

winter record for New York State.

The Ithaca observation is made all the more interesting by a secondhand, unverified report from James Briggs of two Barn Swallows appearing in the vicinity of Binghamton in Broome County during this same warm spell. These birds reportedly reoccupied an old nest on a building and fed in the area for several days.

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Ed Note: Mr. Kibbe's report gives me some belated satisfaction. In the early '50's, while driving to the Cornell campus on old Route 13, the first week of February in a snow squall. I saw a Barn Swallow fly across the road in front of me, and circle back and forth several times. There was no doubt in my mind of the identification, but it seemed so impossible, and I saw it so briefly with no other observer present, that I never put the record in print. It was close to the Cornell beef cattle barns, and conceivably could survive feeding on flies and other insects in and around the barns. I did not think of this bird as an early arrival, however, but a lingerer, which did not go south at the usual time, for some unknown reason. — SHS, Field Notes Editor.

Early Nest of American Goldfinch: For the past two years I have been observing nesting habits of the American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*) in a field of approximately 5 acres located in the Town of Pompey, Onondaga County. The field is fallow, growing up to Hawthorns, Red Osier Dogwood, Staghorn Sumac and various grasses. There is a small cattail marsh at the east end of the field, a Red Pine plantation at the west end and a Scotch Pine — Tamarack plantation on the north side. Thistle grows in abundance in nearby fields.

I check this area for nests from the beginning of May as it is used by many species of birds. The American Goldfinch does not normally nest until the second week of July and continues throughout the summer. I was able to locate 33 goldfinch nests in this field in 1973.

On June 12, 1974, I was crossing the marsh and saw a female goldfinch sitting on a nest in the crotch of a small chokecherry. I approached and the bird remained quiet until I was within two feet of her. When she flew, I saw that there were two typical bluish-white eggs. Over the past two years, I have seen that the goldfinch does not start incubation until the clutch of 4 to 6 eggs is complete. I assumed that the female was on the nest to lay another egg or that part of her clutch had been destroyed and she was completing incubation of the two eggs. I returned on June 14th, but found the eggs gone and the nest abandoned. Several days later I found the nest torn apart.

I checked with the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Nest Record Card Program and found that they have only 150 cards on this species, but that their earliest nest dates are in July.

In the Arthur Bent Life History series, he mentions that Andrew J. Berger of Ann Arbor, Michigan, found a goldfinch nest "on the early date of June 11, 1947." He mentioned that it was a two-story nest over cowbird eggs, but does not mention if there were any goldfinch eggs at that date.

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