

The Calls of the Barred Owl.—I have seen the Barred Owl (*Strix varia varia*) occasionally but never have heard it "sing" or in a debate, until last spring when in southern Indiana at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Cleo Wesner of Campbellsburg. In that part of the state there are many interesting species of birds, including the Barred and the Great Horned Owls. The Bald Eagle is occasional, (they caught one in a trap), and there are present several members of the heron family; the Whip-poor-will; rare warblers, including the Swainson Warbler (which nests there) and the Kentucky Warbler; the Summer Tanager, which is very common; the Black Vulture; and many other species of birds, including seven species of the woodpecker family, the rarest being the Pileated Woodpecker. But the doings of the Barred Owl were something new to me. They had told us of its "oratory", and when supper was over after dark, I was called to the yard to listen to two Barred Owls having a debate. First one would talk, then the other, arguing and explaining all the while, but in a muffled voice not quite understood by the visiting audience. Then they would say something, perhaps a joke or something very clever and to the point, and this would be followed by the loudest maniacal laughter one could imagine. When this was over, they would resume their argument and again discuss various things which we could not understand. To one listening to such conversation for the first time, it was most interesting and impressive. The birds were a short distance back of the house it seemed, in a ravine at the foot of a wooded hill. Finally the discourse died down and the debate was possibly settled to the satisfaction of at least one of the contestants. That entertainment alone paid us for the trip; but during the night someone tapped on our door calling softly, "Are you awake? Listen to the Whip-poor-wills." But I was already listening with both ears. The hills of southern Indiana are most beautiful and a natural paradise for birds.—MRS. HORACE P. COOK, *Anderson, Ind.*

Late Nestings.—Four instances of late nesting, three of them in Knox County, Illinois, came to the writer's attention this year (1932). A pair of Eastern Field Sparrows (*Spizella pusilla pusilla*) had three half-grown young in a nest August 26, while on September 4 two fledgling Eastern Mourning Doves (*Zenaidura macroura carolinensis*) were on the point of leaving their natal home. The thirty-day period for shooting the latter species in Illinois opens September 1, although nests with eggs or young in mid-August are not of extremely rare occurrence. Whether or not toll is taken to such extent as to be a serious factor is undetermined, but it is quite evident that hereabouts Mourning Doves have not held their own, numerically, for at least a decade. A female Eastern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus virginianus*) was incubating ten eggs September 16. On September 11, two fairly grown Yellow-billed Cuckoos (*Coccyzus americanus americanus*) were observed in a nest in Des Moines County, Iowa.—HAROLD M. HOLLAND, *Galesburg, Ill.*

The Western Gnatcatcher Also Moves Its Nest.—In the first three numbers of Volume XLIV (1932) of the WILSON BULLETIN, contributions were made on the nesting habits of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliopitila caerulea caerulea*). A summary of these contributions may be given as follows: (1) that all nests observed were on top of a limb, near a fork, possibly for protection of some sort; (2) that all nests had been moved or were being moved; and (3) that various factors are responsible for a change in the nesting sites. From evidence submitted it seems fairly safe to say that nest building material is sometimes re-used in

another nest; that this bird deliberately moves its nest at will; and that changing conditions at a chosen site may cause the birds to move the nest to a more favorable location before the eggs are laid.

I have read these contributions with interest, and believe it timely to report some observations made upon its western relative, the Western Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea amoenissima*). This past summer I had occasion to observe a pair of Western Gnatcatchers about their nest and recorded certain conditions which corroborate observations made on the eastern form. Some new information is also given.

On July 8, 1932, I was collecting in the juniper belt of the Upper Sonoran Zone, between the north base of the San Francisco Mountains, Arizona, and the Painted Desert of the Little Colorado, when I saw a gnatcatcher. Desiring specimens of this species, I followed the bird to a pinyon tree (*Pinus edulis*) where it was joined by another gnatcatcher. I soon saw a nest near one of the birds. No nest of this species had been reported from these mountains. I therefore decided to take the nest and birds, and climbed the tree. The nest was on a live horizontal limb, a few inches out from a fork, the second limb inclining upward and away from the nest. The distance to the ground was about twelve feet. The nest was covered with lichen, but was not closely examined at that time, as it was not quite completed and I planned to return later to make my collections.

The following week I returned but found the nest gone. Closer inspection disclosed only a few fibers still adhering to the limb. I was puzzled by these conditions since I was certain no person other than myself had recently been in the vicinity. In a search beneath the tree I failed to find evidence of nest or eggs. The missing nest could be attributed only to removal by birds, for predatory animals are uncommon in the region and destruction by this means would surely have left a clue. I therefore attributed the cause to my previous visit. By searching the neighborhood I found a gnatcatcher, but time did not permit further search for a nest.

A review of *The Condor* for more than twenty-five years disclosed only two references to gnatcatchers moving their nests. Both however pertain to the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila melanura californica*), and are recorded by R. S. Woods. In "Home Life of the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher" (Volume XXIII, 1921, p. 175) Mr. Woods casually states that "an inspection of the nest showed that a section of it had been removed, and it was found that only a small portion of the unused nest previously built remained"; also that "the nest appeared looser and bulkier than those built of new material." Several years later in "Nesting of the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher" (Volume XXX, 1928, p. 143) he reports that "the material of the previous nest, which had entirely disappeared, was probably used in its construction." Such casual treatment of these incidents implies a familiarity of the writer with this trait in his birds.

These observations indicate that the Western and Black-tailed Gnatcatchers, like the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, sometimes move their nest; they corroborate observations of eastern observers; and offer an additional reason why gnatcatchers move the nest. These reasons now are: first, convenient nest building material in the form of an old nest (Lewis, Vol. XLIV, p. 115); second, too close contact with an undesirable bird neighbor (Lloyd, Vol. XLIV, p. 185); and third, molestation by man before the nest is completed.—LYNDON L. HARGRAVE, *Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff, Ariz.*