

Early on the morning of 30 May, the Starling again fed the young in the nest. A short time later one young left the nest. Thereafter there was much excitement and calling from two Robins on the roof. The second young left the nest in the late afternoon. We could not locate either of the young in the dense undergrowth, and it is not known whether the Starling continued feeding or whether the Robins took over the care of the young.

Logan (Auk, 68:516-517, 1951) has described the feeding of young Robins by a male Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*) at least a day before its own young hatched, and twelve days after the robins had left their nest. Jewett (in Bent, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull., 196:1949) has also recorded a Swainson's Thrush (*Hylocichla ustulata*) feeding nestling Robins whose parents were present. In the numerous instances of interspecific helpers at the nest summarized by Skutch (Condor, 63:98-226, 1961), the participation of a hole-nesting helper at the open nest of another species seems to be quite rare.—KATHLEEN GREEN SKELTON HERBERT, R. D. 2, Middletown, Delaware 19709, 21 August 1970.

An aberrant incubation stimulus.—A thermistor telethermometer probe, inserted into the nest of a Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*), may have functioned as an incubation stimulus for the nesting female. A standard white-tipped, round telethermometer probe was inserted through the bottom of the empty nest and extended 2.3 cm above the nest floor. It is doubtful that the probe was in direct contact with the median aperture of the bird because the probe registered temperatures from 28-30°C, which are lower than would be expected under direct contact.

The probe was inserted on 26 April 1969. A single egg was found under the incubating female on the evening of 4 May, at which time the egg was removed. The bird continued to incubate in the absence of eggs until the probe was removed on 23 May. After the removal of the probe, the bird was seen only once at the nest, which then was abandoned. The length of observed incubation for this bird was 27 days, the normal incubation period being 12 to 13 days.

This may support the view (McClure, Auk, 62:270-272, 1945) that for some birds the "feel" of the egg or other object alone may evoke the incubation behavior. Prolonged incubation of infertile eggs (Berger, Condor, 15:151, 1953; Jickling, Jack-Pine Warbler, 18:114-115, 1940; Peterle, Wilson Bull., 65:119, 1953) has been reported for several species, but this is the first case known to the author where this behavior apparently was elicited by an object (4 mm × 4 mm) considerably smaller than the species' own eggs (25.3 mm × 18.2 mm).—JOHN R. HALDEMAN, Department of Zoology, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 75701, 31 October 1970.

Bull snake and Common Grackles.—About a dozen pairs of Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*) nest each spring in the willows along Little Dry Creek near my home in Arapahoe County, Colorado. One huge tree has 10 branches going abruptly upward from the main trunk, and in this tree a pair of grackles built a nest completely concealed by heavy foliage about 15 feet from the ground. I had watched the birds carrying material and consequently knew its location, though it was not visible from below.

On the afternoon of 8 June 1970 I saw a five-foot bullsnake (*Pituophis*) at the base of the tree; it paused momentarily and then started up the rough bark of the trunk—and unerringly headed along the branch holding the nest—bombed by the pair of grackles and at least eight others from nearby. Half of the snake disappeared into the leaves at the nest site, leaving a loop below, and with a long pole I tried to dislodge the reptile. The head appeared and the snake disgorged the yolk and white of an egg, apparently retaining the crushed shell. The animal fell to the ground and was mobbed by the irate birds as it headed into long grass.

We know, of course, that bullsnakes regularly rob nests. Through the years we have observed them taking eggs of ducks and other ground nesting species at Mile High Duck Club, and I have seen snakes high in towering cottonwoods in nests of Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) though without at the time giving a thought as to how the reptiles locate eggs in out-of-the-way places.

Seeing the bullsnake ascend without hesitation the one correct branch of 10 of the willow intrigued me. Was it mere happenstance, or do reptiles have an innate something which enables them to located food?—ROBERT J. NIEDRACH, *The Denver Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado, 12 June 1970.*

INFORMATION WANTED

Several hundred mounted Mexican bird specimens, many of them from the vicinity of Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, have been housed at the University of Oklahoma Museum of Zoology since my coming to Norman in the fall of 1952. Since some of the specimens had, according to the museum's old catalogue, been collected by Charles D. Bunker, I continued to assume that all had been taken by him, or possibly by one of his field assistants. According to Margaret Morse Nice (*Birds of Oklahoma*, 1931, p. 43), Bunker was a "taxidermist at the University of Oklahoma" from 1901 to 1903. The Mexican specimens referred to were taken in 1910 and 1911, years during which Edwin D. Crabb "collected and mounted various birds" near Yukon, Canadian County, Oklahoma (Nice, *op. cit.*, p. 44). Crabb may also have collected birds in Mexico in 1910 and 1911, for all I have thus far been able to find out. However, according to the museum's old catalogue none of the Mexican specimens referred to was taken by Crabb, a few were taken by Bunker, and no collector's name is given for most of them. One specimen, a Stygian Owl (*Asio stygius*), taken 22 April 1911 at or near Ciudad Victoria, is of special interest since it may well represent the only record of *A. stygius* for the whole of northeastern Mexico. My friend Alexander Wetmore is confident that Bunker could not have been in Mexico in April of 1911. I have written Crabb, addressing the letters to the University of Colorado in Boulder, but the letters have been returned to me unopened. Will anyone having information as to who might have collected all these Tamaulipan specimens in 1910 and 1911 please write me?—GEORGE M. SUTTON, *University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73069.*