

## DIVERSIONARY BEHAVIOR OF RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER

On April 26, 1948, Lucien Harris, Jr., John W. Burch, and I found 2 occupied nest holes of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (*Dendrocopos borealis*) in longleaf pines about 50 yards apart. One of these holes, only 5.5 feet from the ground, is the lowest yet recorded for the species to the best of my knowledge. The young had left both nests by June 13, 1948. On May 29, 1949, I again visited this spot with J. B. McCall, Jr., hoping to have him photograph the birds which occupied the lower nest site. When we had approached within 5 feet of the nest a female carrying food approached; upon seeing us she flew with somewhat impeded flight, stopping at several intervening trees, to the second nest hole 50 yards distant, entered the hole still carrying the food, emerged without the food, and flew away. McCall and I satisfied ourselves that the second nest hole was unoccupied. The visit of the female to the unoccupied hole served effectively to divert our attention from the occupied nest. I left, but McCall remained and was successful in taking excellent color movies of the female feeding the young from a distance of 20 feet within the next half hour. These observations occurred near Kingsland, Camden Co., Ga.—FREDERICK V. HEBARD, 1500 Walnut Street Building, Philadelphia 2, Pennsylvania.

## BEHAVIOR OF SPARROW HAWKS

On March 22, 1949 at about 1 P.M., 3 Sparrow Hawks (*Falco sparverius*) were seen flying above and around the roof of the 7-story Department of Justice Building, Washington, D. C., directly across the street from our observation window on the fifth floor of the Internal Revenue Building. One alighted on a chimney on the Justice Building, another about 100 feet distant from the first on a wire attached to the same roof; the third hawk alighted near the bird perched on the chimney. After a few moments the third bird mounted the perching bird, and the two birds apparently copulated; the upper bird was clearly smaller than the other. Within a few minutes both flew away, the larger bird out of sight and the smaller bird directly to a position near the bird perched on the wire. The smaller hawk soon mounted the bird perched on the wire and the 2 birds apparently copulated; again the upper bird was clearly smaller than the other bird. After the second apparent copulation, the smaller bird flew away and out of sight; the larger bird remained perched in the same place. Only 3 birds were involved in the behavior described. About 5 minutes later a smaller sparrow hawk flew to, and mounted, this same perching bird, and the 2 birds apparently copulated. The total elapsed time for all of these observations was approximately 20 minutes.—ARTHUR H. FAST AND LEWIS H. BARNES, Internal Revenue Building, Washington, D. C.

## SPARROW HAWK BAFFLED BY ROOFLESS COURT

The skill of the sparrow hawk in flight would seem to assure its ready escape from a roofless enclosure approximately 85 feet high and with an area of 115 x 195 feet. Such an enclosure seemed to offer an insoluble problem, however, for a female sparrow hawk (*Falco sparverius*) which died of starvation and thirst in a court of the U. S. Department of Commerce building in Washington, D. C. This court has no side exits, but is entirely open to the sky.

There was no indication that the sparrow hawk was incapacitated in any way when first observed in the court on July 21, 1949. It flew many times with no difficulty at all from one side of the court to the other, and on at least one occasion ascended to a cornice just one floor below the top of the building. As the hot July days progressed, however, it became less alert and permitted observers at windows to approach within a few feet. On July 27 it was offered a chunk of liver which it accepted and tore with its beak, without eating more than a few shreds if it ate any at all. The next day it disappeared, and the day thereafter, 8 days after it was first seen, it was found dead on the cement floor of a sunken alleyway adjoining the

court. It is my belief, shared by others who saw the hawk, that it somehow became bewildered and unable to recognize that freedom was easily accessible if it flew upward.—FRANK C. CROSS, 9413 Second Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland.

#### SHRIKE ATTACKED BY BARN SWALLOWS

The Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica erythrogaster*), though normally a peaceable bird, appears to lack no courage in attacking its enemies. Bent (1942, *U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull.* 179: 452) reported that he once saw a pair of Barn Swallows attacking and chasing a Sharp-shinned Hawk which had approached their nest too closely.

On August 2, 1949, I saw 5 Barn Swallows attack a Migrant Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) near Colesville, Maryland. They harrassed the shrike, which was perched on a telephone wire, until they forced it to take wing and flee across a field with its tormentors in hot pursuit. This attack seemed to be entirely unprovoked; the date was well past the period when Barn Swallows are known to nest in the vicinity. Apparently, they merely recognized the shrike as an enemy and set upon it for no other reason.

Recognition of the shrike as an enemy is evidently not universal among small North American birds. About one month earlier, near Osborne, Kansas, I had seen a Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) and a Redwing (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) calmly sharing a stretch of telegraph wire less than 6 feet long with another shrike. These 2 species are not listed by Miller (1931, *Univ. of Calif. Pub. in Zool.* 38-2: 198, 200) among the victims of shrikes, but he lists other birds, including the Mourning Dove, Cardinal, Robin, and quail, which are as large or larger.—FRANK C. CROSS, 9413 Second Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland.

#### PECULIAR BEHAVIOUR AT THE NEST OF *FLUVICOLA PICA*

The small white and black tyrant (*Fluvicola pica*), known in Surinam as the Cotton Bird frequents banks of ditches and watercourses and is quite common in the coastal area. It builds its domed nest with a side entrance in branches overhanging the water. At a nest found on July 24, 1946 near Nieuw Nickerie I observed a peculiar behavior of one of the parent birds. The nest was lined with white feathers and contained one egg and one newly hatched chick. The parent birds were not present. I was much surprised to see suddenly one of the parent birds hopping nervously on the branches near the nest with a large white feather in its bill, but it did not actually enter the nest. At this stage of the breeding cycle the lining of the nest seemed quite out of place. So I attribute this behavior as the outcome of nervous agitation caused by my presence, when the bird returned to its nest. It seems to me to be a typical example of a "displacement activity", a behavior so common among birds. Armstrong (*Bird Display and Behaviour*, 1947) mentions many examples of fidgeting with nest material by birds in a great variety of situations and my observation of *Fluvicola pica* seems to be another example.—FR. HAVERSCHMIDT, Paramaribo, Surinam, Dutch Guiana.

#### RED-WINGS FEEDING ON WHITE ASH

A review of the literature shows few examples of Red-wings (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) feeding on seeds of trees. Beal (1900, *U. S. Biol. Surv. Bull.* 13: 41) lists "fruits of the wild cherry", beechnuts, and gives a personal account of Red-wings extracting seeds from pine cones, which he considers a case of necessity.

On October 15, 1949, I observed 2 male Red-wings (second year birds) feeding on the seeds of a White Ash (*Fraxinus americanus* L.) near a marsh at Lake Waubesa, Madison, Wisconsin. Both birds remained in the tree for half an hour, during which time they continually seized, manipulated, and dropped ash fruits. At first it appeared that the birds were simply picking off the fruits in play, so quickly did they handle them, but closer examination showed that they