

just those whose contents he collected, it is doubtful that any direct evidence of nesting was obtained from Bull's Island.

In summary, American Coots are now known to have bred at only two localities in South Carolina, and the only extant site is Magnolia Gardens. Seventeen nests containing eggs have been found. The egg dates are 1 May (1960) - 20 July (1961). The mean peak egg date is 5 June. Assuming that the data in Table 1 (plus that for the single nest found in Barnwell County) represent a normal distribution, then the 95% confidence interval for egg dates is 27 May - 14 June.

## **Breeding of the Chestnut-sided Warbler at Caesar's Head, S. C.**

IRVIN PITTS, JR.  
8170 Geer Highway  
Cleveland, SC 29635

In suitable habitat, the Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) is a common breeder in the mountains of North Carolina (above 600 m). In South Carolina, breeding records for this species have not been documented since the 1890s. Loomis (Auk 8:323-333, 1891) in his visit to Caesar's Head, stated that "this warbler is very common in this locality." He mentioned finding recently fledged young at Caesar's Head, but details of a nest are lacking. This article is a report on the present breeding status of the Chestnut-sided Warbler at Caesar's Head, Greenville County, S.C.

Territorial male Chestnut-sided Warblers were present in the Caesar's Head area in the summers of 1986 through 1989. I found the birds in areas associated with brushy powerline clearings. In 1986, one male was present near the Caesar's Head State Park headquarters (960 m). In 1987, a male was present in the same locality and I saw another singing near the Raven Cliff Falls Trail on 23 May (850 m). In 1988, a male was present near the State Park headquarters and another near Hwy. 276, 1.5 km from the North Carolina border.

On 30 April 1989, a territorial male was first seen in the powerline clearing near the State Park headquarters. On 14 May, I watched a female as she foraged in the undergrowth of the powerline clearing. The male chased her into a thicket and grasped her tail with his bill. They disappeared, and mating was not observed. On 8 June, I saw the male singing while holding caterpillars in his bill. He flew to a Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) thicket, which contained a nest with four young. Later that day, I photographed a female brooding the young.

I saw both adults bringing insects to the nest; these included caterpillars, moths and small grasshoppers. The young were fed at frequent intervals. The adults were tame and brought food while I stood nearby. When distressed, they reacted by moving through the shrubbery while giving an excited "chip" call. I did not see a distraction display. The young fledged on 13 June. On 15 June and 18 June, I saw both adults feeding the young in a nearby thicket.

The nest was located in a Mountain Laurel thicket situated in a small, open clearing (960 m). Other shrubs and saplings of this thicket included Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), Rosebay (*Rhododendron maximum*), Yellow Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), Sweet Shrub (*Calycanthus floridus*), Sweet Pepper Bush (*Clethra acuminata*) and Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*). The significant herbaceous plants included Day Lily (*Emerocallis fulva*), Whorled Loosestrife (*Lysimachia quadrifolia*) and Hay-scented Fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*). The average height of the Mountain Laurel was 1.1 m. The laurel used for nesting was 82 cm.

The site was located 17 m from the powerline clearing and 8.2 m from the State Park parking lot. The site was also located 5.1 m from a brushy, wooded margin with a thick understory. The dominant canopy trees here included Sweet Birch (*Betula lenta*), Red Maple, Black Locust and Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*). The understory was composed of Carolina Rhododendron (*Rhododendron minus*), Mountain Laurel, Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) and Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*). Coral Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) and Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) formed a dense cover on the outer fringe. The young moved here after leaving the nest.

The nest was 56 cm above ground and was attached to four stems of the Mountain Laurel shrub. It was placed at the edge of the thicket and was partially open to view. The outer cup was thin-walled and loosely woven with weed strips, grasses, bark strips and plant down. It was wrapped and attached to the laurel stems with spider web or insect silk. The inner cup was neatly lined with grasses, fine weed strips, thin shreds of bark and Mountain Laurel flower pedicels. The diameter of the outer cup was 6.3 cm, and the depth was 3.5 cm. The nest is now in the Clemson University Vertebrate Collections.

The male frequently sang from the powerline clearing and other nearby wooded margins. He sang persistently during the day during May to mid-June, at which time singing declined. He sang from both the canopy and the understory. During May, Chestnut-sided Warbler primary song was most frequently given. By late May-early June, another more variable, rambling song was heard.

My observations indicate that the Chestnut-sided Warbler is an uncommon summer resident of the Caesar's Head area. In the 1890s, this species was considered very common. The reasons for its decline may be revealed by Loomis' (1891) statements. He mentions that periodic burning to create range for cattle was a practice in this area during the 1800s. This probably created the second-growth habitat favored by the Chestnut-sided Warbler. Intentional burning, or clearing, is no longer a common practice at Caesar's Head. Today, suitable habitat is restricted to powerline clearings and other small openings such as around houses. A closer look at this habitat may reveal that the Chestnut-sided Warbler is fairly common, but localized, in these areas.