

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Late Nesting Attempt by an American Woodcock: The American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) is considered the earliest nesting upland gamebird in the north-eastern United States. Nests of this species in the northeast have been observed in late March and early April when snow cover still remained on the breeding grounds. Most woodcock nesting in the Northeast occurs in April and May with eggs in most nests hatching in May. Eggs in late nests and re-nests usually hatch at the end of May and in early June (Sheldon 1967). I report here my observation of a woodcock incubating eggs at least 36 days after the last known hatching date for woodcock eggs in the Northeast.

On 11 July 1982 my bird dog pointed an incubating hen woodcock in an old field located three km south of Pulaski, Oswego County. The vegetation of the old field consisted of various forbs and grasses interspersed with arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*) and alder (*Alnus* sp.) shrubs. When flushed, the hen went into the distraction display as described by Sheldon (1967). The nest, located at the base of an arrowwood shrub, contained three eggs. On 20 and 22 July the nest was examined, and in both instances the hen flushed from the nest performed the distraction display; on both days the nest still contained three eggs. When the nest was examined again on 24 and 26 July, the hen was not detected, and the eggs were cool to the touch. On 29 July, the hen was not located around the nest site, and the three eggs were collected. The eggs, which had been incubated for a minimum of 12 days, were found to be infertile.

The latest hatching dates reported for woodcock eggs in Maine, Massachusetts, and New York, respectively, are 15 June (Mendall and Aldous 1943), 15 June (Sheldon 1967), and 17 June (Bull 1974). The nesting attempt described in this report is the only known occurrence of a woodcock incubating eggs in July. Since the nest contained three eggs rather than the normal four, it was likely a re-nesting attempt (Mendall and Aldous 1943).

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LITERATURE CITED

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- R. W. Parris, State University of New York, Department of Environmental and Forest Biology, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, New York 13210.