

coast of Venezuela on April 24, 1926. Reported by the American Consul at Trinidad, British West Indies, through the United States Department of State.

Auburndale, Massachusetts.

RECENT HISTORY OF A PAIR OF WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES, NOS. 117455♂ AND 117456♀

BY HELEN GRANGER WHITTLE

IN the *Bulletin* for October, 1925, I reported a pair of Nuthatches (*Sitta c. carolinensis*) which had remained together a winter and a summer, and which had brought a family of young to our Peterboro station in July, 1925. These parents have been under observation for another year. They have now spent at least two winters and two summers constantly in each other's company, and they have raised two families which we know about. Keeping "tabs" on these birds has been simplified by the fact that both are banded on the left tarsus. All our other Nuthatches have been banded on the right tarsus.

None of the banded young of the 1925 brood has ever appeared at our station since their disappearance therefrom in July, 1925. The parents continued to make frequent visits throughout the autumn of that year, until the closing of the station on November 12th. During the same period they visited a neighbor's feeding-station about one-half mile distant, and continued visits to that station during the winter of 1925-1926. The banded young were also reported at that station during the fall and winter. I myself saw the parent Nuthatches at the neighbor's feeding-station on March 21, 1926, and on April 16th they were again at our banding-station, where regular feeding had been resumed. (Some sunflower seed and suet had been available there during much of the winter.) After April 16th, through the remainder of the spring, they neglected the neighbor's station almost wholly, and were constantly at ours. The only apparent reason for this was the fact that other Nuthatches (including their own young?) visited that station. About the 10th of May the female Nuthatch ceased to visit the station for a time. Presumably the nest was at some distance, and she did not leave the eggs long enough to make the journey. The male continued his visits. No observations were made the first week

in June. During the second week in June both parents came to our station, but separately, their visits, however, becoming more infrequent as the month advanced,—owing probably to the increasing demands of the young. From June 28th to July 7th no observations were made. On my return to the station on July 8th, Father Nuthatch was found to be bringing youngsters. Ordinarily he brought two at a time. One day he was conducting four. They were very near full maturity in appearance, and the father was already decidedly peevish in his manner toward them much of the time. I captured only one, a female, before this young family disappeared as the 1925 family had done. A young male came a few days after his father had ceased attendance on him, but by the 20th only the parents were left. At no time was the mother seen feeding young. Toward the end of July the visits of the parents became very infrequent at our station. At the neighbor's station, during this period, Nuthatches were reported abundant, but there was doubt about the bands on them. Very little was seen of the Nuthatches during August at our station. During the second half of that month, the female resumed visits to some extent and seemed to have completed her molt. Her breast was snowy white and she had a generally spic-and-span appearance. Nuthatch calls were often heard from trees near by, but it was not until September 4th, when we had begun to fear for his life, that the male Nuthatch suddenly resumed visits to our feeding-station. He now is in immaculate plumage, talkative and lively, and quite unnecessarily peremptory with any Purple Finch which might have preceded him at his favorite hanging feeder. He flares his wings and tail to their fullest extent at these times, with a great display of white, and seldom fails to make the desired impression on a Finch. In the case of Downy Woodpeckers which he encounters at the suet tree, a large elm, he is much more discreet, usually retiring quietly to the far side of the elm's wide trunk and waiting there until the Woodpecker has departed.

The prolonged absences of these Nuthatches from our feeding-station in August we attribute to their period of molt. Most of our birds seem especially timid and retiring during the molt, and it seems very probable that they may require a larger percentage of animal food in the feather-producing process. This year, the male Nuthatch appears to have finished the molt at a later date than the female, but we have not, as yet, evidence that this is always true.

During September 4th and 5th the pair of Nuthatches came

to the station very frequently, always together, but the male usually leading the way. They must have made twelve to fifteen visits, or even more. Since the 5th they have settled down to the more usual six or eight visits a day or less. They seem entirely satisfied with each other's companionship, and there is no reason to suppose, barring the death of one of them, that they will not continue mated indefinitely, corroborating our permanent-mating theory for this species.

It has happened, also, that several times during the past year or two—at least three cases come to mind—we have observed, away from our stations, a pair of Nuthatches (that is, one male and one female) travelling about together. In one instance they were feeding on the ground beside a wooded highway. Our banded Nuthatches are not at all averse to descending to the ground at times in the search for food or water. One day when the supply of sunflower seeds had fallen very low and the search for them was more desperate than usual, the female Nuthatch was observed to pick up leaves and toss them aside, lest they might be hiding something of value. Their amusing little way of hitching along on the ground, with their short legs is characteristic.

RUFFED GROUSE NO. 332430 OF THE STONE BIRD SANCTUARY

BY LESTER W. SMITH

DURING November, 1925, occasional reports came to me of a Grouse that walked about quite close to observers and made no effort to fly away, but would walk or run off a short distance when approached. It was seen at various times and places, and I tried to locate it but without success. Finally a neighbor who had been given the privilege of cutting the dead chestnut trees in the Sanctuary told of having seen the bird almost daily. It would come to him and walk about quite near him after he had been chopping a short time. This gave me a clue on how to attract the bird. On November 20th, hearing the sound of his axe, I asked him if he had seen the bird. He answered, "Not to-day, but yesterday I had to push her out of my way so that I could swing the axe." After this I began scouting about in the brush in widening circles, and after a few minutes spied the Grouse walking slowly, with head held low, apparently inspecting me. At first