

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Dark-eyed Junco Nests in a Hanging Flowerpot

On 19 Jul 2000, I received a phone call from Manlius, Onandaga County, advising that there was a pair of Dark-eyed Juncos nesting in a hanging flowerpot on the patio of Mr. Steven Huse. As this seemed quite unusual, I visited there to make certain it was a junco and not some other finch.

No sooner than I walked into the yard, I heard the sharp chips of an agitated junco!

Checking further, I found the pair of juncos nesting in a flowerpot five feet above the ground, a fact unusual in itself, but made more so in that this was a development of town houses arrayed in a circle surrounding about an acre of mowed lawn. There were a few small ornamental trees such as flowering crabapple, some deciduous shrubs and evergreens on the far side of the circle.

Each town house had an enclosed patio, and Mr. Huse's had a hanging bird feeder containing black oil sunflower seed, and three hanging plants, one of them being New Guinea impatiens, in which the nest had been built. One could sit in a chair about ten feet away and watch the adults come and go feeding the four young that were in the nest. Mr. Huse advised that he often sat there and read while the nest was being built and later when feeding was taking place. The adults would hop across an area of bark mulch, then up on a picnic table and then to the nest.

One nesting had already been successful and that nest was still there intact. After raising two young in the original nest, they moved to a different plant and built the nest now under observation.

Bent (1968) mentions four other unusual nesting sites for the species, such as beneath the gable of a house, in a trellis overgrown with woodbine, in a half-pound tobacco can on the ground and in a triangular bird feeder mounted on an eight foot pipe.

Literature Cited

Bent, A.C. ,et al. 1968. Pg. 1032 Life histories of North American cardinals, grosbeaks, buntings , towhees, finches, sparrows, and allies. Compiled and edited by O.L. Austin Jr. Originally published by Smithsonian Institution Press as U.S. National Museum Bulletin no. 237. Republished by Dover Publications, New York in 1968

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