

## EASTERN WOOD PEWEES' LONG NESTLING PERIOD

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During the summer of 1978 I had the privilege of observing an Eastern Wood Pewee build two nests in the garden of our summer cottage at Whytefold about 5 km, south of Winnipeg Beach on the south shore of Lake Winnipeg. For the past 5 summers this species has nested in the neighbourhood of our cottage.

However, 1978 was different in that, firstly, she built two nests, the first one having been pilfered by a crow when the clutch was just a few days old. On 23 July she commenced to pull and peck small bits off the first nest and fly to the new location. She chose a horizontal lichen-covered limb of an oak tree, approximately 6 metres from the ground. Secondly, this nest was not vacated by the young until 31 August, making it a long nestling period. This is what made it so interesting and unusual.

During the time she was rebuilding there were several crows and red squirrels in the immediate area on many occasions. So I was delighted to observe on 29 July that she was finally sitting once more.

On 10 August I observed the female perform her usual acrobatic flight for midges, sit on a bare branch of the same tree, and then fly back, perch on the rim of the nest, and put her beak down into it three times. It wasn't until the 14th that I was able to confirm there were three little beaks. By the 29th the little nest was more than top heavy with three overly active young, the fine grasses

around the top of the nest began to loosen and some pieces were hanging down.

I was not able to observe the nest for one and one-half days until 11:30 a.m. 31 August. By that time I noticed the young had left the nest, in all probability that morning, as the three of them were sitting huddled together in a row on a bare branch of a tall poplar, 15 metres away from the nesting site, all demanding food, with squeaks like a mouse in distress.

From my daily observations I have concluded that the young were 20 days old when they left the nest. It may be that the reason for the longer nestling period was due to the lateness of the season, with a resultant scarcity of food. During the third week the female appeared to have become very weary as, instead of making numerous relays with food for such a hungry brood, she had to take long rests in between and remained quite still on a dead branch of the oak. Also, her call became rather sad and much quieter, as though her energy had become depleted.

At no time did I see the male bringing any food to the nest; he was content to give his sweet plaintive call from daylight to dusk — "pee-a-wee" (pause) "peea", from 12 to 16 metres away in the wooded area nearby, but he was always the protector when crows, grackles and red squirrels were in the vicinity of the nest.

I understand that the normal nesting period for young pewees is from 12 to 14 days. Upon referring to A. C. Bent I found mention of three instances of longer duration — 15, 16 and 18 days. It may just be that this particular nest set a record for an Eastern Wood Pewee.