

nests of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird usually disappear very soon after the young birds have flown, strongly suggests that, like the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, these tiny feathered rainbows use material from old nests in the construction of new ones.—JOHN B. LEWIS, *Lawrenceville, Va.*

Bob-white a True and Faithful Father.—On the sixth of September a farmer friend came to me and told me of a nest of Bob-whites along the roadside near the edge of the timber, and on account of the late date I decided to give this nest careful observation and watch the results of such a late nesting. When I approached the nest on September 6, I found the mother bird carefully brooding her twelve white eggs, just five feet from the wheel tracks of the road, in a nest which was so carefully arched over that she was quite well concealed. She was of exactly the same color as the surrounding dead grass, which had recently been mowed, the sickle bar having passed just over her head, not missing her over an inch.

I visited this nest daily, and each time I found conditions the same, with the mother bird patiently brooding. But she would always flush upon my approach and would not allow me to get her photograph. On September 15, just nine days after my first visit, upon approaching the nest we observed a mass of brown feathers in front of the nest, and "Old Bobbie" himself was brooding the eggs, or rather eleven of them, as one had been rolled out of the nest and lay near by. The mother bird had been killed and devoured some time during the night, and nothing remained but a lot of her feathers. The eggs, however, had been spared, and our old faithful friend Bobbie had now undertaken the job of raising a family, which sometimes is the lot of a lone widower. He was a great deal more shy than the mother bird had been, and I could not approach nearly as close to him before he would flush. I would have given a great deal to have secured a good photograph of him on those eggs, but I did not have the heart to set up a blind and wait for him to return, as is customary. I was afraid that he would not return, and I wanted so much to have him complete the job which he had started.

I continued my daily visits to this nest, each trip requiring eight miles of country driving. On the afternoon of September 21, I found that one egg had hatched nicely, and there were eleven whole eggs remaining in the nest with the two half shells, but neither the chick nor "Old Bobbie" were anywhere to be seen, so I presumed that he was away in the grass somewhere giving his little son his first lesson in catching grasshoppers. That night it rained all night, and the next forenoon was so cloudy and wet that I could not get to the nest until in the afternoon. When I drew near I found that all that remained was a lot of empty shells, as every egg had hatched during that night of rain and "Old Bobbie" had gotten away with every chick without me so much as seeing one of them, much less getting a photograph.

I knew that birds of this kind take to the grass as soon as hatched, but I hardly thought that the entire dozen would get away during a rain without me seeing one of them, and I only away from them for about twenty hours. I had secured a good photograph of the nest and twelve eggs on September 6, one of the mass of feathers with the nest in the background on September 15, and one of the nest and empty shells on September 22, and I will have to content myself with them. However, the experience gained by watching this tragedy and the

happy final ending was worth more to me than all the photographs I could have secured.

I experienced, however, the inner battle between the nature lover and the photographer. Had I set up a blind and waited I might have secured some excellent photographs of "Old Bobbie" on the job, but I debated that if I did so I might also frighten him away altogether. Thus the battle raged for several days until finally the true nature lover spirit within me won out, and I will leave it to the readers whether the right won or not. It increased my love of the Bob-white that much, however, that I will always fight for his rights and I will place him first on the list as our most valuable bird and man's best friend.—
W. M. ROSEN, *Ogden, Iowa.*

Birds of a Feather Flock Together.—As I stood on the top of the hill at the rear of my home on an October evening of 1924, watching the swirling mass of Purple Grackles and Starlings coming in to roost all around me, I thought of how little we have really learned, since the composition of this wise little saw, of the basic impulses influencing the organization and government of the flocks and roosts of our wild neighbors. If anyone had asked me why the Purple Grackle persists in roosting in shade trees close to man, I would probably have replied for the same reason that it nests near dwellings, namely, for protection against the thoughtless or irresponsible man, coupled with the desire to take advantage of the thick foliage of our shade trees, especially after the forest trees had become denuded.

For the first time in my life I found myself in the center of the establishment of an entirely new roost. In almost fifty years of residence in the same place I cannot recall a single instance of a large roost of any species of wild bird in my immediate neighborhood until this temporary or tentative roost of Purple Grackles and Starlings developed in our deciduous boundary trees in October, 1924. During October, 1925, on the evening of the 17th, a roost of probably 500 individuals established itself undisturbed in our cherry, locust and maple trees. This flock increased to something like 10,000 by the 19th, overflowing to the trees of my immediate neighbors, with the maples, pines and spruces the favorites, abandoning the deciduous trees as fast as their leaves dropped. It must be explained that the maple as a shade and ornamental tree came into vogue locally during my lifetime, and has recently grown to goodly proportions. On the blustery evening of October 25 the birds, now approximateing 20,000 and including some Cowbirds, came in at dusk riding the gale like snowflakes, and, as some of the maples had become denuded of leaves during the day, such of the maple, cherry and apple trees as were still clothed, together with the evergreens, proved the prime favorites, the overflow settling in the thick foliage of the rows of maples along the nearby avenues. The trilling and chattering of the Starlings lasted as late as 10 p. m., with perhaps little abatement all night long, in the trees at the rear of my home, although the birds that had located along the avenues, which were probably nearly all Purple Grackles, were silent.

My subsequent notes follow: October 26—The birds left their roost at 6:15 A. M. but this evening as they came in some one shot at them, and in consequence only a few roosted on the premises, though they were numerous in the shade trees along the avenues.

October 27—Again I heard the reports of a shotgun as the birds began to flock in increasingly large numbers at 4 p. m. All of the maple and cherry trees and