

Nesting of the Pine Siskin at Denver, Colo.

"Nests in the far north, preferably among the conifers" is the convenient phrase with which most of the winter visitants are disposed of by the "book men," especially when they must say a word or two regarding every species in "the book." But this disposal must not be taken too seriously here in Colorado.

We have a passable migration in altitude which answers all purposes for many birds, if they are not over particular and have no ambition to make a few daily "century runs," and the Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*) at times seems to be disposed to accept this kind of a migration. I believe they nest quite generally over most of the western portion of the state, through the mountain country and the territory adjacent to the east of the mountains, though perhaps not with any regularity as to localities or sites, the birds being erratic and more or less dependent upon the severity of the winter.

The winter of 1898-99 was a severe one, continuing far into March. The Pine Siskin came from the north in great waves and no doubt the late spring had the effect of holding many of them here during the nesting season. The winter just past has been mild and open and the siskin has been almost absent.

I had noticed that while here in winter they were not a very shy bird, and that I could get among them without alarming them to any extent, but was not prepared to see them carry this trait so far as to bring their nest right to the house. One nest was built in a small lilac bush by the front gate and not three feet from the public walk where people were constantly passing. Another was under construction in a mass of dead vine on the back fence, which I did not notice until I tore down the vine to make way for a new growth, while a third was built in

a lilac bush in a neighbor's front yard, but I did not learn of this until the young were hatched. Is it not probable, therefore, that they colonize in their nesting as they do in their flight and migration?

As to the nest I did not collect, it was examined daily by from five to eight children (not all mine) from the time the first straw was placed until completed. So much familiarity would have discouraged a dove or even a tame canary. The male bird was much in evidence during the construction of the nest and up to the time of finding the first egg, but from that time I never saw him and I was on the lookout the greater part of five days. Was this due to "the cat" or was it another siskin habit worthy of record.

The nest was complete in all its detail one week before the first egg was announced by the children on May 13, the others following at regular intervals of a day each and I took the set of three on May 17. Regarding the eggs, they come up to the requirements of the book description, to a nicety; viz: being of a "pale greenish-blue color" and marked "chiefly around the larger end" with reddish brown. I would call the markings blotches, and there are a few over the whole egg, together with a few black marks. The nest is well-proportioned, strong, cup-shaped and perhaps large for the size of the bird. It is composed first of flat grass blades, weed fiber and some round stems. Between this and the lining is the weaving of very fine dry grass which gives it shape and strength. The lining is of horse hair and combings of human hair.

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