

Building about 300 yards from Bailey Hall, at which time swifts were still roosting in nearby chimneys in flocks of several hundred.

These nesting dates may not be significantly early or late but it is interesting to note that swifts apparently begin nesting before the flocks break up in the spring and continue nesting after flocking has begun in late summer.—Pauline James, Texas College of Arts and Industries, Kingsville, Texas.

Chickadee in Convulsion.—Five chickadees were at my feeding station eating sunflower seeds and peanut butter when suddenly one of the birds flew up in crazy circles, bumped the outer branches of a nearby spruce tree about five feet above the snow time and again until the circles became more narrow and they gradually amounted to a whirl downward; then he plunged into the snow, two inches of which was soft above the crust, and continued to spin about always in a clockwise manner. Now by slow degrees the circles widened and he wound up against a twig of a rose bush the end of which was buried in the snow, and he grasped it with a deadly grip and froze with his head still inclined to the right for fully three minutes.

The instant that I noticed that he was flying crazily I recognized it as a fit and watched constantly wondering if he would die in it. However, at the end of the three minutes of freezing, his head twisted farther to the right until I thought he would wring it off, he slowly turned back and looked the other way and finally flew to the spruce tree nearby apparently fully recovered.

It was 8 A.M. sunny and calm, the thermometer stood at 1 degree below zero. The Blue Jays had left after their first breakfast and did not return until 8:30 so the chickadee was not frightened by one of them. A number of English Sparrows were sitting in the rose bush and the other four chickadees were flitting about the station so there seemed to be nothing unusual to cause fright. Whether the convulsion was caused by fright, injury or an internal ailment it is impossible to say.

For the past ten years I have carried on experiments with canaries, crossing them with the American Goldfinch and the South American Black-hooded Red Siskin and their progeny. Out of about a thousand birds I have observed less than a dozen individuals that were subject to fits. In one case the condition was brought on by fright but was not very severe. This bird invariably had a fit when his cage was cleaned. Usually I held his head under the cold water faucet and he came to, though I found he would slowly recover by himself when left alone.

One other case was very severe, the bird fairly thrashing himself to pieces on the floor of the cage. He dropped off the perch oftentimes for no apparent reason and kept this up for several weeks but after some time he fully recovered and sang for many years afterward.

All other cases either ended in instant death or gradual decline, the individual never fully recovering and usually left with a condition that caused him to turn his head to the right constantly and sometimes not being able to keep his balance or to eat properly. A watery right eye or a constant irritation causing the bird to scratch the right side of the head indicated some internal ailment. If an individual did not die immediately but lingered on death seemed due to the fact that he was unable to nourish himself sufficiently.

Though such a condition has been called paralysis by Stroud in his "Digest of the Diseases of Birds" I am inclined to believe it an injury to or pressure on the brain brought on by injury, parasite, or fright.—Olive P. Wetherbee, 11 Dallas St., Worcester 4, Massachusetts.

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