

FLEDGING OF A RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

GEORGE ANDREW AMMANN

Rt. 2, Box 380A, Erwin, Tennessee 37650

At approximately 1100 on 13 August 1987, I observed a young Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) leave its nest. The nest was on the lowermost, downsloping limb of a small (15–20 cm dbh) river birch (*Betula nigra*), about 4 m above a small rapids in Spivey Creek, Unicoi County, Tennessee. I had discovered the nest a week earlier when, as I sat on the deck of my home, a movement among the foliage attracted my attention. I had a clear view of the nest, which was about 30 m down a steep slope, on the opposite bank of the stream. I had a fleeting glimpse of the female perched on the rim of the nest, but I was not sure the nest was occupied until she returned about 30 minutes later and fed a single nestling.

Throughout the following week I observed the nest for several minutes at a time on numerous occasions; however, I saw the female feed its young only once more. Except while it was being fed, I was in doubt that the nestling was still there because it sat so low and remained motionless. Only by 11 August did I note the movement of the chick. On 12 August, there was more activity: the chick sat higher, occasionally stretched its wing, preened, and scratched its head.

Finally, on the morning of the 13th, the chick's activity increased and it appeared to be perching on the rim of the nest. I watched the nest more frequently, and was fortunate to have my binoculars trained on it just as a hornet or bumblebee approached and almost landed. The chick immediately flew horizontally 2 or 3 m, momentarily perched on a twig, then continued flying in the same direction 1 or 2 m. Then it abruptly reversed direction and angled upward for 3 or 4 m and disappeared into the foliage. Its flight seemed slow and laborious, compared to that of an adult, reminding me of a male American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) circling to gain altitude during courtship flight. During the next week, I did not see any activity on or in the immediate vicinity of the nest, although hummingbirds frequently visited the feeder and flowers on our deck, as well as the jewelweed (*Impatiens* sp.) along the stream.

Accepted 22 August 1987.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The 1989 Fall Meeting of the Tennessee Ornithological Society will be held at the Ramada Inn in Crossville on 13–15 October. Program Chairman is Dr. David Snyder (Biology Department, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN 37044; 615/648-7781). Local arrangements are being handled by Dr. George R. Mayfield (999 Sunnyside Drive, Columbia, TN 38401). A block of rooms is being held for TOS members until Labor Day; please make lodging reservations with Ramada Inn (615/484-7581) prior to 1 September, if possible. When making reservations, indicate you are with TOS.