

the inside window into a house near Sulphur Springs, where it was found by the Calhouns when they returned home from work. There was fresh blood on the wall and floor, showing that it must have happened only a short time before they arrived. The pane of glass in the storm window was 30 in. by 32 in., and this glass was double thickness. The inner pane was smaller, about 12 in. by 16 in. Outside of this window the Calhouns found a pigeon with band CU 61-29040. One wing of the pigeon was injured or broken, but the bird was not otherwise seriously hurt and survived.

The hawk was given to me on Dec. 13, and I banded and released it the same day. It was large for a Cooper's Hawk and very wild. One claw was broken and the toe was bleeding, but there was no blood in the cage. We did not notice any other injury to the bird, and it was able to fly when released. — Frank A. Clinch, 173 Haley St., Watertown.

Boreal Owl in Oswego County: At about 2:30 P. M. on March 17, 1962, while walking down a path which runs from the New Centerville Road (3 miles east of Pulaski) through spruce plantations and native white pine, hemlock, and deciduous trees and brush down to the Salmon River, I noted a small owl perched six feet up in the outer branches of a white spruce. The white spots on the fore-crown of the generally brown and white bird, and the size — which, at 30 feet, I could tell was about that of a Screech Owl, larger than a Saw-whet — convinced me as I observed the bird through 9x35 binoculars that it was a Boreal Owl! I left to fetch camera and Balscope from my car, returning as silently as possible. Such caution and the scope proved unnecessary for observation and photography, as I eventually approached to within four feet to photograph the owl without causing it to move other than to slowly blink its yellow eyes. At this distance, the black "frames" of the white facial discs, the reddish-brown streakings on the sides, and the white tear-shaped spots on the brown wings, as well as the white stippling on the forecrown, were clearly noticeable in detail. Although the owl was not well hidden, there was a remarkable camouflage effect in the similarity of the wing pattern to that of a nearby fungus-covered tree trunk, and the forehead stippling suggested snow caught in spruce needles. The shape of the facial frames gave the owl a flat-headed and very slightly "eared" look. The bill was not yellow, but of a light bluish-gray horn color.

After fifteen minutes of observation I left to notify other birdwatchers of the presence of this rarity, returning at about 5:00 P. M. with Mr. W. D. Bulger of Pulaski, who took still pictures and movies, again at less than four feet, without flushing the owl. The bird would open its eyes from time to time and would become more alert if one squeaked like a mouse; that is, it seemed aware of our presence but completely unafraid rather than blind (a characteristic which Bent notes in his "Life Histories"). Eventually it flushed, at dusk, about 6:00 P. M., when one of us accidentally jostled the branch it was on. It flew off in a rather straight line into the dense spruce plantation, and we lost it from sight.

Examination of the roosting place showed only one pellet and small amount of whitewash, indicating the bird had not roosted for long in this particular spot.

On March 18 at 10:45 A. M., by following sounds of Black-capped Chickadees which apparently were scolding the owl, I rediscovered it about 150 yards away from the previous day's perch, quite out in the open on a white pine branch about eight feet up. On this occasion 24 people, including Dr. Arthur A. Allen and five ornithology students from Cornell and members of the Onondaga Audubon Society, observed and photographed the Boreal Owl at close range. Even with so many people present, the owl did not flush until someone experimentally shook the branch it was on.

At no time was the owl heard to make any noises, either vocally or by bill-snapping.

Parties of two searched unsuccessfully for the owl the following day (Monday), and also on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Possible evidence of other roosting places (whitewash) was noted.

E. H. Eaton's **Birds of New York** gives an Oneida County (1893) and an Essex County (1896) record for the Boreal Owl. Kenneth Parkes' unpublished thesis, "The Birds of New York State and Their Taxonomy," lists Franklin County records for 1878 (presumably), 1914, 1916, and 1922; a Plattsburg record (1922); and one for Westchester County (1951). For the last decade **Kingbird** and **Audubon Field Notes** show New York records for Watertown (1958) and Dutchess County (1960). As far as I can determine, the present record is a first for Oswego County and the only record this century for Region 5. — Margaret S. Rusk, 114 Standard St., Syracuse 10

Grackles Nesting on Bridge Girders: The grackle nest site described by Allen Benton (**Kingbird**, 11, 1961:201) is perhaps not as exceptional as Dr. Benton believed. Bent (**U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull.** 211, 1958:400) described grackle nests, reported by several observers, "on the steel beams inside of a large coal briquet plant" (Scranton, South Dakota); "on the girders of a large water tower" (Youngstown, Ohio); "on the girders of a large steel bridge" (Lake Milton, Ohio); and "similar situations." Todd (**Birds of Western Pennsylvania**), 1940:587 wrote "In recent years the Grackle has manifested a tendency, remarked by several observers from various parts of the country, to nest in the steelwork of bridges."

For reasons I do not presently understand, the Common Grackle is anything **but** common in the city of Pittsburgh, just about the only major city of the Northeast in my experience in which grackles are **not** one of the most conspicuous features of the avifauna of the city parks. Immediately behind the Carnegie Museum is a fine, large city park known as Schenley Park, which is traversed by a valley named Panther Hollow. Soaring 150 to 180 feet above the floor of this narrow valley is the Panther Hollow Bridge, part of the roadway system that winds through the park. Somewhere among the girders supporting this bridge, most years if not every year, nest from one to three pairs of grackles and several pairs of domestic pigeons. Although there are certainly other pairs scattered elsewhere around the city, this is the only place I have personally found that I can count on seeing nesting grackles. The height above ground will suggest why I do not know the exact details of nest placement. — Kenneth C. Parkes, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Unusual Nesting Failure in a Purple Martin Colony: In the light of the mention in the October 1961 **Kingbird** of the early departure of Purple Martins in Region 3 this past summer, our observations on our own Martins might be of interest.

For the past 25 years we have had two martin houses and have had exceptionally good luck in having a rather full complement every year. This year was apparently a good one, at least when the season started, as we had, by count, at least 12 pairs. As far as we could tell the season was normal.

However there was a noticeable shortage of young. Normally they leave about August 15, departing for a day or two, then returning and leaving again. This year, however, they left sometime during the last week in July and did not return.

In late September we took down the two houses, to clean out and store them for the winter. Each house has 12 compartments. Often we find two or three dead young, but there were ten this time. In one compartment there was a clutch of 6 eggs that were perfectly clean and apparently had not been incubated at all, and there were six more unhatched eggs in other nests. Along with a few dead birds beneath the house, the nesting failure was great enough to make us wonder if something happened to affect the Martins. — A. H. Barben, 110 Cayuga St., Seneca Falls, New York.
