

The Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher in Indiana.—I noticed in the WILSON BULLETIN for September, 1931, p. 230, that Margaret L. Weir of Hawarden, Iowa, says concerning the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea caerulea*) that she found its nest hanging in the fork of a branch some twenty-six feet over the sidewalk. I have had some experience with this interesting bird, but it had a very different nest from the one she described. I did not know the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher ever built anything except the one kind of nest, and that one similar to but larger than the nest of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. A nest that we found this summer was on top of a dead limb of a tree, where the branch forked with one above the other, and this nest was built upon the lower branch so that the other fork was a sort of a protection over the nest.

When we first noticed the bird it was fighting two Hairy Woodpeckers which were in the same tree. Then it flew immediately to the nest with an insect or worm for the young, making it easy to see the nest. We watched for some time, noting how suitably the nest was placed and how well it was built. It was about twenty feet from the ground near the river in Mounds State Park, which is about three miles from this place. A few days later we returned to the place to find the three young birds out in the tree, begging for food and following the parents about to be fed. Later we went to try to get the nest and found that it had disappeared. We hunted for it on the ground but it was gone. It was perfectly made and about four inches deep, covered with lichens. Several pairs of these tiny birds were in the same park during the summer, indicating they were nesting thereabouts.—MRS. HORACE P. COOK, *Anderson, Ind.*

Unusual Nesting Site of Chimney Swifts.—April 1, 1930, found me badly in need of some Senega Snakeroot (*Polygala senega*) plants, a plant bearing a root that is much used in medicine, so early that morning I set forth with a companion in quest of some. We finally found some on a southern hillside overlooking the rocky, winding stream of Bullfork, a small creek northeast of my home. But we did not work long, for a sudden rain forced us to seek shelter. About a quarter of a mile from us on the opposite side of the hill was an old unused log house, and my companion and I hastened to reach it before we became wet, but as the rain gained steadily in volume we were forced to give up the idea of collecting more plants.

We ate our lunch, and, becoming tired of inactivity, began to explore the old house. The ceiling was little higher than the height of an average man, and the attic was reached through a square hole cut in one corner of the ceiling. I climbed through this, and after becoming accustomed to the poor light, the first thing I noted was a row of seven nests of the Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*) plastered to the southern wall, about three feet beneath the comb. The three middle nests were built complete to the last stick, but two nests on either side of the completed three were but half finished. The nests were straight in line, spaced almost alike. I should say that they averaged about eight inches apart. Cracks in the walls of the attic allowed about half light to enter, but the only way that the swifts could have entered was through one eight-inch tile set in the roof, a tile that had once served as a "collar" for a stove pipe that had come from a stove in the lower room through a hole in the attic floor, and then through the tile in the roof to the outside.

I wondered if one pair of swifts had built the seven nests, and went back later in the spring to see if I could learn, but some one had partly demolished the

old building so, of course, the swifts were not there. However, a pair of Phoebes (*Sayornis phoebe*) were using a nest that I had seen on my first trip, a many-storied nest above the north window of the downstairs room.—GRANT HENDERSON, Greensburg, Ind.

Some Observations on the Eastern Willet at Nesting Time.—The nest of the Eastern Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus semipalmatus*), its notes and migrations, have been quite well covered, but little seems to have been written about the nesting habits and period of incubation.

I had the opportunity during April and part of May, 1931, to spend a part of the time along a sandy fill where these birds nest abundantly, but unluckily had to leave before completing the season with them. The Long Island Fill and the connected Oysterbed Island are in the neighborhood of the Georgia-South Carolina state line, and on the north side of the Savannah River, near the entrance, and looking out toward Callibogue Sound and the open sea. The willets feed on the extensive mudflats and nest in the thick Bermuda grass on the higher sandy ground.

The nests show the individuality of the pair, though always scanty as nests go, as sometimes eggs are laid on the ground and very little grass is added during the incubation. Others prepare a nest before laying the eggs, and while some use dry grasses only, others include some green material. In all, eleven nests were logged and visited from day to day as eggs were added. No attempt was made to set up a blind near the nests. The presence of the birds was noted with reference to the time of day, and of tides, and it was found that the eggs were seldom uncovered for more than a few minutes at a time, after incubation had commenced, which was as soon as the last egg was laid. One exception to this concerned a nest which could be found uncovered quite often, and it later seemed that only one bird was caring for the hatching. Whether this was a case of desertion or accident, of course cannot be told, but if this nest alone had been relied on, some very different, and erroneous conclusions might have been reached.

Both birds incubate. They change at quite frequent intervals, though flushing the bird from the nest may have been the reason. To determine this, a small swab covered with prussian blue in oil, in once case, and with smeary maroon paint in another, was placed in the nest. One pair appeared with maroon paint on the wing of one and the belly of the other. The second pair had one unmarked bird, and one with a large blue area underneath. Several times I flushed one bird, and a half hour later found its mate on the eggs. The feeding grounds are so near that usually both birds are near, or within call.

In a couple of cases the birds would allow close approach, before leaving the eggs. One, in particular, would sometimes stay until I parted the grasses directly overhead. The eggs are laid at one or two day intervals, varying with different pairs, and until the full clutch is laid are not covered at all times. The temperature and protective coloring probably makes covering unnecessary.

After leaving the vicinity, I made a trip back, and found two young birds in the nest. The clutch had been completed on May 6 or 7, and this was the 30th, which gives an incubation period of twenty-three or twenty-four days. These two young had been hatched not much over an hour, yet one persisted in trying to crawl into the surrounding grass. The young birds are seldom seen from the time of hatching until the flight feathers are partly grown, when they begin picking up food along the sand and the mudflat edges.