

attic room. Two days later 4 young were out and disappeared into the tall grass out of our sight but not of the ever-present surveillance of the watchful female. And to our amazement there was one more young in the box. And into July seven Sparrow Hawks, old and young, dominated the aerial scene at Home Farm.

Bill and Trixie Strauss, Home Farm, Amenia, N.Y.

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Song Sparrow Chasing Cowbird: About 5:40 P.M. on May 8, 1967, a rainy day, my attention was attracted by a female Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) walking rapidly along the floor of a 25-foot bridge which spans a creek in front of our house. A Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) was pursuing the Cowbird as it walked along the west side of the bridge to the north end, crossed to the east side and started south. Each time the Cowbird stopped, the Song Sparrow rushed at it. When the Cowbird stopped midway on the east side and the Song Sparrow rushed at it, the Cowbird flew onto a branch overhanging the stream. The Song Sparrow followed, whereupon the Cowbird flew under the bridge and alighted on a willow on the west side of, and several feet above the bridge. From my window about 50 feet northeast of the bridge, I could see that the Cowbird had flown underneath the bridge without stopping. It returned to the southwest part of the bridge and the performance was repeated, except that when the Song Sparrow chased it onto the overhanging branch at the east side of the bridge, the Cowbird flew up under the bridge, was out of sight not more than 2 or 3 seconds, then flew out the same side and alighted on the lawn with a small white object on the end of its bill. This it deposited in the grass, pecked at it once or twice, then flew off when a Starling alighted very close. I rushed out doors, frightened the Starling while it was still looking at the object. I found two halves of a Phoebe egg shell (pure white) and the yolk below them in the grass.

The Phoebes usually nest under the bridge on the inner side of one of two I-beams. The nest is only visible from directly under the bridge and the water has been too high this year for me to check it. Some years the Song Sparrows have nested at the southwest corner of the bridge where there is a thick growth of Red-osier Dogwood, willow and Virginia Creeper, part of it overhanging the stream.

Mary Welles, Big Flats, R.D.1, Elmira, N.Y.

House Sparrow Nest in Cattail Marsh: The nest of the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) is usually associated with, or located very near human dwellings. David Peakall brought to my attention the Summers-Smith monograph on this species (1963) which states: "Nests are usually on buildings, either in holes under roofs or in creepers. Less frequently in the branches of trees and rather seldom in holes in trees. When tree sites are used these are invariably close to buildings, very rarely more than a hundred yards away." This past season a pair of House Sparrows raised two broods in a hollow willow stump at Vischer Ferry Game Management Area surrounded by many acres of marsh and some distance from human habitation.

The management area consists of 810 acres of which one-half is river bottomland at about 190-foot elevation, one-quarter is shallow ponds and one-quarter is wetland. It lies adjacent to the Mohawk River in Saratoga County between Locks 6 and 7 of the N.Y.S. Barge Canal.

The birds were first observed on May 20, 1967 when the male was mist-netted and banded on a dike adjacent to the cattail marsh frequented by the pair. They represented the first of their species that I have seen in the management area in over ten years of observing the area, and the male was the first banded there in three years of banding. Their attachment to a particular area of marsh was considered peculiar at the time, and also on May 26 when they were seen again. However, it was not until June 17 that the female was observed carrying food to young at a hole in a willow stump. The stump was in a pond, about three feet deep and immediately adjacent to an extensive cattail marsh, and stood about 9-10 feet above water level.

The nest hole was on the south side of the stump about 7–8 feet above water level. On June 24 the young, at least three in number, were gone — presumably fledged. On July 31 the female was again observed feeding young at the nest hole. By August 6 the nest was empty once again.

From a U.S.G.S. topographical map it was determined that the nest site was located about 850 feet (0.16 mile) from the entrance to the management area, and 1690 feet (0.32 mile) from the nearest human habitation to the west where House Sparrows were common about barns and stables; or about the same distance to the southeast where some summer camps are located along the river bank.

In the immediate area of the nest site were 36 nest boxes erected for Tree Swallows. These boxes were attached to tree trunks standing in water, and had been in place since winter. Each box had a one-and-one-half-inch opening. None of these boxes showed any evidence of use by House Sparrows.

While I was banding there on October 15, 1967, a female House Sparrow, possibly the parent or an offspring, sat atop the stump and called. This indicates considerable attachment to that area.

Robert P. Yunick, 1527 Myron Street, Schenectady, N.Y. 12309

Turkey Vulture Nest near Clayton: The regular occurrence of the Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) in northern New York since 1960 has been reported (*Kingbird* 16(2):92, May 1966). The area in which birds are seen covers the northern part of Jefferson County and adjacent portions of St. Lawrence County. Nesting in this area has been suspected and it can now be reported that a pair of Turkey Vultures raised two young on Picton island in the summer of 1967.

Picton Island is in the Thousand Island section of the St. Lawrence River not far from the village of Clayton. The nest was located in a huge pile of broken granite rocks. The two young were found August 16. They seemed to be about two months old and did not try to fly. They were banded and photographed. On August 27 the two young vultures were still in the same place.

John B. Belknap, 92 Clinton Street, Gouverneur, N.Y. 13642

Frank A. Clinch, 17 Haley Street, Watertown, N.Y. 13601

Swallow-tailed Kite over Cayuga Lake: On August 20, 1967 shortly after noon, my wife and I were driving north on Route 89 en route from Ithaca to the AOU meeting at Toronto. About twenty-five miles north of Ithaca I glimpsed a bird with pointed, falcon-like wings. The bird was flying and I caught only a brief glimpse since trees adjacent to the highway interrupted my vision. The impression was of a falcon with two streamers trailing behind. My first thought was that this was a falconer's bird with jesses trailing.

As soon as traffic permitted, I pulled to the side of the road and located the bird with binoculars. When I had a good look, it was obvious that this was a Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*). I have observed the species in Florida and am familiar with all field marks. We observed it as it proceeded easterly in large sweeping circles until it disappeared over Cayuga Lake. The bird was under direct observation for approximately five minutes. There was no indication of jesses or other markers which would indicate an escaped bird.

As well as observing all characteristics (white underwing coverts, white belly, dark flight feathers and dark forked tail) I had my wife also observe the bird through binoculars and verbally describe the bird to me. This was then checked with the description in *Birds of North America* by Robbins, Bruun, Zim and Singer.

The location was approximately 200 feet south of the road down to the north end of Elm Beach.

Earl B. Baysinger, Chief, Bird-Banding Laboratory, U.S.D.I., F. and W. Service, Migratory Bird Populations Station, Laurel, Md. 20810

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