

BIRD NESTS OF AN OLD APPLE ORCHARD NEAR INDIANA
UNIVERSITY CAMPUS.*

BY GERTRUDE HITZE.

As part of my work in Nature Study during the Spring of 1902 I was assigned an old orchard east and north of Indiana University Campus. My work was to locate and report on all of the birds' nests of this orchard.

As a preliminary a plot was made of the orchard. The rows of trees were numbered serially from 1 to 22, and the individual trees in each row were also numbered. The orchard was thoroughly searched for nests between the latter part of April and the early part of June. The exact location of the nests is omitted in this report.

From an ethical and sentimental standpoint the work was very discouraging. Two-thirds of the nests were not completed or were destroyed in different ways. In all, 24 nests were found, and 18 of these came to grief in one way or another, as the report will show.

The report will be of interest as showing the vicissitudes of birds near a town, and the expense at which birds become and remain adapted to their environment.

TURTLE DOVE.

May 21st I found a nest loosely made of twigs, lined with hay and feathers, and containing two pure white eggs. May 23d this nest was robbed and destroyed. The old birds were flying about the orchard. On June 2d I saw no doves in the orchard.

CHIPPING SPARROW.

May 21st I found a little nest under a grapevine. It was built of dry grasses and lined with horsehair. The nest was built in a little hole in the ground. It contained one white egg with many brown

*Contributions from the Zoölogical Laboratory of Indiana University. No. 61.

spots. May 23d this nest had been robbed like so many others. The nest was not destroyed but the birds never returned.

May 23d I found a nest under another grapevine. The nest had four eggs in it. Two of the eggs were pipped. June 2d four little birds were in the nest, one of them with a lady beetle in its mouth. June 4th, birds almost feathered. They seemed not to be afraid of me as I drew near them. The mother did not go far from the nest as long as I was near. June 8th, the birds have flown. There were *six* little birds hopping about in a tree near the deserted nest.

SONG SPARROW.

May 23d, along the north fence I found a nest in a grapevine, nicely hidden among the leaves. The nest was made of twigs lined with dry grass. There was one white egg, spotted with heavy brown spots. June 2d, two eggs were in the nest. No bird was near at this time. June 4th, the nest had been robbed but not destroyed. No birds were near.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.

On April 30th I found a White-throated Sparrow building a nest in a brush heap. The bottom of the nest was finished and made of twigs. Every time the Sparrow carried any material to the nest a Catbird would fly down and take it away. The Catbird fought and chased the Sparrows until they left the nest unfinished.

HOUSE WREN.

May 21st, in the southeast corner of a shed I found a nest in the old woodwork. The nest was made of dry roots lined with chicken and turkey feathers. There were seven young almost feathered and nearly ready to fly. May 23d, the birds have flown.

CRESTED FLYCATCHER.

May 7th I saw two Crested Flycatchers flying around an old tree. They were building a nest, for one carried a feather, while the other flew at me whenever I came near them. I was unable to find their

nest. May 9th I looked again for the nest but was unable to find it. May 21st I found the nest in a hole in the old tree. It was in a dead limb at a depth of about twelve inches from the opening. It was lined with feathers. There were five light eggs with heavy brown markings, especially at the large end. May 23d, no change in the nest. The birds were near. June 2d, five little birds were in the nest. June 9th, birds are just ready to leave the nest. June 11th, birds have flown.

BROWN THRASHERS.

I found a nest in a brush pile on April 23d. The nest was made of twigs lined with dry grass. There were three eggs with brown specks, more spots at the large end. On April 30th the nest had been robbed and no birds were near.

On April 30th I found another nest in another brush heap. There were two eggs in it. The mother remained hiding in the brush. On May 5th I found the brush pile was burned and the birds gone.

On May 7th I found an unfinished nest in still another brush pile. May 9th, the nest was finished but no bird was near. May 14th, four eggs in the nest with the Brown Thrasher on the nest. She was not a bit shy, and allowed me to come quite close to her. She then hopped off the nest and from twig to twig, and out upon the ground, and then flew away. The male sat off at the other side of the orchard and sang very merrily. May 16th, the female was still upon the nest, the male was very happy as he sat up in the tree and sang. May 21st, the nest had not been destroyed. The bird was quite friendly, as she would sit and allow me to talk to her. On the 23d I found that some boys had been in the orchard. They had robbed and destroyed all the nests. This one was not spared. The birds have disappeared.

On May 7th I found the foundation of a nest in a tree, nicely hidden by leaves. It was built of large twigs and lined with a few dry grasses. The nest seemed deserted. On May 9th no birds were near and no work had been done on the nest. June 1st, the birds had been working on the nest. It had been entirely relined. June 5th, one egg, blue, flaked with brown, was in the nest. June 9th, there were

three eggs in the nest. The mother bird was quite nervous when I was near the nest. No further observations were made on this nest.

CATBIRD.

On May 2d I saw two Catbirds weaving straws into a nest. May 5th, the nest was gone. Catbirds not near. I believe they are hard to please, for they begin a nest and then desert it, sometimes leaving the foundation and other times entirely destroying every trace of it.

On May 7th I found a nest made of twigs and dry grass with Catbirds near it. On May 9th this nest was partially destroyed. The birds were gone.

On May 7th I found a nest in a tree. I chased the birds off from the nest to find two greenish eggs in it. The eggs were smaller than the Robin's eggs. The old birds fought me. May 9th, no change in the nest. Birds fought even harder than the last time. May 14th, one egg was pipped. May 16th, I climbed the tree. No birds flew at me, and I soon found that, like so many other nests, this one had been robbed. The eggs were gone. No shells nor birds were near.

On May 7th I found an unfinished nest. It was nicely hidden by leaves. It was built of twigs and a few dry grasses; no birds were near. This nest was deserted, as no more work had been done and no eggs were found in it on later visits.

On May 9th I found the fifth Catbird's nest. It contained one egg. No bird was near to fight. On May 14th two eggs were in the nest, and on May 16th the eggs had been broken and the nest torn up. No birds were near.

The sixth nest was found on May 9th. It contained one egg, but no bird was near to fight. On the 14th the nest had two eggs in it, but they were broken and the nest was destroyed.

On May 14th I found a nest quite high in the tree. There was one egg in it. May 21st, the egg was gone; it looked as though it had been broken. The inside of the nest was torn out.

On May 21st I found a newly built nest. The Catbirds were in the tree and seemed very interested in the nest. On May 23d the nest was destroyed and no birds were near.

ROBIN.

On April 21st, 1902, a Robin's nest was found on the rail of a fence, about four feet from the ground. The nest was made of roots, dry twigs, dry grass, plastered together and to the fence with clay. Softer grass was used in the center. Two blue-green eggs were in the nest, their small ends toward the center of the nest. On the 23d the bird was on the nest when I made my round, but she flew off. There were four eggs in the nest, and just as soon as I left she flew back. On the 30th the nest was found to have been torn from the fence and thrown upon the ground. The eggs were broken. No birds were noticed near this place again.

On April 14th I found an unfinished nest in a tree. It was being constructed like the one above described. Birds working hard. April 17th the nest was completed, but the birds were not near. April 21st I found one blue-green egg in the nest. April 23d I found that three eggs had been laid but had been broken, and the shells were on the ground near and far. The nest was wet with the white of the egg, and the inside of the nest destroyed. I was unable to find the cause of the nest being destroyed. Nothing further was done on this nest by the birds up to the end of the observations.

On April 17th I found a nest in a tree which had been completed. The Blue Jays and the Robins were fighting, the latter being driven away. On April 23d I found a Robin on the nest sitting on one egg. April 30th I found the bird sitting on three eggs. The Robin seemed quite friendly, for she allowed me to come very near to her. Then she flew only after I made a motion as though to touch her. May 2d I found the bird sitting on four eggs. May 5th the Robin was still on the nest. She allowed me to come quite near. May 7th, two little Robins in the nest; the other two eggs were pipped. May 9th, four little birds. They seemed all mouths and eyes. The mother flew as soon as I came near the nest, but did not go more than five feet. The male followed me a long distance. This was the first time he had shown fight. On March 14th, the birds have grown very much. They would not take anything from me. Both the old birds tried to fight, and as I left the nest the male followed. May 16th the birds were nearly feathered; very shy. May 17th, all the

birds have flown. In just one month from the time I found the nest all trace of the birds was gone. It was twenty-four days from the time the first egg was laid in the nest until the nest was empty.

On May 4th I found a Robin's nest up high in the tree. Made like those above described. May 7th I found four blue-green eggs in the nest with the female on the nest. On May 14th two of the eggs were pipped. The mother was very nervous. On May 16th four little birds were in the nest. On May 21st the little birds were nearly feathered, and on the 23d the birds had flown.

BLUEBIRD.

May 21st I found a nest with one blue egg in an old and partially hollow tree. It was in a cavity on the east side about ten inches from the opening. The nest was lined with fine feathers, but in pulling off the bark much of the loose, decayed stuff fell into the nest. May 23, the nest has been robbed and the lining pulled out.

LIST OF MAMMALS, REPTILES AND BATRACHIANS OF MONROE COUNTY.

BY WALDO L. MCATEE.

(By title.)