. The bird obviously had been unable to escape from the chimney the way it came in.

Many Wood Ducks doubtless die in chimneys instead of being rescued. Pettingill (Auk, 52, 303, 1935) reports Witmer Stone finding a dead Wood Duck in a chimney in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Leopold (Condor, 53: 212, 1951) records finding a dead Wood Duck in a fireplace chimney in Burlington, Iowa; Hunt (My experiences during 38 years of breeding and rearing game birds and wild waterfowl at the Mason State Game Farm, Lansing, Michigan Dept. Conserv., 1956, p. 11) reports dead Wood Ducks to be such a problem in some parts of Michigan that many chimneys were screened; Milton B. Trautman (pers. comm.) advised me that he received many reports of dead Wood Ducks found in chimneys at Put-in-Bay, Ohio.

Wood Ducks sometimes explore chimneys without entering them and thus presumably recognize their unsuitability without an internal inspection. On 25 April 1951 I saw a pair of Wood Ducks on top of a chimney in Westerville, Ohio, but the pair flew away without the female entering it. Leopold (ibid.) also reports seeing a pair sitting on top of a chimney in Burlington, Iowa, without the female entering.

Only the female Wood Duck normally enters cavities when exploring for nesting sites, and the loss of female Wood Ducks in chimneys may be an important factor in limiting reproduction in this species.—PAUL A. STEWART, *Entomology Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Oxford, North Carolina 27565*. Accepted 16 Jan. 70.