

On 8 June 1969 at 18:30 a pair of Trumpeter Swans with five cygnets was surprised in a narrow borrow ditch adjoining a 531-acre marsh in which the pair had nested. Cygnets swam between the adults as the brood progressed down the ditch. Soon after, one cygnet swam around to the anterior end of an adult and climbed onto its back. The cygnet quickly turned around, sat down and began preening. Both adults were alerted to my presence and disregarded the preening cygnet (Fig. 1). Four other cygnets remained in the original swimming position. The swans were motionless in the water watching me or were swimming down the ditch during the next 15 minutes. The riding cygnet continued preening for five minutes and then returned to the other cygnets swimming between the adults. An opening in dense cattail provided an escape route allowing the brood to swim out of view a few minutes later.—DONALD A. HAMMER, *Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge, Martin, South Dakota, 2 September 1969.*

**Notes on the foods of juvenile Black-bellied Tree Ducks.**—Studies of waterfowl food habits traditionally emphasize the diet of adult game ducks (cf. Cottam, Tech. Bull. 643, U.S. Dept. Agr., 1939; Martin and Uhler, Res. Rept. 30 (reprinted), U.S. Fish and Wildl. Serv., 1951). Only more recently, however, have the diets of juvenile waterfowl been emphasized in the literature. Chura (Trans. N. Amer. Wildl. Conf. 26:121-134, 1961), for example, described the diet of maturing juvenile mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*). Similarly, Bolen and Forsyth (Wilson Bull. 79:43-49, 1967) reported only the foods of adult Black-Bellied Tree Ducks (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*), and until now, even scant records were unavailable for young birds of this species.

Individual foods from both the crops and gizzards of two Black-bellied Tree Duck broods were examined volumetrically to determine basic trends in the diets of the young birds. The birds' ages were estimated from linear measurements of the middle toe, exposed culmen, and tarsus length following criteria developed by Cain (in press). These broods and other tree ducks were collected in 1966 and 1967 at Lake Mathis (= Lake Corpus Christi) in Live Oak and San Patricio Counties, Texas.

The foods of five 21-day old ducklings primarily consisted of *Echinochloa colonum* seeds; this food occurred in all of the gizzards and crops (100 per cent frequency within the brood) and with an average volume of 5.4 cc (crops) and 2.5 cc (gizzards). *Eclipta alba* (= *Verbesina alba*) seeds occurred in all of the crops and in 40 per cent of the gizzards; its volume was 0.1 cc or less in each case. Animal matter was found only in the crops (100 per cent frequency) and averaged 0.5 cc per bird.

The crops and gizzards of six 35-day old ducklings each contained *Sagittaria* tubers; the average volume for this food was 0.8 cc (gizzards) and 7.0 cc (crops). Trace amounts of *Heteranthera dubia* seeds occurred in some of these samples. Measureable amounts of animal matter were again largely limited to the crop samples; the average amount per crop was 0.6 cc.

The overall percentages of plant and animal materials in the diets of these broods are compared with similar data for a larger sample of adults in Table 1. The two adults tending the 21-day old brood contained only trace amounts of animal matter whereas the adult collected with the 35-day old brood lacked any evidence of animal food in its digestive tract.

The nature of the animal matter seems significant. Specifically, the animal foods taken by the younger brood included insects, spiders, snails (*Physa anatina*), and in one instance, a bivalve (*Sphaerium securis*). Of these, only the insects and spiders were

TABLE 1  
COMPARISON OF OVERALL PLANT AND ANIMAL DIETS FROM THE CROPS OF JUVENILE  
AND ADULT BLACK-BELLIED TREE DUCKS.

Age Group	Type of Food-Per cent	
	Plant	Animal
21-day brood	91.6	8.4
35-day brood	91.3	8.7
Adults <sup>1</sup>	94.4	5.6

<sup>1</sup>Data from Bolen and Forsyth (1967).

important foods, each occurring with 100 per cent frequency of occurrence. The insects included 14 families of which most (86 per cent) were primarily terrestrial.

Animal matter in the 35-day old brood included insects, snails, oligochaets, and single occurrences of an unidentified tick and freshwater shrimp. Nine insect families were represented of which only two (22 per cent) were primarily terrestrial taxa.

The incidence of terrestrial insects in the younger brood and the corresponding change to aquatic forms in the older broods suggests that young tree ducks are reluctant to submerge their heads while feeding. Additionally, the older tree duck brood fed heavily on submersed *Sagittaria* tubers whereas the young birds took plant foods either aerially or floating at the surface. Chura (op. cit.) found that young Mallards are at first hesitant to submerge while feeding and that they accordingly tend to avoid many aquatic invertebrates until their feeding behavior matures further. The few data now available indicate, however, that young Black-bellied Tree Ducks still in downy plumage apparently rely less heavily on animal foods than many other waterfowl species.

Several food items were identified with the gracious assistance of Francis M. Uhler and Harold D. Murray. The field work was supported by the Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation and the School of Agricultural Sciences, Texas Tech University.—ERIC G. BOLEN AND JOHN J. BEECHAM, *Department of Range and Wildlife Management, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409, 24 June 1969.*

**Successful reconstruction of active Bald Eagle nest.**—On 25 June 1969 an active Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) nest in Itasca County, Minnesota, blew down during a violent rain storm (wind 65 mph). The nest, two 8-week-old eaglets, and the top two meters of the tree fell 18 m to the ground. The tree supporting the nest was a partially dead northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*) and had served as the nest supporting structure for 16 years. The nest was located 2½ m above the forest canopy on the dead portion of the tree and the parent birds had easy access from all directions.

The nestlings showed no apparent injuries and were kept for three nights in a makeshift nest box three m above the ground. This nest could not be seen from above the forest canopy. On 27 June an artificial nest was constructed adjacent to the trunk of the original nest tree on a large branch one-third m from the top of the tree. The base of the nest was constructed of six freshly cut poplar poles 1½ meters long which were nailed and criss-crossed on top of the branch. A two-meter square piece of 2½ cm chicken wire was then placed on top of this framework. A 1⅓ meter square piece of burlap was then placed over the larger sticks and on top of this were placed smaller