

her with his wings partly spread and, although I was immediately in front of him, I could see practically the whole of his shoulder-patches. That the feathers forming the patch were elevated, I am almost sure, for if they had laid flat I could not have seen all of them unless the shoulders had been lowered and the tips of the wings somewhat raised,—and the wings were not in this position. Even from a distance of 50 or 75 yards the display of brilliant color was almost startling,—it seemed impossible that a Blackbird could make such a gorgeous show—but to the female viewing the display from only a foot away, it must have been dazzling—half the sky must have been shut out by fire.

That this display by the male of his secondary sexual characters constituted an actual courting maneuver was proved by the immediately subsequent action of the pair.

The Cowbird (*Molothrus ater ater*), like the Oriole, bows before the female; also like the Oriole his head is of a different color from his rump and breast. No great contrast to be sure—black and coffee-color—but perhaps by bowing for countless generations the head will take on a more brilliant color and the species will thereby gain finally as sharp a contrast as the Baltimore Oriole possesses now.—WINSOR M. TYLER, *Lexington, Mass.*

A Blue Grosbeak Family in Southern Pennsylvania.—The finding of a family of Blue Grosbeaks (*Guiraca caerulea caerulea*) on the line between Lancaster and Chester Counties as a matter of rare interest reaches beyond the ornithological circles of the immediate region. The accumulated evidence of a line of expert observers in Chester County since Townsend's day has produced only two or three records of the bird as a straggler there. About a hundred and twenty-five years ago John Bartram, the famous Philadelphia naturalist, reported the Blue Grosbeak as a summer resident of Lancaster County. The local bird students of the fifties and sixties seem to have listed the Grosbeak among the Lancaster County birds almost solely on Bartram's authority. To those of to-day the species had become little more than a passing tradition.

Clifford Marburger and I went to the Barrens of southern Lancaster County on July 12, 1923, to find the Prairie Warbler which we thought might be nesting there. A belt of serpentine extending into this part of the county from Chester County and nearby Maryland produces a soil of such thinness that the region resembles the New Jersey Pine Barrens in its sparse growth of post and barren ground oaks, pitch pine and red cedar.

We were working along the edge of the Barrens at the county line—the Octoraro Creek, when out of the evening bird chorus we caught a new voice. Fairly strong, clear and melodic, the song had in it the sprightly tones of the Indigo Bunting curiously combined with the softer warble of the Bluebird. A little cautious maneuvering and we had the songster in the fields of our binoculars. He was singing with head back and bill

straight upward—a thick-set bird about seven inches long. The light was failing fast but it was bright enough to show us something that quickened our interest—a massive slaty blue bill. We followed the restless bird to some low bushes and then, at a distance of ten yards, with my Zeiss 8 × 40, I had the sight and thrill of my ornithological life time.

There were—in the clear round field at one time—four birds: A male Blue Grosbeak, he of the slaty blue bill, dull grayish brown above, and below, with red-brown shoulder marks and indistinct blue on the lower back and tail coverts; his mate—similar in stocky build, heavy bill and notched tail, but with solid, sooty back and yellowish-buff throat and breast; a Towhee, perhaps attracted by the nervous chirping of the Grosbeaks; and only for a few seconds, but long enough to show one the diagnostic black line on the yellow side below the wing—a female Prairie Warbler. Then twilight deepened and we went to headquarters—hot, a bit catbriar scratched, but happy.

The discovery of something new or rare in nature brings to some men an inrush of joy which is permanent in its effect and establishes a craving. Only he who has been as fortunate as I was in my little rediscovery of the Blue Grosbeak can understand that it is the benign potency of this craving which made Audubon master of hardship and disappointment, and which has taken thousands into the open in heat and cold humbly and without reward to weave the beautiful fabric of American Ornithology.

The next morning we were out at four thirty. We hoped to find the nest of the Grosbeaks though we knew the season was against us in this. We were too late. But the pair were where we had left them the night before and in the bright morning light gave us ample opportunity to reestablish the very great indistinctness of the blue on the male and to settle the fact in our minds that next to the bill the best field mark on the male is the reddish shoulder. And the young were there too, for we soon discovered the droll, dull-colored, stump-tailed birds, barely able to fly, about which the Grosbeaks were making so much fuss.

Which after all was just as good for our purposes as finding the nest; for quite as certainly, after a century and a quarter of doubt, we had modestly supported the testimony of John Bartram and placed the Blue Grosbeak back on the list of Lancaster County's summer residents.—**HERBERT H. BECK**, *Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa.*

Western Tanager in Texas.—Nearly all of June I spent in Dallas, Texas, at the home of Mr. R. A. Gilliam, who has a beautiful estate in the suburbs. He has about ten acres of wooded land, and five of lawns, gardens, etc. About thirty species of birds nest on his place, and I spent a good deal of time wandering about and identifying these birds, many of which were new to me.

The first week in June I heard a strange song and following it up found the bird and examined it closely both with and without a glass, having a splendid opportunity to study it closely. It was a Western Tanager,