

## TWO ALBINO ROBINS IN THE SAME BROOD

Edw. P. Churchill

University of South Dakota

The author reported the appearance of an albino robin on the campus of the University of South Dakota early in July, 1936. The occurrence was noted in the Proceedings of the South Dakota Academy of Science, Volume XVI, for 1936, page 83.

As is stated in that report, that robin was found dead a few days after being seen on the occasion described.

The object of this note is to report the presence of two albino robins found on the same day during the present summer on the campus of the University.

During the forenoon of June 8, 1938, a young albino robin barely able to fly was observed by a graduate student, Mr. Richard Tollefson, his attention having been called to it by the janitor of the Chemistry building. This robin was in the trees about the open air theatre in front of the building mentioned. The robin seen in 1936 was in front of the same building, between it and the theatre.

Mr. Tollefson caught the young bird, since it could fly but feebly as yet, and banded it. In the afternoon of the same day a young albino robin in the same place was reported to the undersigned who went to the point indicated along with two or three students. On reaching the spot, it was found that Mr. Tollefson was already there looking at a young albino robin in a small tree. He recounted to the author the fact of having banded such a robin earlier in the day. He said, however, that the one then being observed had no band on the leg.

The group of observers watched the robin for some time. It could barely fly and there was no difficulty in following it as it fluttered from one small tree to another. Several times a good view of the legs could be had and there was no band on them. It seemed most probable that two albino robins had appeared in the same brood, since this bird was in the exact locality of the one caught and banded in the forenoon.

During the next day the banded robin was caught at least twice and brought to the Museum, where the Curator, Dr. Wm. H. Over, explained the circumstances and released the bird. On the last occasion, the wing had been hurt and the robin was greatly exhausted. It was not seen after that second day of its observed presence on the campus.

Some few days later an unbanded albino robin was seen several times in the same region, about the front of the Chemistry building, by the writer and others. It had grown to about adult size but was being fed by a mature robin in the usual manner. It flew about in the manner of a normal robin and often flew into fairly high trees.

The writer and various other observers made special efforts to see whether or not the leg was banded. Several different ones on different occasions were able to approach quite close to the albino robin, choosing times when it was on the cement of sidewalk or pavement so that an unobstructed view of the legs might be obtained. This robin was most definitely not banded.

After a few days on which this robin was seen about the Chemistry building as described, it did not appear again and the probabilities are that it died or was killed as is so often the fate of such an unusual form.

There is no doubt that there were two young albino robins about the Chemistry building and the open air theatre on the two days, the day on which one was banded and the unbanded one seen later in the day and the day following. It would seem most probable that they had hatched in the same brood. Further it might very well be that these two robins were produced by the same pair that had been parents of the albino seen in 1936 in that same spot. It is of course well known that robins return year after year to the same place for nesting. Albinism is recessive and each parent must give a gene for the characteristic. It would therefore seem more likely that such a pair would have produced the later albinos in that place than to suppose a second pair of parents each with the recessive gene for albinism.

So far as the author is aware there is no other record of two albino robins appearing in the same brood.