

GENERAL NOTES

Egg Weights of some Arctic Nesting Birds.—During the early summer of 1940 the writer accompanied Mr. Lawrence I. Grinnell of Ithaca, New York, on a trip to Churchill, Manitoba, for the purpose of collecting data on certain birds and mammals of that region. Mr. John Cruttenden of Quincy, Illinois, was also at Churchill during part of our stay there, collecting a limited number of eggs of various species of birds. With his kind permission I recorded in grams the weights of certain of the sets which he secured, as follows.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia arctica pacifica*), two sets: 101.3, 100.4 and 93.4, 98.6 (average, 98.4), both taken on June 17 and partly incubated.

Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*), three sets: 9.4, 9.4, 9.9, June 17; 8.7, 8.9, 9, 9.3, June 18; and 9.9, 10, 10.3, June 21 (average, 9.5). A fourth egg of the third set was blown by mistake before being weighed. Stage of incubation of these sets not recorded.

Hudsonian Curlew (*Phaeopus hudsonicus*), one set: 42.4, 45.7, 46.6, 48 (average, 45.7), taken June 18, slightly incubated.

Least Sandpiper (*Pisobia minutilla*), three sets: 4.2, 5.4, 5.7, 5.7 and 5.6, 5.7, 6.2, taken June 17; and 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.1, taken June 18. The lightest egg of the first mentioned clutch was cracked and therefore, omitting this one, the remaining ten average 5.4 grams. None were very far advanced in incubation.

Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus hendersoni*), one set of three about three days after completion of the clutch: 16.7, 17.3, 17.6 (average, 17.2), taken June 18. I personally collected and sexed the incubating bird, which proved to be a female.

Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*), one set: 10.4, 10.9, 10.9, 11 (average, 10.8), taken June 21 when slightly incubated.

Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Ereunetes pusillus*), two sets: 7.2, 7.2, 7.5, 7.6, taken June 17; and 6.7, 6.9, 7, 7.1, taken June 18 (average, 7.2). The former were incubated about one week, while the latter were fresh.

Northern Phalarope (*Lobipes lobatus*), two sets: 5.8, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.2, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5 (average, 6.3), both taken June 17 and stage of incubation not noted.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), two sets: 16.9, 17.4 and 16.5, 17, 17.2 (average, 17), taken June 17. Both sets were slightly incubated.—RALPH S. PALMER, Ithaca, New York.

Black Vulture and Red Fox Found in Unusual Association.—On June 17, 1939, Mr. J. W. Webb, an employee of the Alabama Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, found an occupied den of the red fox (*Vulpes fulva*) in a large rocky outcrop about ten miles west of Auburn, Lee County, Alabama. While searching for other entrances to the fox den, he discovered a nest of the Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus atratus*) containing a nestling approximately a week old. The rocks, known locally as "Buzzard Rocks," have provided nesting sites for Black Vultures for years.

The nest was situated on a rock shelf overhung by a huge boulder, a location typical of Black Vulture nesting sites in this region. On being approached, the young bird paid little attention to the observer, neither attempting to hide in the deeper recesses of the pocket nor showing other evidences of fear. Judging from the size of the nestling and the fact that it exhibited no fear, it was estimated to be from four to eight days old. Young Black Vultures over a week old almost invariably display fear and defiance when their nest is visited for the first time.

Under the rocky slab was a large crevice extending directly beneath the nest and continuing an undetermined distance into the outcrop, gradually narrowing to a passage about 12 inches in diameter. Just back of the nest the slab ended,

allowing the upper and lower crevices to unite. This arrangement provided two avenues by which the adult birds could leave the nest; the first, by the upper entrance; the second, by way of the lower opening (see photograph). To use the lower exit the birds had to leave the nest from the rear, jump down some two feet to the crevice floor and then pass to the outside. There was some evidence that both avenues were being used.

Upon examination it was discovered that the lower entrance was being used regularly by foxes and that the lower passageway was apparently one way of entering their den. This opening showed considerable recent use and den refuse was scattered nearby.



The nest was visited again on June 29, at which time an adult vulture was flushed from the nest. The nestling at this time was approximately one-fourth as large as a mature bird but was still entirely covered with yellow juvenile down. On this visit, the young bird ran to a corner of the crevice, hissed loudly and regurgitated its latest meal of a DeKay's snake (*Storeria dekayi*) and some well digested, unidentifiable meat particles. The foxes were apparently still using the lower entrance. The fallen tree just below the lower arrow (see photograph) showed evidence of having been gnawed extensively by the foxes while they played or searched for insects. The remains of a chicken and several rabbits which they had captured since the first visit were found nearby.

Since the fox is supposed to be very fond of eating birds' eggs, young birds, and even grown ones, it is interesting to note that these foxes had not disturbed the nestling or the parent birds, even though they had easy access to them. Not only had they not been disturbed, but the birds had been allowed to use part of the den entrance. The foxes apparently preferred to catch and transport chickens from a farm house some three-fourths of a mile or more away rather than eat the Black Vultures—a preference for which the foxes could hardly be blamed!—
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