

larch with an old nest amid its upper branches. My first thought was that perhaps the young had been blown from the nest to the ground and had been established there by the parents, but, and this does not preclude that the above did not happen, there was quite evidently an attempt at construction of a rudimentary nest of coarse twigs, such as is typical of the species.

The nest contained two downy young, about three weeks old as judged by the development of the wing and breast feathers. Pictures were taken to authenticate the occasion. The parents were in evidence while I was at the nest site, but they would not come to feed the young while I was in the vicinity. I constructed a blind and hoped to obtain feeding pictures in this manner, but the parent birds were wary of the disturbance in their natural surroundings.

A Black Duck's nest was located about ten yards away. The alertness of the old mother duck made it impossible to proceed to the Mourning Dove's nest without the parent bird taking flight, even in inclement weather.

I banded and weighed the young. The larger of the two weighed four ounces, the smaller three ounces; three days later both weighed four and a half ounces. As I kept watch on the nest in the several days following, I chose a different approach path each time in order to not attract predators.

The hummock on which the nest was situated was surrounded by water about a foot deep; the hummock itself was some five feet across by three feet in length. A few black alder grew upon the same hummock, to a height of about five feet. These provided some canopy and protection from the sun.

When I viewed the nest at the end of the second week in July, I found it to be empty. In looking about the area I noted two adults and one young bird perched on transmission wires about a quarter mile from the nesting site. The band on the leg of the young was plainly discernible through the binoculars; it was then justifiably assumed to be one of the two mentioned above inasmuch as there were no other banders in the immediate area. The trio was seen several times at later dates, sometimes in company with others. I did not see the second young bird after it had left the nest.

In June, 1958 I went again to the area to see whether the old pair would return to the same site. A pair of adults was seen on the wires nearby, and although I combed the area for evidence of a nest, either on the ground or in the trees, none was found. None was found in either 1959 or 1960 although adults were seen regularly. The banded bird was not seen again, and there has been no return information from the Fish and Wildlife Service indicating that a recovery has been made.

A ground nesting of the Mourning Dove is a matter of some interest; the great majority of nests, of course, are in trees.

In further connection with the Mourning Dove the Fish and Wildlife Service is especially interested in tracing its migratory movements and determining its status as a resident in areas where it is found. Although numbers in this area vary by season and year, the species can be found here the year around. In winter such localities as wind-swept knolls, plowed dirt roads, and bare stream banks are attractive to these birds, as are in fact any areas where seeds might have blown and small gravel is available. The gravel is of importance in the assimilation of food consumed, much as it is with the gallinaceous birds.

The Mourning Dove is a protected species in the North, and it would seem that the species should be accorded the same protection in southern areas where it is now hunted. As evidenced by literature sent to banders by the Fish and Wildlife Service, this is a declining species. Its status merits the attention of Federation members in seeking nationwide protection of it as a species. — Thomas A. Lesperance, Keeseville.

Barn Owls in Onondaga County: The Barn Owl is a rare bird in Onondaga County. The most recent nesting was discovered in an abandoned coal silo near Brewerton. When the four birds were found on October 5, 1960, the youngest was estimated to be about three and a half weeks old (its feathers were just poking out of the quills). The primary feathers of the oldest bird, estimated to be about five weeks of age, were well advanced and the down was rubbing off. Assuming a three week incubation period, the egg dates would be approximately August 9 to August 21.

There have been only a few Barn Owl records from Onondaga County in recent years. There was a nest with four young in a silo at Warners in 1955, with the egg dates estimated to be June 1 to June 7. On April 18, 1956, an adult Barn Owl was inadvertently caught in a tower at a Syracuse lumber yard. Another nesting with four young was reported at Warners in 1956, with the approximate egg date July 1. In the summer of 1958 a family of Barn Owls was seen near a deserted brick home near Syracuse. In the winter of 1957-1958 an adult was found dead in a barn near Syracuse; the bird had become squeezed between some bags of grain and was unable to extricate itself. During that same winter a Barn Owl became covered with oil in downtown Syracuse, was captured, cleaned up, and released (**Kingbird**, Vol 8, No. 1, p. 22) — Benjamin P. Burtt, 109 Haffenden Road, Syracuse 10.

Move to Protect Golden Eagle: The Golden Eagle, efficiently decimated by aerial gunning in the southwestern states and to some extent in California, may be coming in for legislative attention in the forthcoming Congress. Whether anything is finally done depends, of course, upon the manifestation of public demand. At any rate, four to five senators are expected to jointly sponsor a bill designed to halt in particular the hunting of these birds from airplanes. There is even a move under-way to obtain action by the Canadian government, since it appears quite probable that many of the wintering birds killed in our South come from Canada.

A phenomenon of the past fifteen years is that clubs have been organized exclusively around the airplane hunting of eagles. One hunter has become known for his marksmanship, having been credited with 8,000 of these birds. The airplane hunting accounts for 90% of the destruction of these birds, according to John A. Alderman, former member of the Texas Ornithological Society's conservation committee and now a New York City businessman (Ed — see also "Texans Shoot Golden Eagles from Airplanes," **National Wildlands News**, July, 1960). Active in mustering support for protection, Mr. Alderman may be reached at 220 Church Street, Mail Station 144, New York City 13. For those interested, the Federal Government has published an interesting booklet: "The Golden Eagle, Its Economic Status." It is Bulletin No. 27 of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C. — Maxwell C. Wheat, Jr., 333 Bedell Street, Freeport, Long Island.

Observations on Diet of Goldfinches: Four reports of Goldfinches feeding on beet leaves came to my attention this past summer. While this habit has been observed before, it has by no means been widely publicized. One of the women who made the report to me indicated that she had been planting beets for several years especially for Goldfinches.

There were two other reports of Goldfinches feeding on the leaves of Swiss chard. The birds apparently bite small portions from the edges of the leaves. It has been suggested by several, including Sally Hoyt of the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology, that the Goldfinches may be satisfying some craving for a salt or other chemical in the leaves. Both beet and Swiss chard leaves are high in calcium, but then too so are many other plants which are apparently untouched.

If others have observed this phenomenon or know of any studies that have been made on the subject, I would be happy to hear from them — Benjamin P. Burtt, 109 Haffenden Road, Syracuse 10.

Experiences with A Nighthawk: Last September 18 a Common Nighthawk was brought to me by a neighbor, Lou Brown. Mr. Brown, a railroad brakeman, had found the bird sitting on the front of the engine. The Nighthawk did not appear to be injured, but its flight indicated that it was apparently a young bird.

Quite a few injured birds are brought to me from time to time (I hold the required licenses for this), but this was the first Nighthawk I had cared for. I immediately called Mrs. Harold Alsdorf, who has had considerable experience in looking after and feeding many species of birds. Looking through her files she came up with a proper diet for the Nighthawk; this had been given to her in turn by a Mrs. Schoonmaker of Washington State. The diet was most interesting, I thought, and the bird looks forward eagerly to each feeding. It includes a jar of strained beef heart, two tablespoons mashed potato, a tablespoon mashed carrot, two teaspoons butter, and four drops Vi Penta vitamins.