

Tree Nesting Canada Goose at Caumsett State Park: Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) are year round residents in 1600 acre Caumsett State Park (CSP) on the north shore of Long Island. Pitocchelli and Capainolo (1989. *Check-list of the Birds of Caumsett State Park*. 2nd Edition. Queens College office of Publications, Flushing, NY) list it as a breeding species within the park boundaries. This designation is based on sightings of adults with goslings near Caumsett's fresh water pond in 1984 and 1985. On 1 May 1989, David Künstler and Jeff O'Handley observed a Canada Goose land clumsily on top of an old dead tree located close to the water on the south side of the pond. This goose settled into the bowl of the tree and assumed an incubating position. The bowl seemed fairly deep since only the head and several inches of the bird's neck were visible above the edge. Attempts to photograph the goose failed because of the depth of the bowl and height of the tree. The barkless tree was identified as Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), with a height of 29 ft (8.7 m) and a diameter at breast height of 26.4 inches (68.3 cm). Due to surrounding foliage, nest tree weakness and the goose's position, I was unable to investigate the bowl by climbing or using a spotting scope. Between 3 and 7 May, Mary Richard observed a gander (presumably the mate of the goose in the tree) standing guard in open areas around the nest tree. He always displayed mild alarm by head-pumping and never direct forward attack as described by Blurton Jones (1960, in Palmer, R. S. 1976. *Handbook of North American Birds*, vol 2:221-222. Yale University Press, New Haven and London). A tree nest such as this is probably high enough to alleviate the need for a gander to defend with a full attack. By 11 May 1989 there was no sign of either bird. Possibly Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) found the eggs and the geese deserted. More likely the eggs were in water most of the time, as it was a week of heavy rain Perhaps the bowl of the tree prevented water from draining and the embryos perished. Tree nesting Canada Geese have been recorded since 1804 (Palmer. *op. cit.*) throughout North America and so the phenomenon is not new. To my knowledge

this is the first record of Canada Goose nesting in a tree in Caumsett State Park and should be of interest to local birders.

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