The Nest of the Magpie.—My studies of the Magpie (*Pica pica hudsonia*) have all been made in Montana, particularly in the prairie region of the eastern half of the state. The nest may be built in either a bush or a tree. When built in a bush the nest may be as low as five feet from the ground. The Buffalo-berry is very commonly chosen by the Magpie for a nesting site. The thorns on this bush may afford some degree of protection to the birds, though it is doubtful if this is more than an accidental relation. The bush nest is usually constructed around the central bush stem, involving other branches as the bulk of the nest spreads outward. Tree nests are seldom over twenty feet from the ground. They are often located some distance out on a horizontal limb, and the nest is anchored to one or more erect branches on this limb.

The nests are built of small sticks which are derived mostly from sage brush and cottonwood trees. The lining is composed of the soft, inner bark of the same woods. I have never noticed any mud in the structure or lining of these nests. I have found nests located as far as four miles from any natural mud. I do not believe that Magpies in this region characteristically use mud in the construction of their nests. Some of the nests are as large as two feet in diameter and thirty inches high. An entrance is placed near the center of one side, and is usually directly over a limb or branch. The latter is used especially by the young birds as they are learning to leave the nest, and from which they may easily and quickly retreat into the nest.—W. R. FELTON, *Sioux City, Iowa.*

Nesting Habits of the Magpie.—Few birds can offer more for observation and study through their nesting habits than the Magpie (*Pica pica hudsonia*). These birds are very crafty and always seek to place their nest where they will not be disturbed. Frequently, in the western states, I have noted that if their nests are disturbed they will not return to that locality the next nesting season, but will proceed to find some isolated place where they can rear their young unmolested. In the earlier days when the scanty population paid little attention to these birds they would frequently build their nests in the trees along the small streams flowing through the mountain valleys. Here, year after year, they were allowed to nest unmolested. But, as civilization progressed and the birds finally brought themselves into disrepute by their unwelcome visits to the nearby farms, they were hunted as a pest. Bounties were placed upon their heads by the state and as a result their nests were robbed by the hunters, who found it an easy catch to discover a nest full of nearly full grown birds. As soon as their nests were disturbed, in this manner, they at once sought the most unfrequented places of the higher mountains, so that it is difficult to find a nest, even when days are spent in searching the mountain side.

Their nests are carefully built. A pair usually selects some inaccessible bushy tree, usually a thorn tree near the top of some desolate canyon slope. The nest is built near the top of the tree. They select small dead branches and sticks, and carefully weave them about the closely packed branches of the thorn tree. After they have completed their task the nest closely resembles a crudely constructed cage. Every stick is tightly woven in its place making a very strong structure on all sides. In fact it requires great effort to break into one of their nests. The entire nest is about the size of two half-bushel baskets, placed top to top. Usually one opening about five inches in diameter is left on one side, although two openings may be seen. The nest proper, on the inside of the cage,

is then built with small sticks and dead grass. They do not line their nest with feathers or down as is often done by small song birds. The inside of their nest resembles very much that of a Crow's nest and shows the efforts of a stable nest builder.

Usually two to six eggs are laid, and after due time the young are hatched. The parents carry food to them and take every good care of them. The young are thus cared for until their eyes are open and they develop strength enough to move about. At this point in their career the parent bird promptly weaves in sticks closing the holes. The young birds then become prisoners. Food is supplied to them through the cracks in the cage by the old birds. When the young reach maturity and are fully feathered and able to fly, the door is opened by the parents and the young go free. It seems that these young birds tend to leave the nest without the slightest hesitation, even long before they are fully feathered. Hence the old birds take this means to guard their young until they are able to care for themselves. This seemed to be the common practice with the Magpies in southeastern Washington, in the vicinity of Walla Walla; but I have also observed the habit in northeastern Washington, three hundred miles northward.*—A. C. STARRY, *Sioux City, Iowa.*

The Odd Behavior of a Stunned Ruffed Grouse.—One sunny afternoon last fall a female Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus umbellus*), flew violently against our screen door and there fell to the porch floor. The impact was considerable, but the yielding screen must have broken the force of the collision somewhat, for the bird picked itself up and scurried under a porch seat, where it remained for about fifteen minutes. It then came out, walked to the corner of the porch partially screened by a climbing rose, and, taking a position there, remained for almost two hours, calmly resting.

An observer, seated in plain sight at a low window about ten feet away, kept the grouse under observation during the whole time, indulging in a long monologue directed at the visitor, including many sentimental assurances that a real refuge had been found. To all this the bird paid almost no attention, maintaining an air of complete indifference, and at times turning away its tranquil eyes as though unconscious of any human presence. The demeanor of the grouse expressed not only outward calm, but inward serenity.

Suddenly a cat appeared, passing along the sidewalk. Immediately the whole aspect of the grouse changed to one of alertness, as she shifted her position to keep the cat in range. Surely, now the bird would fly. But not so. As the cat trotted out of sight, the grouse settled down again to enjoy her sunny haven. It began to seem as though some serious injury might be the cause of her reluctance to leave. But evidently not, for as the afternoon waned and changed to dusk, the grouse hopped to the ground, stood around the door step for a few minutes, and them flew away on strong wings to a distant field.

Mr. C. W. Mayhew, who has hunted and trapped along this valley of Baughman Creek for sixty years, says he had not seen a Ruffed Grouse near this village for ten years. But not long after the incident related above, he flushed a pair in the valley back of my house.—MARCIA B. CLAY, *North Bristol, Ohio.*

*Apparently, however, the habit of closely imprisoning their young until they are able to fly and then suddenly liberating them is not general with the Magpie, as witness the preceding note. It would be interesting to know if any other ornithologists are able to corroborate Dr. Starry's observation.—Ed.