

COOPER'S HAWK NESTING IN A SUBURBAN YARD

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Serendipity brought a pair of Cooper's Hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*) to my yard in Purchase, Westchester County, New York. The hawks fledged three young from a nest there during 1992. Two factors made this nesting noteworthy. Both members of the pair were first year birds in immature plumage, brown with streaked breasts and yellow eyes; and Cooper's Hawk seldom nest in suburbia close to houses.

THE NEST

In late March, a Cooper's Hawk flew overhead near my house. On 7 April, an immature female Cooper's Hawk flew through a 1/4 inch plate glass window in our living room and was killed. To avoid future hawk-window strikes, we suspended 2 inch wide strips of tape from the edge of the roof down the entire 17 foot height of the window wall. A week later, I saw an immature Cooper's Hawk perched in the back yard. Throughout spring migration, I observed Cooper's Hawks in the area. On 14 June, with Summer Bird Count participants gathered on our back patio to compile subtotals, a Cooper's Hawk flew into the yard, wheeled around and flew back over the house. We followed it or its mate flying with a twig in its mouth to a nest in a Norway Spruce just 20 feet from our front door. What a find to report to the count compilers at Greenwich Audubon! I was chagrined that I hadn't found it myself much earlier.

The stick nest was built on branches on the east (road) side of the main trunk, about 15 feet below the top. The nest tree stood about 70 feet tall, located at the edge of the driveway, its lower branches overhanging our roof. The nest was best viewed from my back yard, where I set up two spotting scopes. Unglazed skylights in the 10 foot overhang in the back roof permitted viewing in the morning when the nest was backlighted. By holding a camcorder up to my spotting scope eyepiece, I was able to videotape life in the nest. One day, I recorded a chick yawning and dozing off. After the young fledged, I obtained many good close-up scenes using that combination of equipment.

The habitat is suburban, with houses on 2-acre lots containing some tall deciduous trees and a few pines and Norway Spruce. Our front yard is an acre of untended woods, about 200 feet deep; the neighbors' yards

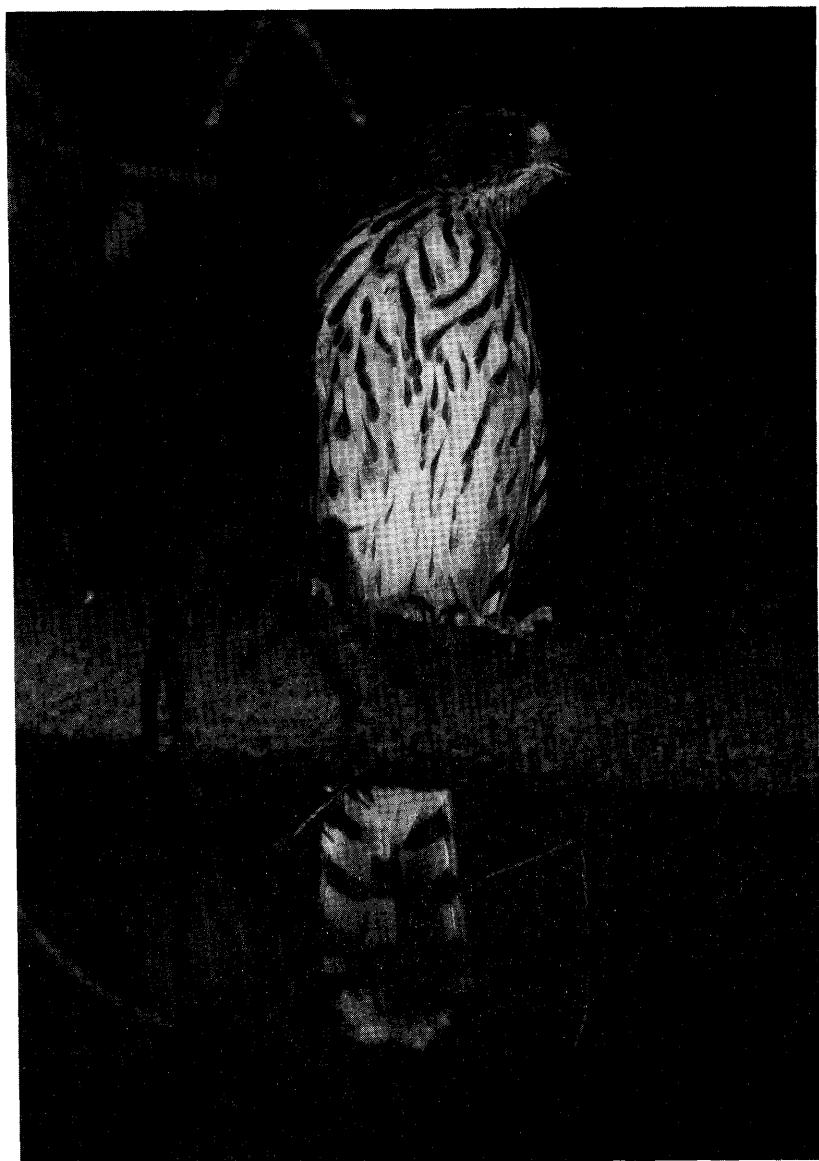


Figure 1. Immature Cooper's Hawk at Purchase, New York. Photograph by David Gardner.

are less dense, though with tall trees, and all houses have lawn in the back. The nest was about 220 feet from the road. To the east across the road is Pepsico's 200+ acre main headquarters and about 800 feet north is the 500 acre SUNY Purchase campus, both partly wooded.

Cooper's Hawks usually build their own nests, and as crows have not nested in our spruce, I suspect these birds built their own nest in our spruce. According to Bull (1974), most Cooper's Hawk nests are in deciduous trees.

NESTLINGS

In the first week after the 14 June discovery, the female spent most of her time on the nest incubating, and the male was rarely seen. Nesting passerines, especially Blue Jays, chickadees, titmice, and a Carolina Wren occasionally mobbed the nest, and crows did also. Carolina Wren nested in the cover of a propane tank directly under the nest.

20 June: at 8 AM, I first saw the female tearing prey apart and apparently feeding young, but I didn't see the hatchling(s). In the first days after hatching, the male called to his mate every few hours, about six soft "cuh-cuh-cuh"s. She flew to him and usually returned within a few minutes, sometimes with prey. The male was seen infrequently in those days and I never learned where he perched. I believe the male gave her headless and plucked prey because I didn't see her pluck prey and no feathers or prey remains were found under the nest at this time; I wondered what she did with the bones. At the nest, the female broods but is frequently busy tending the chicks. Always alert to sounds in the yard, I watched her react to Downy Woodpecker calls. I never saw her carry twigs or repair the nest, and never found twigs beneath the nest.

24 June: the female moved off the nest for the first time, moving 3 feet to the left for 10 minutes. Ten minutes later, I got my first glimpse of a baby hawk, a fluffy white head with a dark eye, light cere, and dark beak. The next evening a second white head appeared and I watched the female put food into their mouths. They seem lively and healthy, one somewhat more developed. I was surprised I hadn't been able to see them before this. After meals, which take up to a half hour, the female settled down and brooded the chicks.

27 June: the chicks first backed to the edge of the nest, lifted their tails and accomplished the projectile defecation typical of hawks; and the first dark feather shafts showed on the underside of a wing.

Apparently the chicks' body temperature was beginning to stabilize, as the female stayed on her side perch for two hours. The next day, I confirmed three white heads. I suspect that I hadn't seen three before because my view was obscured by the tree trunk. The chicks became active, clambering around the nest and changing places with each other; the female stayed on or near the nest. The chicks were quite clumsy moving around the nest and used their wings for balance. I noticed pinfeathers on the underwing of at least two. The chicks often snuggled in the female's flank feathers and long, fluffy under tail coverts during rest time after meals. At least one chick has pinfeathers visible on upper side of wing and a row of dark spots on its shoulder.

28 June: at 7 PM on I heard the male calling from the yard to the north, a repeated loud, high-pitched, rapid "keh-keh-keh." I found him in a tree and watched him fly off. Two evenings later, I heard the same agitated call and I located the male standing on the neighbor's roof. He went from the roof to the driveway and back twice, then attacked a plastic Great Horned Owl on the front stoop. He made three passes at the owl, hitting it with his talons twice before flying to our front woods. At our request, the neighbors quickly removed the owl and came to view the chicks at the nest. The owl had been put out to scare away rabbits.

1 July: one chick is clearly ahead, with more developed plumage on wings, tail, and back. All three are rapidly developing feathers, but they're still primarily white. They begin to preen.

3 July: I noted that the chicks feed eagerly, but did not compete for food. They defecate after feeding, then rest.

4 July: at 4:30 PM, I watched the female stop feeding the chicks, pick up the prey and fly off, leaving the chicks picking on what was left in the nest. They had grown larger and seemed more surefooted as they moved around. Their faces are still mostly white, but they are growing dark body feathers, which look like porcupine quills on their backs. The older chick sports some dark chest feathers, but the lower belly and thighs are white. They seem to be shedding the down on their faces. The eyes are bluish-gray and the legs are yellow. The young eat, nap, play, and preen in the nest. They stand upright on the nest rim and flap their wings, and hop across the nest. They are very aware of one another; I watched two peck each other's beaks and play tug-of-war with something in the nest, I couldn't tell what. Their activity periods are a few minutes long, then they quiet down and often are not visible. As they preen, their heads rotate far around to permit tending to their own back and wings. When they shake, white down falls like light snowflakes.

5 July: a chick reacted to an airplane overhead, looking up but not tracking it. Later that day it or another chick tracked a plane visually. For the first time a chick moved off the nest. There is astonishing activity in the nest, including leaps that I consider pre-flying. The chicks preen often and pick at their feathers.

6 July: for the first time, the female tore prey apart and the chicks took it from the nest themselves. Feeding is vigorous but not aggressive; in one feeding session, a piece of meat flew to the back of the nest and a chick lunged for it. The chicks' new chest feathers are buff with light brown teardrop centers, giving a streaked appearance. All show dark ear patches in mostly white heads, and they are clearly hawk-shaped. They spend increasing time preening.

7 July: at 7:45 PM, the female had been away from nest for at least 1/2 hour as the chicks slept. When a fire siren went off 1/3 mile away, the chicks perked up and looked around. Within moments the female was hovering over her offspring, and she remained in the horizontal position until it was too dark to see.

8 July: the chicks are feeding on their own, and the next day I note that their heads are more feathered and their backs are darker.

10 July: the chicks are erect on the nest looking more developed than they did yesterday. I note the characteristic long tail with its white terminal band and the flight feathers developing. Their crops are usually bulging; the young parents are excellent providers.

FLEDGING

Three weeks after hatching, the chicks begin to move around the tree. The young became very active and literally reached new heights.

11 July: the young use their wings in modified flight, fluttering as they leap from an upper branch to a lower branch or to the nest. They play frequently, running back and forth across the nest, disappearing behind the trunk and reappearing on the other side. The oldest chick stood on an open branch at least 5 feet above the nest, preening and scanning every direction. One of the less developed ones ventured higher, but soon dropped down to the nest. Two chicks pulled greenery from the tree, and one put some in the nest.

13 July: at 6:30 PM the oldest chick was lying on its belly with one yellow leg hanging out of the nest. The siblings were also in view. I videotaped the older chick's first flight, 15 feet to the adjacent Norway Spruce and five minutes later, its flight of about 40 feet across the

driveway. During the first flight, the parent called to the chick. The fledgling chick and parent had not returned by 9:10, when darkness closed in.

14 July: in the evening two young are in the nest tree, jumping and flying from limb to limb. After a half hour they rested for ten minutes and then one flapped its wings for five minutes before jumping to an adjacent tree. Moments later, the adult brought food and flew off after a few minutes. The two chicks fed and then moved around the tree. The unfledged chick climbed around the tree and settled on a branch near the nest. At last light, one chick was visible and the one that fledged yesterday had still not been seen.

15 July: early in the morning, two were chicks in the nest. The nest was observed for most of the morning and all three young were fed in the nest. All three were in the tree at 6 PM when the wind picked up, the sky darkened, and it began to rain. When lighting and thunder started, one scurried to the nest and the other two perched underneath.

16 July: at 6 PM with all three young in the tree, I heard the first identifiable chick call, a soft drawn out "peeeer" that tapered off. The next day, for the first time, I found prey remains under the nest tree: an American Robin's wing, feather, and pelvis. The female still delivered all the prey to the nest, though the chicks spend time in the adjacent trees. The chicks are still much smaller than the adult female and show white on the heads; one couldn't confuse a parent and young. The chicks sometimes feed without a prey delivery, and I suspect they return to eat leftovers.

FLEDGLINGS

17 July: Drew Panko and Trudy Battaly came at 6:30 AM to record the young hawks' calls, and they were rewarded with a lot of high-pitched sound and good looks at the fledglings flying. At 11:30 AM, a chick flew over the house to the large oak in the back yard and later amused the observers by lying down on a branch like a nightjar. I observed them lying down frequently, until they left our yard permanently. At 6:15 PM the remaining unfledged chick took its first flight. I taped all three young together before they flew to a neighbor's yard. Their flight was ungainly. They sometimes lost their balance and bumped noisily into branches and foliage. They called to each other while flying. I found American Robin feathers and tail with attached flesh, two pellets containing a bird foot, bones and feathers under the nest tree.

20 July: two chicks flew to the dead larch adjacent the nest tree in the evening and waited while the third fed in the nest and then took a nap. At 6:40 PM, the two flew high up to some oak trees and the third joined them. It seems that 7 PM is flight time at this stage of life. The nest is still the home base and though they are not often in it, the female still brings the food there. Prey found under the nest included the front half of a chipmunk and two wings with unfurled feathers that seem to be from a robin nestling. Cooper's Hawks rob nests occasionally when feeding young.

22 July: all three fledglings returned to the nest for a meal. Then for the next hour, they flew together, calling and occasionally returning to the nest for food. The next evening I heard them calling near the nest tree and they soon returned to the nest for a feeding. There were passerine remains under the nest, and I noticed an increasing amount of whitewash under the large oak tree in the back of the house and on the back patio.

23 July: I found the hind half of chipmunk, two grackle feathers, other bird parts, and part of a pellet below the nest. A fledgling flew down to the back lawn to retrieve prey, a large frog, that was there. When our dog moved toward the hawk, the hawk carried the frog to a tree branch and continued eating it. This was the only time I identified a frog as prey. Later, two chicks were seen walking on our bathroom skylight. At 6 PM, I found all three young in our neighbor's yard, calling and flying from tree to tree, where the young hawks had been seen regularly. I found prey remains, whitewash, and Cooper's Hawk feathers in this yard. The nest tree was no longer the center of activity for the fledglings and we had to check several locations to find them. They favored the southeast side of our yard, a yard near the road, and the White Pines at Pepsico. The young usually were together and called to each other. If not in the nest tree, I could often locate them by their calls or find them perched in one of their favorite trees. They generally stayed within 400 feet of the nest tree, but things change rapidly.

The calls are squeaky or wheezy and high pitched, like a baby's squeeze toy, but with a great deal of variation depending on the message they intend. When a sibling encroaches on another's meal, the warning call is a rapid "keh-keh-keh," somewhat like the male's frantic call during the plastic owl episode. Sometimes they emit a plaintive call, perhaps asking for food, and there are non-frantic calls for communication on the wing or from tree to tree.

One afternoon, two fledglings perched next door, despite children playing there. Later all three young were playing in the dead larch, grabbing the branches, hanging by their beaks like parrots, and chasing each other. They are sometimes seen beak-wiping, which is called "feaking" by falconers.

26 July: I couldn't count on seeing the young in our yard, though the female still brought food to the nest. At 10 AM, two of the young hawks were peering at us from the edge of our roof only 20 feet away. Prey remains collected that day included a Blue Jay head and many American Robin feathers. I saw a fledgling eating a Northern Flicker in an oak near the front door, indicating that the adult was now depositing food away from the nest tree. Later, one of the young ignored harassment by American Robin and Gray Catbird, even when a robin flew directly at it.

27 July: the female brought food to a chick, which carried it to a series of perches, pursued by its siblings. It found privacy on our roof and fed upon the prey for a half hour. It appeared to have cached the unfinished portion for later consumption. About 7:15 PM the three young flew between three adjacent yards several times. There was only one bird prey wing under the nest today, and less whitewash there, indicating that the young fed elsewhere. The prey delivered today was headless.

28 July: a chick feeding was inadvertently flushed from atop the woodpile at the side of our house. The prey remains consisted of the intact head and spine of a Brown Thrasher, picked clean, and a few rufous feathers. All three young perched on the swing set in a neighboring yard.

29 July: all three young hawks were calling and zooming around their expanded home territory. A moment of danger was recorded on tape: two fledglings were on our lawn chasing each other when our dog went after them. She snapped her jaws just an inch from one hawk's tail. Later, the adult brought food, sparking a flurry of calling, chasing, and carrying pieces of prey. They fed in the nest tree but not in the nest. Later, a fledgling flew to a branch in a spruce next to the nest tree and ate prey remains. I heard a parent's alarm call, a high-pitched "keh-keh-keh."

DISPERSAL

1 August: the fledglings were very active. They carried prey, chased each other, and returned to places where prey leftovers were. The first known hunting success by the young was observed. A chick scratching in the leaf litter like a towhee appeared to be trying to capture bugs. It

caught one and ate it. It continued its search among the leaves and snared a small rodent. We observed a fledgling perched on a low snag eating a large prey item. It repeatedly glanced sideways at a nearby sibling that was ready to pounce. It emitted a rapid, high-pitched "keh-keh-keh" warning call as its sibling buzzed it, and it protected its meal. The young permitted us to approach them quite closely, up to about 12 feet, excellent for photography (Fig 1, 2). One responded to harassment by American Robin and Blue Jay by flying away. Two fledglings called and flew from perch to perch, knocking into each other while vying for space. They have become more aggressive and jump on each other and displace one another from perches. They also remain still and call to their parents to bring food.

3 August: two young were at the edge of my neighbor's yard, one on the ground and the other on a twig 2 feet above the ground, where the birds were approached to within 3 feet. One of them dove from a height of about 30 feet, but came up empty taloned. This was the first observed "stoop." The young birds ventured farther afield each day, out of sight and hearing.

5 August: one fledgling was eating an unidentified gray prey item that seemed sawed off, indicating it had been brought by a parent during the morning. At 5:45 PM, I found all the chicks at Pepsico scratching on the ground for food. As I videotaped the action, four hawks flew out, confirming that at least one parent was still attending the young. Later, one of the young hawks dove down to the ground after prey but was unsuccessful. When the fledglings land on a branch, they twitch their tails sideways several times. After meals, with their crops bulging, they sometimes relax their lower belly feathers. I hardly ever saw the chicks without full crops, proving what good providers the young parents were.

8 August: the young birds were observed all day, alternately feeding, roosting, chasing each other, and flying around together, usually vocalizing. Their progress from even a week ago shows in their skill and ease of flying. Their skill in hunting is slower in developing, but they are practicing. Exciting scenes occurred when one young hawk chased a Red Squirrel round and round the trunk of a White Pine about four feet off the ground, while another unsuccessfully chased a cicada on the ground. It is interesting that the young, before they gain skill at catching birds, hunt for more humble prey on the ground. In another instance, the chicks suddenly took off; an adult must have signaled delivery of a headless chipmunk to a feeding perch. One chick picked it up, but its



Figure 2. Immature Cooper's Hawk at Purchase, New York, August 1992. Photograph by David Gardner.

crop was too full to pack in any more and it carried the prey to a series of perches. Finally it deposited the prey in the spruce, moved to another limb, and sprawled out for a long nap. Another fledgling perched for a long time 15 feet up in a tree. It reacted slightly to Dave Gardner's flash several times, then ignored it and dozed off standing up.

10 August: for two hours, I videotaped a successful hunt. All three young hawks were in a pine at Pepsico, scratching in the needles on the ground and trying to catch prey. They were jumping from the lower tree limbs to the ground and back. Eventually one came up with a small mammal and flew off with it. Soon all three were together on the Pepsico lawn, with no prey in sight, chasing a crow on the ground. After disappearing for 10 minutes, they reappeared in our front yard, energetically calling and flying around the area and back and forth to Pepsico. While one fledgling was eating prey in a spruce, another jumped right on top and both fell about 10 feet to the ground. Within moments, they were back in the tree eating prey. This didn't last long because they were more interested in chasing each other, moving around the trees, and vocalizing loudly. One was seen suspended by its wings between two branches in an often used leafless tree.

11 August: I noted that their faces had become much darker and how sturdy their bodies appeared. I watched all three young together, flying around, spending a few minutes in the nest tree, playing with loose bark and twigs in the dead larch, then being harassed by American Robin and Gray Catbird. They do not stay in one place for very long, and I wondered when they would leave their natal area.

12 August: from 2:45–4:15 PM, a young bird about 8 feet up in the spruce was feeding on a chipmunk that still had its head, a first. For much of the time, a second fledgling, with a full crop, perched above, watching and calling. About 3/4 hour into the meal, the second bird jumped the one that was feeding, which gave the loud, rapid "keh-keh-keh" and protected its meal. The second bird returned to the branch, looked down at its sibling eating, relaxed its lower belly feathers, and called rather plaintively. By 3:35 PM, the third young bird called and soon flew onto the scene. By 4 PM, all three ran on the ground and then flew into a tree, and soon all three were back in the spruce. The well fed one lay down on an upper branch, another fed on the prey, and the third looked on.

13-15 August: previously scheduled but deferred renovation and landscaping began in the front of our house, and the nest tree and dead larch were removed. A neighbor reported that the chicks were in her

yard calling loudly all day during the felling of the tree, and all three were observed on her roof on 15 August. I had requested that the nest be preserved, and the architect obliged. His workers wrapped and tied the nest, and the branches helped break the fall; the nest was salvaged intact with prey remains in it. A 4 foot segment of the tree, including the nest, was given to the Rye Nature Center for a diorama along with the immature female Cooper's Hawk that had crashed through the window in April. The nest construction surprised me, because the chicks often seemed to be deep into it. I had assumed it was bowl shaped; in fact, it was virtually flat on top. The chicks were probably behind the trunk and out of sight due to our obstructed viewing positions. At 15 inches across, it was also smaller than it had appeared. It was made completely of twigs with no bark or other lining. Bird bones were found in the nest.

18 August: I heard hawk calls early in the morning and later saw two fledglings flying. With the nest tree gone and a crew at work all day, I was relieved to see fledgling hawk life as usual. At 5:30 PM, two young were on favored perches near the road. One was about 20 feet up with a full crop, sounding a new call, a sort of a cackle that was somewhere between the "keh-keh-keh" and the shrill "peeeeeer" calls I had earlier heard.

Sightings became infrequent about five weeks after the first chick fledged. Their flying skills had greatly improved but our front woods remained their home base. After 20 August, we never again observed the three young at the same time. Neighbors reported two young in their yard the morning of 30 October, one on a favored perch from fledging days and the other flying nearby. On 31 October, in a field adjacent to the Westchester County Airport, about three miles from home, a Cooper's Hawk flew overhead and perched about 40 feet up in a tree. It was a hatch year bird with bluish eyes. About 20 minutes later, it chased a bird into the trees. I also learned that SUNY Purchase biology students had observed Cooper's Hawk all fall, and as of early February were still seeing an immature Cooper's Hawk on campus. On these dates the hawks could still be around the nest area prior to migrating. Early in December, I saw what appeared to be an adult Cooper's Hawk chase Mourning Doves feeding on our lawn. It had a gray back and appeared small, perhaps a male. The doves escaped and the hawk perched briefly in a tree, twitching its tail sideways in the way that I had seen so many times during the summer. As Cooper's Hawks molt in late summer of their second year, it could have been the male of our pair.

1993 NESTING ATTEMPT

16 March: a Cooper's Hawk flew past my house. Our neighbors had reported two of them in their yard and across the street at Pepsico shortly before, but hadn't been able to distinguish whether the hawks were in immature or adult plumage. During the next week, they reported occasional sightings.

27 March: two Cooper's Hawks were chasing each other. Later, one perched in a White Pine at Pepsico, opposite a neighbor's driveway, exactly where the young hawks spent so much time in the weeks after they fledged. A stick nest was found about 25 feet up in that tree. It resembled the 1992 Cooper's Hawk nest.

28 March: an adult Cooper's Hawk stooped a few hundred feet into Pepsico, then flew toward me with prey and fed on a bare limb of a tree in which the young Cooper's Hawks had fed frequently in 1992 in the corner of my yard. It fed for about ten minutes, then flew off with the prey. I felt that this was the male of the 1992 pair. The hawks were evident daily thereafter.

31 March: neighbors reported the familiar "keh-keh-keh" sound in our yard, and later got good looks at the pair: an immature and adult Cooper's Hawk. The immature was eating prey, and the adult took it away. The adult Cooper's Hawk was later located in a tall White Pine on the south edge of her front lawn, in a stick nest. The new nest was around 125 feet from the nest in the White Pine at Pepsico, which apparently had been abandoned. The second nest was a rough, rather sparse and disorderly pile of sticks about 35 feet up. It didn't appear to be a finished nest, and did not appear to be a platform.

3 April: I confirmed that the pair consisted of an adult and an immature bird. For over 2 hours, the pair called to each other and flew around. The calls were sometimes a high-pitched "keh-keh-keh," sometimes about 6 or more strung together: first soft, then louder, then soft again. Some of the calls were just one syllable.

5 April: at 6:45 PM a neighbor saw the immature bird picking up sticks in our yard and in her back yard, then fly around her house to the front and place the sticks in the nest. This was the first nest building observed since 31 March. I arrived in time to see the two Cooper's Hawk perched. The mature hawk was only about 20 feet up, and I had a good enough look to be certain that the adult bird is smaller, the male, and the immature is a female. The adult permitted close approach; I

walked right under him and joined the other observers at the side of their house to watch through binoculars. After about 10 minutes, the male flew to our yard and out of sight; the female flew to our yard and perched in a tree next to our driveway. My neighbor also reported a crow-hawk chase, where a Cooper's Hawk attacked the crow, biting the back of its neck.

6 April: at 8:30 AM I heard a Cooper's Hawk call and saw an immature female perched in tree. Crows harassed it, and I watched it chase a crow until both were out of sight. That evening, the adult male flew very low over our heads in our back yard.

8 April: I watched the female pull at a twig in my neighbor's back yard before she flew toward our back yard and out of sight. Later, at their house, I heard a snap above me, and saw the male biting a twig. He broke it off and flew directly to the nest with it in his talons. He spent about ten or fifteen seconds placing it, then flew to a deciduous tree in our front woods and repeated the process. In all, I observed five instances of the male gathering twigs from live deciduous trees, sometimes carrying the twig in his beak, then flying to the nest and working at building it. The female was not in view, and there was no calling from either bird during this nest building.

9 April: at 8:30 AM I had a long look at the immature female hawk perched about 40' up in our yard. I noted that her tail feathers were quite worn; the white tail band is nearly gone and the tip was so ragged that a spinetail came to mind. She had several large white spots on her back. She seemed more skittish than the male and was more easily flushed. She fled when I peered at her. Ominously, the following weekend was devoid of hawks.

12 April: at 8:30 AM, an immature flew through our back yard to a tree in at a neighboring house. It was a different female bird, the white spots on the back were smaller and fewer, and the tip of the tail was rounded and neater. At 8:45, another immature Cooper's Hawk flew into the yard and perched. It may have been the female with the ragged tail; it was not the neater female described above. The Cooper's Hawk had abandoned the nest, and were not seen again.

DISCUSSION

There seems to be only one other published record, from California, of a pair of nesting immature Cooper's Hawk, but perhaps one pair in seven involves one immature, usually the female. Cooper's Hawk nests are not especially common anywhere in New York State (Andrle and Carroll, 1988), especially in the rather heavily populated southeastern part of the state. But now that it seems to be more common for Cooper's and their small cousin the Sharp-shinned to take advantage of the easy hunting around bird feeders in winter, suburban breeding may be on the rise. Such incidents should not be discouraged; predation is a natural part of nature and has helped produce the "wild" birds we admire.

Always scanning the trees and sky for birds anyway, I watch for Cooper's Hawks every day. I hope that serendipity will strike again and these beautiful raptors will nest once more around our house. If I get another chance, I'll be a more knowledgeable observer and learn even more about them.

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