

and the feeding continued until dark.

Several of the ants were collected and sent to the Los Angeles County Museum in Los Angeles, California, where they were identified as *Lasius neoniger* by Mr. Roy R. Snelling of the Department of Entomology, who wrote: "This and related species of *Lasius* are known for the often very extensive mating swarms. These are very common ants in woodland habitats and when all colonies in an area put out swarms at the same time, the result can be spectacular."

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House Sparrow enters abandoned American Robin nest in November: On 1 November 1976 at 16:30 EST I observed a female House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) in and around an old nest of an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). The nest was ca. 3.5 m above the ground in a leafless Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) on the campus of the State University of New York at Geneseo, Livingston Co. The wind was blowing from the northwest between 34-43 KPH and the temperature was near freezing.

When first seen the House Sparrow was in the nest, turning and pressing its breast against the walls of the cup while simultaneously treading in a manner suggesting typical nest building behavior (see e.g., Welty, *The Life of Birds*, 2nd ed., 1975, W. B. Saunders, Philadelphia). The bird next hopped to the rim and stabbed its bill repeatedly at the inside of the nest. After entering the nest a second time it began tossing out debris and small sticks with its feet. A passing dog flushed it from the tree. The same or another female House Sparrow, obviously alert, returned to the nest a few minutes later; immediately a second female landed within one meter of the nest and was chased from the tree by the first. Both birds soon returned and one again entered the nest and repeated the shaping and treading movements. The two females remained near the nest until 16:39 EST, when both birds left and did not return.

House Sparrows often construct roosting nests in regions with severe winters and occasionally even breeding nests are built outside the usual reproductive season (Summer-Smith, *The House Sparrow* 1967, Collins, London; Wessels, 1976, *Auk*, 93: 837). House Sparrows build domed nests in cavities (Summer-Smith, 1967), so interest in, and apparent defense of, an open, exposed robin nest in late fall are unexpected. I think the most likely explanation of this behavior is that the females were probably exhibiting behavior usually associated with construction or cleaning of winter roost nests or, less likely, with construction of winter breeding nests, and that they simply misdirected their efforts toward an inappropriate robin nest.

I thank Charles F. Thompson, who also contributed his observations of the sparrows, and Scott M. Lanyon for reading drafts of this note.

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