

age at about 1 week. I withdrew about 50 feet, and the hen quickly returned to her brood.

This sighting may be significant for two reasons: (1) the scarcity of Woodcock breeding records for North Carolina, and (2) the early date of hatching. Critcher and Quay (*Chat*, 17:62-68) found that nests or young Woodcocks had been reported in only 13 counties in North Carolina. To my knowledge no nests or juveniles have been recorded for Granville County. Considering the age of the chicks and the incubation period (Sheldon observed an incubation period of 21 days for one nest), egg laying in the present case might have occurred in late February. C. S. Brimley gives egg dates for Raleigh as 3 March to 11 April with an average of 24 March for 16 egg records. For the Sandhills region Skinner (*Chat*, 17:63) says, "The eggs are laid as early in some cases as the latter part of February, and I have seen young birds as early as the first week in April." Breeding, egg laying, and hatching vary with the latitude, elevation, and weather. The present observation is consistent with data suggesting relatively early reproduction in the North Carolina piedmont. In addition 21 March appears to be one of the earliest dates for observed young in the northern piedmont, perhaps attributable to the mild winter of 1971-1972.

## **Nesting of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Great Craggy and Southern Great Balsam Mountains of North Carolina**

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24 January 1972

Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley (1942) regarded the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) as a breeding summer resident in the higher mountains of North Carolina, but they mentioned only four specific localities where the bird had been observed: Roan Mountain, Highlands, Joannana Bald Mountain, and Greybeard Mountain. Elsewhere, the bird has been reported during summer in the Unicoi Mountains by Ganier and Clebsch (1944), the Great Smoky Mountains by Stupka (1963), and Mt. Mitchell by Burleigh (1941). To date, however, there appear to be no specific records from the Great Craggy or southern Great Balsam Mountains; and the following observations are therefore of interest.

**SOUTHERN GREAT BALSAM MOUNTAINS:** Based on my field work in this range from 1963 to 1971, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is an uncommon summer resident above 3,500 feet in deciduous forests that have been disturbed by logging or fires. During the months of May through August, I have a total of 16 records of individual birds at elevations from 3,600 feet to 5,800 feet. In addition to these individual sightings, groups of two or more birds have been noted at three localities in the range. At Wet Camp Gap (5,360 feet), Jackson County, a pair has been noted repeatedly in June 1963, 1965, and 1969, while on 15 June 1968 two adults were carrying food into a nesting hole some 25 feet up in a large white oak (*Quercus alba*). The cries of the young birds could be heard, but I was unable to climb the tree to examine the nest. In June 1963, 1965, and 1968 a pair was present at 5,540 feet on the eastern slope of Shining Rock, where the birds were seen entering and leaving a cavity in a yellow birch (*Betula lutea*). Although no evidence of eggs or young was noted at Shining Rock, an adult with two young was seen on 25 July 1969 just NW of Beech Gap, Haywood County at 5,400 feet.

**GREAT CRAGGY MOUNTAINS:** I have noted a pair at Craggy Gardens (5,300 feet) in June 1957, 1959, 1968, and 1969. During the first week of June 1957, two adults were carrying food into a nesting cavity 30 feet up in a white oak. I heard the cries of the young birds, although it was impossible to climb the tree for close examination. Elsewhere, I have noted pairs at Beetree Gap (4,900 feet) in June 1964 and 1969, at Sprucepine Ridge (4,200 feet) in June 1970, and on Craggy Dome (5,700 feet) in June 1957 and 1970.

In spite of the published records of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in western North Carolina, a great deal remains to be learned about the distribution of the bird in the area. Observers should be alert to document any breeding of the species in the region.

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### Blue Jays Mob a Dead Common Grackle

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9 March 1972

During the morning of 20 February 1972 I heard Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) screaming wildly in the small trees on the lawn of my home, and upon looking out the window I saw no cat where the birds were centered; thus, I watched the birds a few minutes and determined the exact spot receiving their greatest attention. After the mobbing behavior had stopped, I went to the spot and found a dead Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*). The head and tail of the grackle were buried beneath fallen pine leaves so that the exposed part of the dead bird gave little indication that the black object was a dead bird.

There was little reason to doubt that the dead grackle was the object of the Blue Jays' attention. Inasmuch as Blue Jays normally do not mob living grackles, it is noteworthy that these jays mobbed one that was dead and partly buried.

### Two Instances of Apparent Sublimation of Sex Drive in Robins

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18 August 1972

While watching the birds in my yard near Zebulon, Wake County, N.C., for anting and sunbathing behavior during the cool and sunny days following the heavy rainfall associated with the passage of Hurricane Agnes, I noted an adult male Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) repeatedly mounting pine cones, waving his wings to keep his balance, and apparently attempting copulation. The bird alternately mounted several cones in rapid succession and sunbathed for about 30 minutes beginning at 06:30 EST. Following the last observed mounting, he flew to a tree and began singing. Later in the day (24 June 1972) I saw birds of other species sunning, but they did not mount pine cones.

On 25 June the banded adult male Robin that held territory on the east side of our house and had mounted pine cones the previous day attempted to mount his mate, but she was not receptive. On 28 June she was nest building, and on 2 July she was incubating. I saw the pair feeding young out of the nest on 1 August.

I believe that the mounting of pine cones was a sublimation of the male's sex drive. The Robins had lost their nest on 22 June, and apparently the male was ready to begin re-nesting activities before the female was ready for copulation.

About a dozen juvenile Robins no longer dependent upon their parents had flocked by 11 July. Rainfall began about noon on this date and continued off and on until clearing began about 09:30 on 13 July. By 09:50 Robins and several other species of