

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Protracted Incubation Behavior of a Female American Goldfinch.—Near the University Arboretum in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on July 12, 1949, I found the basal portion of a nest of the American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*). When the nest was completed I do not know, but the first egg was laid on July 25; the last (fifth) egg was laid on July 29. The female was still incubating on August 19, but the nest had been abandoned by my next visit on August 25. The five eggs showed no visible sign of development. Walkinshaw (Jack-Pine Warbler, 16 (4), 1938:11) found that incubation by the American Goldfinch began "at nests of five eggs about the day the third egg was laid." Inasmuch as I did not determine when incubation began at this nest, it is necessary to assume that this female followed the general pattern reported by Walkinshaw, and, therefore, that incubation commenced on July 27. Thus, this female incubated the five eggs for a period of at least 23 days. This is nearly twice this goldfinch's normal incubation period of slightly less than 13 days (Walkinshaw, *op. cit.*).

Odum (Auk, 59, 1942:430-431) made careful observations on the nesting of a pair of Carolina Chickadees (*Parus carolinensis*) whose eggs failed to hatch after being incubated for 24 days. Odum stated: "Examination of the six eggs showed that no development has (*sic*) taken place in any of them." Schantz (Auk, 54, 1937:190) reported a Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) which incubated a clutch of three eggs for 24 days. When Schantz opened the eggs he found "half-grown embryos." Latham (Oölogist, 53, 1936:71) reported a female Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) which incubated three eggs for 22 days. According to Latham these eggs "proved to be sterile." Byers (Wilson Bull., 62, 1950:136-138) described an interesting case in which a female Black and White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) incubated eight Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) eggs a minimum of 19 days before the nest and eggs were destroyed. Nice (Trans. Linn. Soc. N. Y., 6, 1943:222-223) gave other records of unusually long incubation periods.

There is a paucity of precise information on the maximum length of broodiness behavior in passerine birds. It is interesting to note from the case histories here reviewed that the incubation period was in each instance approximately twice the normal period. Indeed, several of the nests were destroyed apparently while the females were still stimulated to incubate.—ANDREW J. BERGER, *Department of Anatomy, University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, Michigan, September 6, 1952.*

Food of the Common Merganser in Churchill County, Nevada.—The Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) occurs from November to March in the Lahontan Valley, Churchill County, Nevada. Only rarely has the species been observed in the area in summer. Nevertheless, adults with small young have frequently been seen at Pyramid Lake, about 50 miles northwest of the Lahontan Valley.

Between November 14, 1940, and March 14, 1945, 110 Common Merganser stomachs were obtained for examination from the Lahontan Valley. The stomachs from 20 of these were found to be empty or contained fish remains that were digested beyond identification. Gravel up to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in diameter was found in some of the stomachs. The birds were obtained from seven general localities as follows: Carson River, from Lahontan Dam downstream to the river mouth at Carson Sink; irrigation canals, all within a radius of 10 miles of Fallon; Indian Lakes, 9 miles north-northeast of Fallon, a series of small lakes developed by fishermen; Rattlesnake Reservoir (an irrigation reservoir situated about 2 miles east-northeast of Fallon); Harmon Pasture (a small pond situated in a pasture about 5 miles east-southeast of Fallon); Hazen Reservoir (a small water supply reservoir situated approximately 2 miles south-southwest of Hazen; and Dutch Bill Lake (a lake situated approximately 5 miles north of Stillwater).

The total number of stomachs examined from each locality, together with the results of the analysis of the food contents is given in the accompanying table. Of the fish found in the stomachs, the carp were from 1 to $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length, the Sacramento perch were from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the yellow perch were all about 4 inches long, the suckers were all about $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the bullheads were all about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the largemouth bass were from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 inches in length.

It is interesting to note that except in one instance the mergansers taken on the irrigation canals