

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Nest of Pine Siskin Found in Erie County: A complete Pine Siskin (*Carduelis pinus*) nest found has not been found in the Niagara Frontier Region since 1889 (Clark Beardslee and Harold Mitchell, *Birds of The Niagara Frontier Region*, Bull. Buffalo. Soc. Nat. Hist. 22:425; 1965). An incomplete nest was reported by L. F. Libler from Jamestown in 1961 (R. Andrle, *pers. comm.*). Statewide a total of only five nests had been found before the New York State Breeding Bird Atlas survey (Andrle, R. F., and J. H. Carroll, eds., 1988. *The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State*, Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, NY, p. 494). Hence, it is appropriate to record in some detail the nesting of a Pine Siskin which I observed in southern Erie county.

The nest site was at Camp Longacres about 3 miles outside of the Village of East Aurora in the Town of Aurora. This site is along the Portage Escarpment in the foothills of the Allegheny Plateau at an elevation of 880 feet above sea level. On 28 April 1990 I was exploring a series of ridges and ravines at Camp Longacres. I stopped briefly under a large hemlock tree when my attention was drawn to chirping sounds coming from one of the branches. Stepping back, the nest came into view. Shortly after, both of the adults flew away from the nest allowing me to identify the nest as that of a Pine Siskin. Over the next few days I watched the nest for short periods of time (one-half hour at a time). I observed adults returning to the nest only twice during this period. The young fledged on 1 May. On 2 May I saw three young Pine Siskin being feed by an adult in a nearby tree. The earliest date for fledglings listed in the Breeding Season Table (Andrle and Carroll, *op. cit.*, p. 518) is 11 June. My observation now extends that date back to May 1.

The nest tree was a hemlock about 21 inches in diameter breast high. The tree stands at the edge of a shale ravine. The ravine empties into the West Branch of the Cazenovia Creek, which is about 300 feet away. The forest cover at this location is mature beech, Sugar Maple, Yellow Birch and hemlock. On the west side of the nest tree, there is an opening in the forest cover. The branch on which the nest was placed hangs into this opening. The ground cover in this opening is jewelweed, along with downy goldenrod, coltsfoot, raspberry, large flowering raspberry, a few black cherry seedlings and a small elderberry bush. The nest was at a height of 29 feet 8 inches above the ground, on a branch about 15 feet out from the trunk of the tree. The nest was placed between one of the secondary leads and two tertiary leads of a hemlock branch. A small

hemlock branch arched over the top of the nest, shading and concealing it from above. The outside diameter of the nest was about 4 inches. The cup was nearly round with a diameter of 1 3/4 inches (4.5 cm). It was 1 3/8 inches deep. The base of the nest was hemlock twigs. It was lined with dried grasses and other plant material. It also contained strips of grape vine bark and a few fine hairs. The inside edge was trimmed with soft (brown) fur and some type of synthetic fiber. The nest was collected and donated to the Buffalo Museum of Natural Sciences.

Mark Gretch, 111 Madaline Lane, Depew, NY 14043