

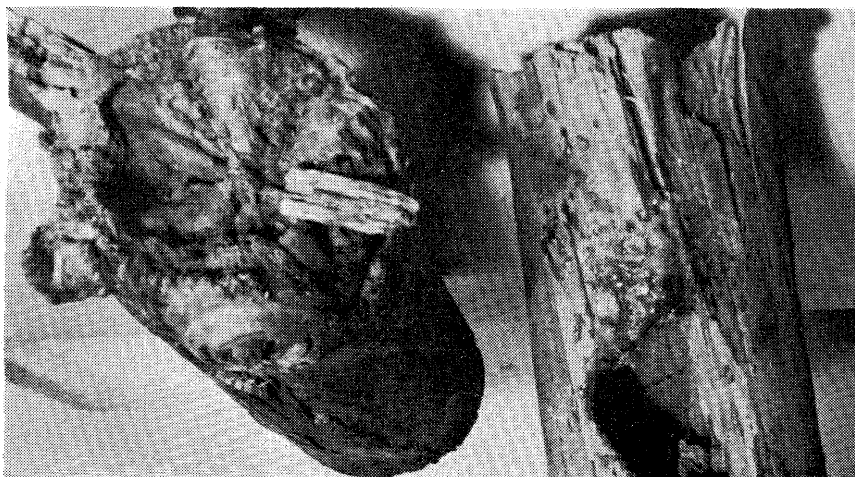
Nesting Red-breasted Nuthatches at Letchworth State Park: On June 4, 1961, as I was resting close by a dense planting of jack and red pine near the Mary Jamison Statue in Letchworth State Park, I heard a faint tapping barely audible among the songs of Black-throated Green Warblers. Upon investigating I located a Red-breasted Nuthatch sitting on a perch about twenty feet from the ground and just below a hole near the broken off top of a dead pine tree.

The short broken off branches formed a circling ring of perches, one row for every year of growth.

As one nuthatch entered the nest, another, leaving, squeezed by in the small hole. The soft pecking sound began again and then stopped as a bird appeared at the entrance hole to let fall from its bill what could be incorrectly called sawdust. The mate returned and exchanged places, and so the work of hollowing continued. I made further observations on June 15 and 18. On June 29 I observed that the lower border of the nest opening was covered with a shiny, gummy substance that formed, at one place, a ball about three eighths of an inch thick. This was the pitch accumulation that is a characteristic of the nesting sites of Red-breasted Nuthatches. One of the birds entered the hole with something in its bill but then left immediately. When I returned on July 13 the nest was vacated. At no time had I seen the numbers of eggs or young.

I took the following close measurements of the nest. The entrance hole was one and three eighths inches wide. The dept of the cavity was six inches, including the two inch entrance. The diameter of the cavity at the base was two and one half to two and three quarters inches. It was interesting to see the floor of the cavity that showed the whorl of branches radiating out from the center of the trunk like spokes of a wheel.

The harder grain of their centers had resisted the pecking of the birds. The inner walls of the nest showed only a light white powdering — testimony to the birds' good housekeeping ability. A nest lining consisted of shredded bark, white hairs three to four inches long, and small gray feathers. There were also some very fine small feathers stuck in the pine pitch that the birds had plastered along the margins of the entrance hole. A barely noticeable amount of gum had been put on the sides, but a considerably larger amount was put along the lower margin. This lower border was up to one and one half inches wide and two localized areas were three sixteenths of an inch thick. — Arthur F. Freitag, 1000 Kensington Ave., Buffalo 15.



Bottom of nest hole.

Nest opening with pitch.