

Ægialitis nivosa. SNOWY PLOVER. — On July 6 there was brought to me for my inspection a Snowy Plover in the flesh. So far as is known this is the third record for Toronto. — J. H. AMES, *Toronto, Canada*.

Disgorgement among Song-birds. — In response to the suggestion appended to Mr. Joseph Grinnell's interesting note in regard to 'Disgorgement among Song Birds,' which appeared in the last number of 'The Auk,' I am moved to jot the following.

While observing the nesting habits of Wood Thrushes — more than a score of years ago — my curiosity was first aroused as to how those birds managed to so perfectly clean — polish, I might say — the quantity of cherry stones I used to find in their nests. After a time I noticed that the parent birds fed to their young broods the cherries whole, as they were brought from the trees, scattered sparsely in the adjacent woods. These cherries, I may say, were noticeably smaller than such as are of average market size, being such as are termed by botanists 'escapes,' and it was not uncommon to find a fair handful of the stones in each nest in a proportion of those examined.

But two or three years later, when the chance occurred of watching the process of rearing by hand a couple of broods of Wood Thrushes, I observed that when the half-fledged young ones were fed with small cherries, unbroken, that afterwards at short intervals — as the pulp was digested — they raised the cherry stones in their throats and expelled them, perfectly clean, from their bills. Occasionally only a single stone was thus ejected, but, more generally, two or three at a time would follow each other rapidly. And in this way it happened that I first understood how it came about that the cherry stones found in Wood Thrushes' nests were polished.

Since then, however, I have had many opportunities of observing that the habit of disgorging the stones of small fruits and the large seeds of some berries, such as those of the dogwood and Virginia creeper, is common to various species of birds; and besides those named, in this respect, by Mr. Grinnell, I have witnessed it in all our true Thrushes except (for lack of opportunity) Bicknell's Thrush. Among Warblers, etc., I have noticed that this habit is possessed by the Red-eyed Vireo, Myrtle Bird, European Robin and larger Pettichaps — this latter observed only in captivity.

But as far as my observations extend, I am inclined to think that such birds as are both insectivorous and frugivorous and whose practice is also, wholly or mainly, to peck their food to little bits before swallowing it, as is the case with the Brown Thrushes and Catbird, for examples, do not possess this habit of disgorgement. — THOMAS PROCTOR, *Brooklyn, N. Y.*

Disgorgement of Cherry Stones again Noted. — Mr. Joseph Grinnell's notes on the 'Disgorgement of Song-birds,' Auk, Vol. XIV, 1897, page 318, have prompted me to describe a similar experience I had this summer while photographing a nest near Philadelphia, Pa. After tying my

camera to a tree and focusing for a close range picture on a nest bulging with young Robins, I noticed them disgorging cherry stones, one of which dropped on the side of the nest, and rolled back inside. The parent birds almost universally remove all excrement from the nest, but it was evident that they did not trouble themselves about removing the clean cherry stones, and on examination of several nests of the Robin, Wood Robin, and Catbird, I found as usual that they each contained from ten to fifteen stones, but, as I had never specially noted before, were perfectly clean, and must have been disgorged in all cases.

I concluded, therefore, that nature has only provided the small bird with this means of getting rid of the stone, which is too large to pass beyond the cavity of the stomach. I only wonder that I never thought of it before, for during cherry season, in nearly every old nest, at least of the varieties mentioned, will be found a clean little pile of cherry stones.— WM. L. BAILY, *Ardmore, Pa.*

Birds' Tongues in Pictures.— During this spring I have had especial opportunity to study song birds (Vireos, Warblers, House Wren, Catbird, Sparrows, Grackles, Orioles),¹ and one point of interest which I have determined to my satisfaction is that from a distance of a few feet, with a strong opera glass, a bird's tongue *cannot* be seen between the open mandibles when singing. In almost all drawings or paintings of singing birds one will find the elevated tongue shown clearly. The musical instrument of a bird is not its tongue, as almost every one knows; the sounds and modulations are produced in the throat and therefore why should the tongue be expected to show (except, perhaps, as a modulator).

To cut the tongue out of a picture of a singing bird detracts from it and looks exceedingly strange, solely because we are used to seeing it so in likenesses, but not in life— but the portrait nevertheless becomes true to nature.— REGINALD HEBER HOWE, JR., *Longwood, Mass.*

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¹ I had no opportunity of observing Thrushes, except the Robin.

² Citizen Bird | Scenes from Bird-Life in Plain | English for Beginners | By Mabel Osgood Wright | And | Elliott Coues | With one hundred and eleven Illustrations | By Louis Agassiz Fuertes | New York | The Macmillan Company | London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. | 1897 | All rights reserved | 12mo. pp. xiv + 430. Engraved half-tones in text, 111. (Price, \$1.50.)