

A parallel instance of male birds wintering further north than their consorts is exhibited in the case of the Towhee. Relatively few females of that species are found during the winter months in this locality.

About sixty-five per cent of the females collected had the chin and throat primrose-yellow. In several it attained an intensity corresponding to that of the brightest males. This depth of color does not necessarily indicate an approach toward *alpestris*; as the wing in one of the deeper examples measures only 3.66 in., while in a white-throated specimen it reaches 3.88 in.

In the foregoing table are given the dimensions of twenty-six males and one hundred thirty-three females. The length of tail is the actual length of the longest rectrix. In the 'wing' the chord is given.—LEVERETT M. LOOMIS, *Chester, S. C.*

Corydomorphæ.—The Lark family, Alaudidæ, represents a particular superfamily series of true oscine passerine birds, distinguished from other Passeres by the non-oscine scutelliplantation, and may appropriately bear the above name, conformably with other passerine groups ending in *-morphæ* in Dr. Sclater's terminology.—ELLIOTT COVES, *Washington, D. C.*

Molothrus ater again in Massachusetts in Winter.—On Jan. 31, 1888, I shot a male Cow Bunting at Watertown, Mass. It was in an old field with a large flock of Goldfinches (*Spinus tristis*), feeding on the weeds and stubble that had not been covered by the snow. The bird was thin, but otherwise in good condition.

This is the third time that this species has been found wintering in New England.*—ARTHUR P. CHADBOURNE, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Blackbird Flights at Burlington, Iowa.—The autumnal migrations of the Icteridæ at Burlington, Iowa, are notable chiefly on account of the immense flocks of certain Blackbirds which congregate in that vicinity. The extensive swamps bordering the Mississippi River above and below the city, on the Illinois side, form an especially favorable rendezvous for these birds, three species of which are represented, nearly in equal numbers—*Quiscalus quiscula æneus*, *Scolecophagus carolinus*, and *Agelaius phœnicus*. During September and October the cornfields of Iowa are visited by countless numbers of these black marauders, which wander about in mixed flocks of several thousands, passing the day in the fields and the night in the woodland or marshes. And it is during this period that so many thousands are poisoned and killed by the farmers. About the first of October these birds begin to appear from the more northern districts, pouring into the Burlington swamps in myriads, and by the middle of the month immense numbers have here collected. Just before sunrise vast flocks begin to rise out of the swamps and radiate in all directions towards

* Two were killed at Belmont, Mass., Jan. 2, 1883, by Mr. Spelman (Bull. N. O. C., Vol. VIII, 1883, p. 121). One seen at Taftsville, Vt. from Dec. 30 to Jan. 30 (C. O. T[racy], Orn. and Oöl., Vol. IX, 1884, p. 45).

the inland cornfields, where they spend the day, returning again to the swamps before sunset. These flocks are often a quarter of a mile in width and are more than an hour in passing—a great black band slowly writhing like some mighty serpent across the heavens in either direction, its extremities lost to view in the dim and distant horizon. Not unfrequently three or four such vast flocks are in sight at one time. How far away from their night resorts they go each day has not been observed; an hour and a half before sunset, twelve miles away from the river, the mighty armies of Blackbirds are still seen coming over distant hills and directing their courses toward the marshes. It is evident, however, that many miles are daily traversed in their journeys to and from their feeding grounds. Making liberal deductions for any possibility of over estimating, the numerical minimum of individuals in a single flock cannot be far from twenty millions.—CHARLES R. KEYES, *Des Moines, Ia.*

Quiscalus quiscula aglæus at Charleston, South Carolina.—Mr. Loomis's record* of the finding of the Bronzed Grackle (*Q. q. æneus*) at Chester, South Carolina, reminds me that it may be well to mention that the bird of the coast region of South Carolina appears to be the Florida Grackle (*Q. q. aglæus*). At least this is the only form that either Mr. Wayne or I have thus far detected there. It is nowhere common, as far as our experience goes, but is apparently resident, for I found it breeding near Charleston in 1884, and Mr. Wayne has just sent me three specimens taken near Yemassee in January, 1888.

As Mr. Loomis has previously reported true *Q. quiscula* from Chester, it follows that South Carolina furnishes all three subspecies. — WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

The Evening Grosbeak in Ontario.—In 'The Auk' for July, 1887, Mr. E. E. Thompson has a note on the capture of the Evening Grosbeak near Toronto and records it as the fifth published occurrence in the Province, the other four being given in 'Birds of Ontario.' Probably this bird occurs every second or third winter in greater or less numbers, as I have frequently noticed them in the cases of stuffed local birds which are to be found all over the country. There is one in the collection of Ven. Archdeacon Sandys, Chatham, which was secured near that place; and one in the collection of Mr. John Dodds, St. Thomas, also of local occurrence; and one was taken near London in December, 1886, which I saw at the house of a taxidermist, but was unable to obtain particulars. — W. E. SAUNDERS, *London, Ont.*

Loxia curvirostra minor taken again at Yemassee, S. C.—Ten Red Crossbills were shot at Yemassee by a negro boy during the month of January, 1888. It seems as if they had changed their diet, as their crops contained only worms, which are found in dead pine trees. There was no 'pine mast' to be had, and perhaps that accounts for their change of food.—ARTHUR T. WAYNE, *Charleston, S. C.*

* Auk, Vol. V, No. 1, p. 113.