

FIELD NOTES

An apparent feeding of an eastern painted turtle on a dead Mallard: During the late morning of 11 July 1971, John M. Burnley and I observed a dead female Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) in a small pond about 800 feet W of Tarkill Road in Brookhaven Township, Suffolk County, Long Island, New York. Something was evidently causing the carcass of the Mallard, floating breast upward in the water, to move. As we watched the body of the duck and the murky water surrounding it a turtle protruded its head above the surface of the water next to the carcass. We could not see the shell of the turtle because of the uncleanness of the water but did identify it on the basis of its head pattern as an Eastern Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta picta*).

The Painted Turtle probably came upon the duck as the bird lay dead in the pond and began eating it as the turtle would any suitable carrion. That the Painted Turtle had killed the Mallard seems quite improbable. Adult *C.p. picta* average 4-12 to 6 inches long (Conant, 1958); the maximum known size of this turtle is 7-18 inches (Conant, 1958; Nichols and DeSola, 1933). Even a maximum-sized Painted Turtle would probably be too small and weak to overcome and kill a Mallard.

LITERATURE CITED

- Conant, Roger. 1958. A field guide to reptiles and amphibians of the United States and Canada east of the 100th meridian. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 366 p.
Nichols, John T., and C. Ralph De Sola. 1933. The probable size maximum of *Chrysemys picta picta* (Schneider). Copeia 1933:151.
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Wood duck presumed nesting in cliff: I was driving south on the Thruway just south of mile 123 near Climax, N.Y. on June 2, 1971, under a high cliff on the west side. There I was surprised to see a female Wood Duck standing on the gravelly shoulder of the road with a closely packed brood of ten babies. I shooed them north several hundred feet till they found a bank they were able to climb leading into the woods. I saw a hole about 3/4 of the way up the cliff where she had presumably nested. There appeared to be no tree suitable for nesting above the cliff. Audubon mentions a cliff nesting site in Kentucky ("in the fissure of a rock": Bent, A. C. *Life Histories of North American Wildfowl*, p. 160.)

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Apparent Goldeneye nest at Buffalo New York: On 18 May 1971, I received a telephone call from Mr. Carl Romane who asked whether we would be interested in some duck eggs in a nest that he had found in Buffalo's south harbor on Lake Erie. Mr. Romane said that he had discovered the eggs a few days earlier in his equipment box under the walkway at his dock in the small boat marina, and not seeing a duck in the vicinity, thought the nest had been deserted.

Upon investigating later that day, I found that the five greenish-colored eggs were in the rear corner on the floor of the open-ended box (interior dimensions .9 × .76 × .76 m). They were in a crude nest composed of various sized wood pieces, a small piece of wax paper, a few small bits of down, and a thin rope lying in a circle among the other objects around the eggs (Figure 1). The box is about 23 meters from shore, almost halfway out the walkway which is paralleled by two others extending into the harbor on each side. As Mr. Romane wished to clean the box, I collected the eggs. They are now in the Buffalo Museum of Science collection. On