

## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Monk Parakeet building nests in western New York: During the past few years there have been several sightings of Monk Parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*) in western New York, but no breeding evidence has been reported. In August 1974 Mr. Eugene Malczewski notified us that a parakeet had been building a nest for a few weeks on a factory at 1144 Military Road in the town of Tonawanda, on the north side of Buffalo. This lone bird was possibly the same individual that had been reported earlier that summer in an adjacent residential area.

On 20 August A. Clark, J. C. Burke, Jr. and R. Semlitsch went with me to the site. The nest was an elongated structure (1.8 x .5 m) composed of hawthorn and other small twigs under the eaves on the south side of the low building, and rested horizontally on the junction of power wires with the building about 6 m above ground (Fig. 1). The entrance to the nest was on one end and a passageway led along the building wall to a cavity where an old American Robin nest was placed on an insulator. There was a small apple in the nest cavity and a few parakeet feathers. Factory personnel said that they had not seen the bird at the nest recently and that possibly some boys had pulled down one end of it by ascending to the roof on a nearby ladder. They also said that the parakeet sometimes frequented a dense grove of apple trees and hawthorns just north of the factory. During our visit we saw the bird in the trees and also watched it fly across the road into the adjacent residential neighborhood where there are a number of fruit-bearing trees scattered through the yards.

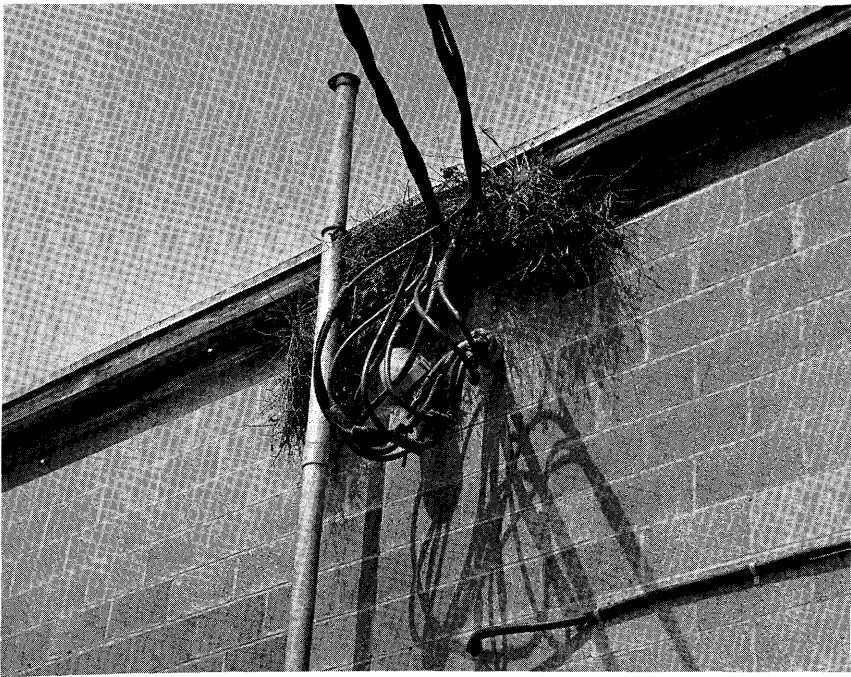


Fig. 1. Nest of Monk Parakeet in Tonawanda, N.Y.  
Photograph by J. Carl Burke, Jr. 5 March 1975

Upon receiving another call from the factory we visited the site again on 30 August, and found what was presumably the same parakeet building a new nest about 7 m above ground in a 10 m tall pear tree at the northeast edge of the large parking lot on the north side of the factory. The parakeet was flying about, perching on telephone wires and calling frequently—a 1-2 sec. long, fairly low-pitched, slightly harsh, rolling trill with softer notes. Factory personnel said that they had seen it take sticks from the old nest to build the new one. This second nest was roughly circular and about .3 m in diameter. We watched the bird fly to the grove of fruit trees and then fly back to the new nest carrying in its beak a thin .3 m long branch which it began to work into the nest. At no time was a second bird seen.

A subsequent visit in September revealed no change in the tree nest and no sign of the parakeet, which factory personnel said they had not seen recently. A single Monk Parakeet, which may have been the same bird which built the nests, was reported during the winter at a feeder about 4.5 km east of the nest site. The nest on the factory was retrieved intact and is now in the Buffalo Museum of Science. To my knowledge these are the first nests of this species in western New York.

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**An extreme fall record for Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*)**—On 10 November 1974 while mist-netting House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) at the Richard E. Reynolds Game Farm, Ithaca, Tompkins Co., New York, I caught a Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*). John Bull's *Birds Of New York* (1974) lists 29 October as the latest fall record inland; 10 November as the latest coastal record. No winter record exists for New York State. This very late record is made more unusual by the atypical habitat in which this thrush was discovered. Before dawn one 12 meter mist-net had been opened next to a corn crib in a large goldenrod field. The net was not far from barns, garages, and farm equipment. Later, when checking the net, I found the thrush along with six House Sparrows, two Tree Sparrows (*Spizella arborea*), and one Downy Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos pubescens*).

The age of the bird remains uncertain. Cranial ossification was complete, yet each greater secondary wing covert had one small (1 x 1 mm) buff spot on its tip. In comparison, all first-year Hermit and Swainson's Thrushes examined five weeks earlier had not yet begun skull ossification. If this were a first-year bird, ossification took place over the intervening 5-6 weeks; if this were an adult it had retained some buff marking in the wing coverts. The thrush weighed 43.8 g, appeared in good health, and had no injuries. Its furcular and abdominal fat depots bulged slightly above the body contours and molt was not evident.

Leberman & Clench (1973, *Bird Banding At Powdermill*, 1972; Research Report No. 31) banded 527 Swainson's Thrushes over four autumn seasons at Powdermill Nature Reserve, Westmoreland Co., Pennsylvania. Only 2% of these birds were captured after 10 October; none were caught after 24 October. Based on their distributions, Leberman & Clench consider adult and first-year Swainson's Thrushes to be simultaneous migrants. Compared to these data, this thrush is three to four weeks later than typically late migrants.

For a two-week period after capture this thrush was maintained in a cage designed to monitor perch-related locomotor activity. On the third and succeeding nights the bird was awake and active, a putative reflection of migratory disposition. The bird gained weight in captivity on a diet of dried insects and dog food and on 1 December 1974 was heavier than when caught (50.5 g). Post-mortem examination revealed it to be a male (testes: 2 x 1 mm). The flat skin was deposited in the Cornell University collection (CU No. 35422).

Clearly, this male thrush was not delayed by overt disease or trauma, lack of nocturnal activity, depleted fat reserves, or late molt.

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