

(locally referred to as "buttonball"), the trunk of which was about four feet in diameter with the base broadening to 7-8 feet and the hollow area in the base about 5 feet across. The nest was on the ground in the hollow base. At that time the hummock on which the tree stood was completely surrounded by water. Later in July the swamp dried out and there was no water in the area about the nest. Trees in the swamp are principally red maple with a scattering of American elm, white ash and other species.

When I first located the nest, one of the parent birds was present. As I approached it flew into a tree about 100 feet away and sat there watching me. On my second trip four days later, one of the parents was again at the nest. It flew away out of sight but a few minutes later as I was photographing the single young bird, I glanced up and found the old bird sitting about 30 feet up in the tree directly over me. These were the only two occasions on which I saw an adult bird. On neither occasion did it make any fuss or utter any cries, but simply kept a strict watch.

I visited the nest eight times and my observations of the young bird are tabulated below. On July 17 Mr. and Mrs. Alec Proskine accompanied me and took numerous pictures. On July 23 Dr. Walter Spofford and David Allen also visited the nest and made photographs. On this trip it was noted that one of the bird's wings drooped and appeared to be injured. On examination no broken bones were found. On the next two visits, Aug. 20 and Sep. 5, the wing still seemed to be giving the bird some trouble. On the September visit the bird appeared to be fully grown and completely feathered, but when it attempted to fly the wing apparently did not function properly. On Sep. 24 the bird was gone. A search of the area did not reveal any evidence that it had been destroyed by predators so, hopefully, the wing mended or the bird learned to overcome the handicap and finally was able to fly.

| Date    | Weight                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Length | Wing span | Primaries | Tail feathers |                                                                                   |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6/15/66 |                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 8"     |           |           |               | Covered with down                                                                 |
| 6/19/66 | 1¼ lbs.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 9"     |           |           |               | Covered with down                                                                 |
| 7/ 4/66 | 3¼ lbs.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 15"    | 2' 7"     |           |               | Covered with down                                                                 |
| 7/17/66 | 4¼ lbs.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 19"    | 3'10"     | 7"        | 3"            | Covered with down.<br>Wings and tail feathering                                   |
| 7/23/66 | 4¼ lbs.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 22"    | 4' 6"     | 8"        | 5"            | Covered with down.<br>Scapulars and back feathers showing.                        |
| 8/20/66 | 4¼ lbs.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 28"    | 5' 4"     | 18"       | 11"           | Fully feathered but with some curls of down showing between feathers on the back. |
| 9/ 5/66 | Fully feathered with all evidence of down gone. Appeared like adult except for black head rather than red. Bird able to fly short distances and no attempt was made to catch it and make any measurements. |        |           |           |               |                                                                                   |
| 9/24/66 | Bird gone.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |        |           |           |               |                                                                                   |

Walter E. Benning, Clyde, N.Y. 14433

**A Marsh Hawk and a Coot:** On September 24, 1966 when I checked a group of ducks on Black Lake at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge with my 30× Telescope, I was surprised to find an immature Marsh Hawk sitting or standing in the water halfway up to its breast. About 150 ducks, Mallards, Blacks, and a few American Widgeon, were milling about the hawk. For several minutes the bird remained

motionless in the water. Then with great effort it started to lift itself into the air, but before its feet were clear of the water it appeared to be pulled back into the water. After resting a bit, the bird again tried to rise and again seemed to be dragged down into the water. After several more attempts, it finally succeeded in rising enough so that I could see something in its claws. On the next attempt the hawk lifted the object partly out of the water and I was able to see that it was the body of a Coot with the talons of the hawk clamped about its head.

Up to this point the hawk had settled back into the water at the same spot. Now each time it rose it moved a few feet toward the shore approximately 100 feet away. The Coot was towed in the water with only the head and neck above water, except for one time when the body was lifted completely out of the water. When the Coot was finally brought to shore, the hawk released it and rested on the shore. Then, grasping the head of the Coot with one talon, the hawk braced itself with the other leg and attempted to pull the victim along the shore. This effort, however, only caused the hawk to sink up to its body in the soft muck. After a couple of attempts, the hawk abandoned its efforts to move the Coot farther and began to eat it.

The hawk had only started its meal when a second immature Marsh Hawk appeared and harassed the first one until it rose into the air to do battle. For perhaps less than a minute a furious dogfight at close quarters developed about 50 feet above the marsh. Then the birds separated and chased and circled one another at ever increasing distances until one disappeared over the marsh and the other came back and settled on the ground about 100 feet away from the Coot. Three or four times the hawk took off and circled in the air and settled back to the ground. Then it settled off over the marsh without ever having come back to the Coot.

Walter E. Benning, Clyde, N.Y. 14433

**Unusual Numbers of Purple Sandpipers along Lake Ontario:** In view of the scarcity of reports in recent years of the Purple Sandpiper (*Erolia maritima*) from Regions 1, 2, 5 & 6 which share the Lake Ontario shoreline and because these reports are usually of single birds, it would seem of interest to record some sightings in the fall of 1966.

On Nov 11 I saw five at El Dorado in company with 110 Dunlins and some other shorebird species. Later the same morning four miles away at Stony Pt. I saw a flock of 27 Purple Sandpipers with 40 Sanderlings. On Nov 12 Allen and Clinch saw eight Purples with Dunlin at El Dorado. On Nov 13 at Sodus Pt. Kemnitzner and Listman saw five Purples, a record number seen at one time in Region 2. Seven individuals in five reports were seen in Region 5, Sandy Pond, Lake view and Little Sodus Bay at Fairhaven between Nov 5 and 19.

On Nov 24 I saw nine Purples in one flock and one other single (crippled) at El Dorado and another single at Stony Pt. On Dec 11 F. Scheider and R. J. Smith saw a flock of 40 Purple Sandpipers at El Dorado, the highest count for Region 6. On Dec 17 I saw 23 Purple Sandpipers with one Dunlin at Stony Pt; Allen saw eight on Dec 19 and I found three still at the same location Dec 23 which is the latest date for Region 6. There were none at El Dorado during late December. Scheider mentions extreme dates of occurrence of Oct 30 to Nov 23 for Region 5; wintering birds have been recorded in Region 1 (Beardslee and Mitchell, *Birds of the Niagara Frontier Region*).

Previous to this year my records for Region 6 are as follows: Nov 11 1961 one ED; Nov 17, 1962 one Stony Pt. (with FC); Nov 21, 1964 one ED (with FC). In 1963 and 1965 I searched in vain several times. On most occasions they have appeared suddenly on the beach, from off the water, where they had not been minutes earlier. All birds reported from the two Jefferson County localities during the four years seen have been on rocky shores.

David C. Gordon, 1347 Sherman Street, Watertown, N.Y. 13601