

territory very few have hitherto been reported from Chester Co., Pa., and they only very recently I believe. My first observation of them was made within six miles of West Chester, east of the town Nov. 30, 1911, when two of them were noticed in a field, on the ground. Three days later, on Dec. 3, I observed quite a large flock of them closely associated with a belated colony of Purple Grackles, they were seeking shelter for the night in a clump of evergreen trees on a lawn in the town and numbered thirty or forty individuals, enough to start a good sized colony next spring if they remain.—THOMAS H. JACKSON, *West Chester, Pa.*

Strange actions of a Red-eyed Cowbird.—I have always considered the Cowbirds as playing the character of sneak, when necessity compelled them to seek out the nest of their feathered kin, but in view of the following incident I feel somewhat dubious.

Toward the end of May, 1911, a pair of Sennett's Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus sennetti*) built their semi-pensile nest, composed almost entirely of fibers from stem or leaf of Spanish Dagger,¹ Palmetto² and Banana, in or rather attached to a vine-stalk of a Rosa de Montana,³ that shaded the library windows of our house from the morning sun. Therefore, the position of the nest allowed easy observation at all times. Early one morning, after the complement of three eggs had been laid, and were being brooded, a female Red-eyed Cowbird (*Tangavius æneus involucratus*) was noted on the ground near the site of the nest. Its restless manner held my attention, and within a very few moments the cause was apparent. Walking to the base of the vine-stalk supporting the nest it flew upward several feet then grasping the stalk continued its vertical progress, at the same time flapping the wings vigorously, thereby producing considerable noise. Reaching a point well within a foot of the nest—or about six feet above ground—it arrested progress, but continued the wing movement. Although this needs have perturbed the setting Oriole, she never once quitted her treasures. After a period of a minute or thereabouts the Cowbird flew away. Two days later the same scene was reacted, only, on this occasion, the departure of the Cowbird was due to the appearance of the male Oriole on the scene. The nest was examined at various times thereafter and it never held more than the rightful contents. Two eggs eventually hatched, but the young never left the nest alive, being destroyed by some mammal, possibly the Texas Opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis texensis*) a serious enemy to bird-life in southern Texas.—AUSTIN PAUL SMITH, *Brownsville, Texas.*

The Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) Wintering in New Jersey.—An immature male of this species was found dead and frozen stiff in Haddonfield, N. J., January 16, 1912, and brought to me by my nephew, Henry

¹ *Yucca treculeana*.

² *Inodes texana*.

³ *Antigonon leptopus*.

D. Sherrerd. The bird seems to have passed its second autumn, having attained the black throat of the adult, but only a clouded suffusion of orange on the breast and rump. This is the first winter record of the species for New Jersey. I have to thank Mr. Witmer Stone for identifying the specimen and the Division of Birds, United States National Museum for corroborating that identification and supplying additional information. During the preparation of the skin no wounds were discovered, but the stomach proved empty and the body's supply of fat absolutely exhausted. The upper mandible is almost broken through near the tip and the plumage of the under parts very dark, as if stained by contact with the earth. However, snow had covered the ground for twelve days and was accompanied by constant cold weather. Although the bird may have been in a starved condition previous to the 5th, when the first snow arrived, I am sure it did not die until about the time it was found, for several snowstorms occurred between the 5th and the 16th and these would have covered the body up, which on the contrary was found on top of the snow. It is likely that the mild early winter lured the bird to stay with us, that the accident to the bill rendered the procuring of food difficult, and that the sudden and bitter cold of the 5th and subsequent days completed the work starvation had begun.—ROBERT THOMAS MOORE, *Haddonfield, N. J.*

Many Purple Finches at Portland, Maine, in February.—The mountain ash trees in the Western Promenade section of Portland attracted no Robins,¹ under my observation, during the very cold winter of 1911–1912; but they nourished an extraordinary number of Purple Finches (*Carpodacus purpureus purpureus*) in the month of February. On Feb. 2 I saw four birds together, at least one of them being in rosy plumage. On Feb. 28, about 9.30 A. M., I counted fourteen birds in one tree, most of which were in rosy plumage. On Feb. 29, about 2.30 P. M., I counted fifty-five birds in and about seven mountain ash trees, twenty-two of them being at one tree and a majority of the total number, apparently, in rosy plumage. On each one of these occasions all the birds were sluggish and rather silent.

Since the first announcement,² of the wintering of this species at Portland, twenty-four years ago, it has been seen by several observers, and there are winter records which need not here be cited, for other localities in Maine; but I believe it has not hitherto been noted except in small numbers.—NATHAN CLIFFORD BROWN, *Portland, Me.*

Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra minor*) in Chester Co., Pa., in Summer.—I spent June 16–17, 1911, in company with John D. Carter of Lansdowne, Pa., on and near the Pine barrens of a serpentine ridge in the extreme southwest corner of Chester County, Pa., bordering on the Maryland line. In

¹ Auk, XXVIII, pp. 270–272.

² John Clifford Brown, Auk, V, p. 209.