

G. Svärdson (Vår Fågelvärld 1946, 5:132—133) found a broken coffee-cup in a clutch of a Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, and established that the Mallard eggs disappeared one after one. He attributed this loss to Hooded Crows. When finally only the cup remained, the hen soon abandoned the nest.

The main cause of the occurrence of strange objects in nests of ground-breeding ducks is undoubtedly the genetically coded reaction of the female, which returns eggs that have rolled out of the nest, using her bill like the rake of a croupier (K. Lorenz & N. Tinbergen, 1938, *Taxis und Instinkthandlung in der Eirollbewegung der Graugans*. Zeitschr. Tierpsychol. 2:1—29). The sign stimuli releasing this behaviour are quite simple (see also e.g. H. Poulsen, 1953, *A study of incubation response and some other behaviour patterns in birds*. Vidensk. Meddel. Dansk Naturhist. Foren. 115:1—139, on the Tufted Duck), so that foreign objects may trigger the innate releasing mechanism of the egg-rolling.

Selostus: Vieras esine haahkan pesässä

Askaisten saaristosta löytyi 17.5.1982 haahkan munat-

tomasta pesästä metallikannaksella varustettu lasipurkki, joka oli sisältänyt Piltti-nimistä lasten ruokaa. Haahkanaaraan todettiin hautovan tätä keinotekoista "munaan" ainakin 26 päivää, mutta kun pesä löytyi täys'untuvisena aikana, jolloin melkein kaikki haahkat olivat jo hautoneet viikon tai ehkä enemmänkin, on syytä uskoa tämänkin naaraan hautoneen "munaansa" normaalialia hautomaisikaa kauemmin.

Purkki oli nähtävästi joutunut pesäpaikalle saarella kesämökin omistavan perheen siivottessa rantaan, sillä haahkanpesä sijaitsi laajassa roskakasassa rannan tunumassa. Maassa pesivien vesilintujen reaktio palauttaa pesästä pois joutunut muna laukaisevat yksinkertaisesti avainnärsykkeet, minkä vuoksi ei ole aivan harvinainen, että vieraata esineitä vedetään pesään sen ulkopuolelta. Arvoituksessaan sen sijaan jäät, miksi haahkan omia munia ei löytynyt pesästä; mahdollisesti siivekäs ryöstäjä oli viennissäne pesän läpi.

Tekijät ehdottavat, että tapaus otetaan mukaan mahdollisesti ilmestyyvään Guinnessin lintujen ennätysiä esittävään teokseen.

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A mixed nesting pair *Parus montanus* and *P. cinctus* in Finnish Lapland

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In 1984 a female Willow Tit *Parus montanus* paired with a male Siberian Tit *Parus cinctus* at Kilpisjärvi ($69^{\circ}03'N$, $20^{\circ}50'E$), NW Finnish Lapland. The nest was in a nest-box in a thinned and productive mountain birch wood about 480 m above sea level. This area has been preferred by the Siberian Tit to the other nest-box areas at Kilpisjärvi (Järvinen 1978).

There are about 200 nest-boxes in the mountain birch woods surrounding the Kilpisjärvi Biological Station of the University of Helsinki. This particular nest-box (no. 152, diameter of the entrance hole 32 mm) was erected in 1966 (new box 1981), and it has been occupied in five years by the Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*, in four years by the Siberian Tit and in two years by the Great Tit *Parus major*. The Willow Tit, which accepts nest-boxes at Kilpisjärvi less willingly than the Siberian Tit (Järvinen 1978, 1982), has not bred in any boxes in the neighbourhood, but observations of permanent pairs indicate that it has bred in several summers in rare natural nest cavities nearby.

When the nest-box was visited for the first time on 18 May 1984, the Willow Tit female was sitting in a completed nest. The first egg was laid on 21 May (mean for five Willow Tit nests $27 \text{ May } \pm 6 \text{ (SD) days}$, and for 25 Siberian Tit nests $25 \text{ May } \pm 10 \text{ days}$ in 1966—80; Järvinen 1983). The clutch consisted of only two eggs. The nest was visited almost daily and the female was observed to incubate very irregularly. She was seen in the nest for the last time on 9 June and the next day the nest was deserted.

There was no sign of embryonal development in the eggs. The nest cup was made of reindeer hair and lined with pale reindeer and hare fur and pale plant fibres. At the base there was moss. The size of the eggs was 16.00×12.36 and $15.65 \times 12.46 \text{ mm}$. Thus the nest and the eggs were of the Willow Tit type (Järvinen 1979).

When the nest was visited, the male Siberian Tit usually came to the nest to give warning, and once it was

startled from the nest-box. The pair often foraged together in the woods nearby. However, the Siberian Tit male did not feed the incubating Willow Tit female in the nest, as he always does for the Siberian Tit female (Haftorn 1973, Järvinen 1982). A female tit is a tight sitter and her successful incubation depends to a great extent on the ability of the male to feed her (e.g. Haftorn 1973, Järvinen 1982). So the desertion was possibly due to lack of proper communication between the parents.

Apparently hybrids between different *Parus* species occasionally occur in nature (e.g. Hildén 1983), but their origin is not usually known. A search of the literature did not yield any observations concerning mixed pairs of Willow and Siberian Tits, but in Belgium a male Willow Tit is reported to have nested in two successive years with a female Marsh Tit *Parus palustris* (Dhondt & Hublé 1969).

Selostus: Hömötiainen ja lapintiaisen pesivä sekapari Kilpisjärvellä

Kesällä 1984 hömötiaisnaaras parittiin lapintiaiskoiraan kanssa Kilpisjärvellä. Pariskunta oli asettunut erääseen Kilpisjärven biologisen aseman noin kahdestasadesta pikkulinnunpöntöstöä. Ensimmäisellä tarkastuskäynnillä 18. toukokuuta hömötiaisnaaras oli valmiiksi rakennetussa pesässä. Ensimmäisen munan se muni 21. toukokuuta.

Lopullinen munaluku oli vain kaksi. Haudonta-aikana pesällä käytti lähes päivittäin ja naaraan havaittiin hautovan hyvin epäsäännöllisesti; 10. kesäkuuta pesä oli hyvä. Munissa ei ollut merkkejä alkionkehityksestä. Muihin koko samoin kuin pesääinekset ja pesän rakenne olivat hömötiastyypiset.

Lapintiaiskoiraan ei todettu vievän ruokaa hautolle naaraalle, kuten tiaisiaan on tapana. Koiraan ruokinnalla on suuri merkitys haudonnan onnistumiselle. Emojen heikko kommunikointi johti mahdollisesti pesän hylkäämiseen haudontavaiheessa.

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A mixed pair of *Parus cinctus* and *P. montanus* nesting in Kuusamo

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In 1984 a female Siberian Tit *Parus cinctus* and a male Willow Tit *P. montanus* were found nesting together in Kuusamo, NE Finland (65°53'N, 29°15'E). The nest was situated in a nest-box, made of boards and placed in an open pine barren, about 30 m from the edge of a bog with dense stands of young birches. The inner diameter of the box was 85 mm and the entrance hole 30 mm. The box was erected in 1976, and in earlier years it had always been occupied by the Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*. There are 38 small nest-boxes in this area, inspected annually by HK. Each year 2–4 pairs of Siberian Tits have nested in the boxes, but the Willow Tit has used them only once (in 1982).

The nest-box was visited for the first time on 7 June. A Siberian Tit was brooding a newly-hatched chick, and there were no other young or eggs in the nest. The other parent bird was not seen. At the next visit, on 13 June, the single chick was fed frequently by a Siberian Tit and a Willow Tit. The Siberian Tit was captured and ringed, and a distinct brood patch showed it to be a female. During about half an hour after the ringing the bird was not seen, and the Willow Tit fed the chick twice. When the Siberian Tit returned, both parent birds behaved nervously and did not dare enter the box; soon they disappeared. The next day the young was found dead and no parent birds were seen in the vicinity.

The nest and the chick were sent to the Zoological Museum at Helsinki and investigated by OH. The age of the chick was estimated at 6–7 days, which means that the egg was laid on about 23 May, a normal date for both species in Kuusamo. The nest was typical for the Siberian Tit, being built almost exclusively of a thick layer of grey hair. No unhatched eggs or remains of dead young were found buried in the nest material, which indicates that only one egg was laid.

No earlier information on hybridization between the Siberian and Willow Tit seems to exist (Gray 1958, Hildén 1983). Interestingly, in the same summer another mixed pair of these two *Parus* species (female *montanus* x male *cinctus*) was found at Kilpisjärvi, NW Finnish Lapland (Järvinen et al. 1985). In this case two eggs were laid, but they did not hatch and were deserted after c. 19 days' very irregular incubation. Thus in both known cases the interbreeding resulted in a greatly reduced clutch and was unsuccessful (in Kuusamo, the desertion may have been caused by the interference of the observer).

Unfortunately, nothing is known about the origin of these mixed pairs. Hildén (1983) supposes that mixed

pairs in tits usually result from "misimprinted" individuals, which have been raised by another species and have adopted the calls of their foster parents; later they would prefer the foster species as sexual partners. This hypothesis probably does not hold for the mixed pair in Kuusamo, as the calls of both birds were species-specific (but the song of the Willow Tit was not heard). Järvinen et al. do not mention anything about the calls of the birds at Kilpisjärvi. Anyway, these two cases suggest that disturbances are likely to occur in the breeding performance of mixed pairs of tits, which may be one reason for the extreme rarity of hybrids compared to the relatively common occurrence of mixed broods of *Parus* species (cf. Hildén 1983).

Selostus: Lapin- ja hömötiainen sekapari Kuusamossa

Lapintaisnaaras ja hömötiaskoiras pesivät yhdessä lautapönttöön Kuusamossa 1984. Ensimmäisellä käynnillä 7.6. pesässä oli yksi ainoa vastakuoriutunut poikanen, jota lapintaisemo lämmitti. Seuraavalla käynnillä 13.6. molemmat emot ruokkivat poikasta. Lapintaisen rengastuksen jälkeen emot eivät enää uskaltaneet mennä pönttöön ja hävisivät pian paikalta; seuraavana päivänä poikanen oli kuollut. Sekä Kuusamossa että Kilpisjärvellä sekaparin munamäärä jäi hyvin pieneksi (1–2) ja pesintä epäonnistui, mikä viittaa taissekaparien huonoon pesintätilokseen ja saattaa olla yksi selitys risteytymien harvinaisuuteen.

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