

Sound to the valley of the Upper Yukon, southern Mackenzie, southern Keewatin, and Gulf of St. Lawrence.' The Gulf of St. Lawrence does not extend south of latitude 45° 35' N., while Cook's Beach is in latitude 43° 44' N., so that it is evident that the breeding-range of this bird extends farther south than was supposed.—HARRISON F. LEWIS, *Quebec, P. Q.*

The Cowbird's Whistle.—During a visit of five days at Jamestown, R. I., July 3-7, 1915, I frequently heard a male Cowbird (*Molothrus ater ater*) whistle in the following manner. He gave two long whistles, inflected upward, followed by three short, quick whistles on a lower pitch. His only variation was to omit one of the long whistles. This bird interested me not a little, for in Lexington, Mass., where the Cowbird is common—especially in the spring and early summer—I have noted a remarkable uniformity in its note. The Lexington birds give one long whistle followed by two short ones—never more and never less.

I should not have ventured to call attention to this Jamestown bird, if the matter had not been brought to my memory by another Cowbird (presumably another one) at exactly the same spot in Jamestown. On May 2, 1919, as I was passing the corner of the road where I had heard the bird four years before, a Cowbird uttered a long whistle, then two short ones, and concluded the series with another long whistle. This performance was not exactly the same, to be sure, as that heard in 1915, yet it was similar to it, and, at the same time, very different from our Lexington birds. During the spring of 1919 I noticed repeatedly a similar extension in the whistling of another Cowbird, two or three miles away in Saunderstown, R. I., although other Cowbirds near at hand whistled as the Lexington birds do.

A small matter, all this, perhaps, yet in the light of Mr. Saunders' illuminating demonstration in his article on Geographical Variation in Song ('The Auk,' 1919, pp. 525-528) the thought suggests itself that there may be many minor variations in bird-songs, slight in direct proportion to the distance separating varying birds. Possibly these Rhode Island Cowbirds presented a variation of a longer song of which I am ignorant, but which may be heard in the southern states.—WINSOR M. TYLER, M.D., *Lexington, Mass.*

Dance of Purple Finch.—The following description of the ecstatic movements of a Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus purpureus*) is interesting in the light of recent discussion. At six-fifteen (Eastern Time) on the afternoon of May 16, 1920, my wife called my attention to a male Purple Finch fluttering among the branches of our cherry tree. A female Purple Finch was soon discovered sitting quietly in the same tree. The male remained about five feet from the female, taking short, nervous flights, raising his crest and softly uttering the call note. In a few moments the female flew down to the ground. At once the male followed and became violently excited, drawing his quivering wings out in an arc

until the ends of the primaries swept the ground. For about four or five minutes this prancing dance was continued while he drew nearer the passive female. And now when he was about two inches from and in front of her he picked up a straw, dropped it and picked up a piece of grass which hung from each side of his bill. This seemed to be the signal for the greatest agitation on his part; with ecstatic dance, full song and vibrating wings he moved slowly on beating feet, back and forth before the female; then he rose six inches in the air, poured forth glorious song notes and dropped to the ground at one side of the female. He landed on his feet but instantly took a most dramatic pose by holding stiffly his spread tail to the ground and tilting back on that support with head held high, the raised crest and carmine ruff adding to the effect. Then like a little tragedian he rolled over on his side, apparently lifeless; the song ceased and the straw fell from his bill. Up to this time the female had remained oblivious as far as outward manifestation showed, but now she turned quickly and gave the male as he lay "dead" a vicious peck in the breast, whereat he came to and flew up in the tree, a normal bird once more, and was soon singing in the usual deliberate fashion from a high perch. The female busied herself about the spot where he had just danced and soon finding the straw and grass which he had dropped she picked them up in her bill and flew into the tree where she went searching from place to place for a spot to start a nest.

I have had one other similar experience with a Purple Finch which included the dance and the straw, but without this dramatic ending. The birds which I have described above were already mated. What relation does this dance of the straw bear to the starting of the nest? At first glance it appears to the reason of man to be an elaborate attempt to stimulate the female to start building the nest.—GORDON BOIT WELLMAN, 48 Dover Road, Wellesley, Mass.

Breeding of the Evening Grosbeak in Manitoba.—During the week-end of May 29–June 1, while collecting at Gimli, Lake Winnipeg, I secured several specimens of the Evening Grosbeak. Besides the fact that this was a very late date for the birds in this part of the Province, I was interested to note that they all appeared to be paired, with the one exception of a male which was apparently courting a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak. They were present during the whole of the week-end and from their behaviour I judged that they were mating and preparing to nest. Knowing that I should be unable to visit the locality again before August, I mentioned the facts to my friends, Messrs. A. G. Lawrence and Harrold, of this city, asking them if they could run up in the meantime and keep their eyes open for the birds. Mr. Harrold managed to visit Gimli on July 1 and found the birds there as expected. He tells me they were fairly plentiful, but he found no nests as his time was very limited. Early in August I was myself back in Gimli, again found the Evening Grosbeak plentiful, and on August 9 collected a juvenile bird. There is therefore no doubt that they bred here.