



We went to this nest several times during the following two or three days, finding the sitting bird (presumably the female) to be surprisingly wary. On April 23 one of our party, Robert B. Lea, climbed to the nest. There were six eggs. These evidently comprised the complete set, for when Lea returned, several days later, to take the photograph reproduced herewith, no more eggs had been added. They were uniform in coloration, all being buffy gray, thickly and evenly spotted with dark brown. They were not collected.—GEORGE MIKSCH SUTTON, *Ithaca, New York*, and OLIN SEWALL PETTINGILL, JR., *Northfield, Minnesota*.

A Robin Anting—On July 12, 1942, Dr. George M. Sutton and I watched a Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) “anting” on the Edwin S. George Reserve, near Pinckney, Livingston County, Michigan. Neither of us had ever observed “anting” in birds before and we were keenly interested in this unusual behavior.

We saw the Robin on a large ant hill that we estimated to be about five feet in diameter and nearly two feet high. This hill was situated in a growth of bushes and saplings near the edge of a swamp. The bird flew from the ant hill into a nearby bush when we first noticed it, but came back onto the hill a few moments after we had retired several paces. We observed that the bird appeared to pick up the ants in its bill, placing them at the base of the primaries, chiefly at the wrist joint, and occasionally at the base of the tail. We did not see any ants crawling up the legs of the bird. The bird was quiet throughout the period of observation and its actions appeared most definite and purposeful. The Robin left the ant hill when a car was parked nearby, but returned to the hill a few minutes after the people walked away.

Altogether the Robin spent at least fifteen minutes on the ant hill (9:10 to 9:20 A.M.). As far as we could determine, the bird appeared to be normal in every way. Its plumage was wet and disarranged. We believed that it had either bathed or had become wet from the heavy dew that was still on the bushes and grass. Although we saw no definite evidence of molt, the worn plumage of the bird indicated that the molt was about to begin. Sutton flushed a Robin and a Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) from this same ant hill on August 23 and both of these birds had short, newly molted tails.

Ants from the hill were identified by Professor Frederick M. Gaige as *Formica exsectoides exsectoides* (Linn.). These ants are good biters and do not sting. They are capable of spraying formic acid from their abdomens; in fact, Prof. Gaige characterized them as "one of the richest extruders of formic acid in North America."

The literature on the "anting" of birds has recently been reviewed by McAtee (*Auk*, 55, 1938: 98-105) and Nice (*Auk*, 57, 1940: 520-22).—ARTHUR E. STAEBLER, *University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

European Starling Nesting in a Bank Swallow Burrow.—On May 9, 1942, while inspecting the walls of a large gravel pit about nine miles northwest of Albany, New York, I observed an adult Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) fly from one of the Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) burrows there. The Starling carried a pellet of excrement in its bill, good evidence that it was attending young within.

In the afternoon of May 12, I again visited the gravel pit. Shortly after my arrival an adult Starling emerged from the burrow with a pellet of excrement which it dropped after flying about sixty feet.

This gravel pit lay near a surfaced and moderately traveled highway extending over rolling, open country in an agricultural community. Several rural homes and the usual complement of farm buildings were in the immediate neighborhood.

The walls of the pit, which had been excavated in a roughly circular manner over an area of perhaps three acres, were precipitous and varied in height from 15 to 30 feet. The burrow occupied by the Starling was in the deepest portion of the pit. Only two or three other Bank Swallow burrows were on the same face of the bank as the one occupied by the Starling. This bank face and the burrow entrance were directed north. However, just around a sharp promontory, a few feet southeast of the Starling's burrow, were some 60 additional Bank Swallow burrows either completed or in process of construction. Their entrances faced the east. The swallows themselves were swarming about these burrows, entering and emerging from them frequently.

Obviously the burrow occupied by the Starling had been excavated by Bank Swallows. It was three feet below the rim of the pit and about 25 feet above its floor. The opening to it had been eroded a little so that it was higher than wide. However, it was not large enough to permit insertion of my hand. The burrow itself was 19 inches deep. With a small flashlight I could plainly see the well constructed, grass nest and two young Starlings 5 to 6 days old. They appeared to be in good condition and intermittently broke forth in unison with the characteristic hunger call.

During the course of my examination, which comprised some 70 minutes, one of the adults approached with food two or three times. One parent, perhaps the same one, expressed vocal dissent at my presence on each of two or three fleeting aerial sorties. But within ten minutes after I had left the immediate vicinity an adult Starling entered the burrow with food for the young. Other Starlings obviously were nesting about the nearby farm buildings and from time to time some of them alighted in the tall trees at one side of the gravel pit.

In the more or less intensive observation and study of the Bank Swallow which I have carried on over a period of twenty years this is the first time that I have found a Starling occupying a burrow of that bird as a nesting place.—DAYTON STONER, *New York State Museum, Albany, New York.*