

The Shedding of the Stomach Lining by Birds.—The stomach of a bird is lined by a corneous layer which, as is well known, strips very readily from the mucous coat after death. The fact that it sometimes separates naturally during the life of the bird is, however, less widely known.

In Newton's 'Dictionary of Birds,' p. 918, is summed up the knowledge of this occurrence in the case of Old World birds. It is said: "As a rule the cuticle...is continuously wearing away and being reproduced, but many cases are known in which most of the lining is suddenly cast off and ejected through the mouth, as has been observed in *Pastor roseus*, *Sturnus vulgaris*, *Turdus viscivorous*, *Carine noctua*, *Cuculus canorus*, and especially in *Buceros*." These cases are discussed in European publications but in American journals the phenomenon has received little attention.

A most interesting observation in the case of *Himantopus mexicanus* shows, that not only is the cuticular coat of the gizzard of birds worn down by constant trituration or disgorged *in toto*, as stated in the above quotation, but that it is also sometimes shed off in the gizzard and there ground up and disposed of in the same manner as food. The bird in question was collected at St. Joseph Island, Texas, August 14, 1905. In examining its stomach contents, which was largely made up of aquatic hemiptera and coleoptera and grasshoppers, several bits of a translucent horny substance were separated for further study to determine their identity. Turning to them a brief examination convinced me that the material was a fragmentary stomach lining. This conclusion has subsequently been confirmed by most careful comparison with the present functioning lining of the same stomach, with which the fragments agree in every detail of structure. The present lining is hard and readily peels off, as is usual in birds.

Suggestive data are on hand in the case of a few other species, but in the above mentioned instance there seems to be no doubt that the stomach lining had been shed. Observations on this point are necessarily of a desultory nature and for that reason the case here noted is now put on record.—W. L. McATEE, *Washington, D. C.*

Virginia Creeper as a Winter Food for Birds.—Occasionally, we discover some favorite food supply which attracts nearly all the birds of the neighborhood. Such is furnished in some localities by the Virginia Creeper. On account of the climbing habit of this vine the berries escape being covered in winter and thus increase in importance to the birds with the severity of weather. Through all the cold, zero or below, through periods of sleet and snow and ice that sealed up everything on or near the ground, the writer has observed several species of birds feeding upon these berries.

The observations were made on the campus of the University of Indiana,