

tion it is probable that the parent bird had fed these poisoned caterpillars to the young, unwittingly causing its death.

It seems very desirable to analyze stomachs of birds found dead on or adjacent to lawns that have been treated for the extermination of Japanese beetles, in order that we may know to what extent the birds suffer.—WHARTON HUBER, *Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pa.*

Insect-catching Tactics of the Screech Owl (*Otus asio*).—During the spring of 1929 Screech Owls nested in an aged apple tree near our house at Bethany, Brooke County, West Virginia. By May 20 the young birds were old enough to clamber about their nesting chamber and to stick their comical heads out of the opening in the stout shell of the tree. The parent birds usually spent the afternoon dozing in favorite spots, sometimes directly in the sunlight. With the lengthening of afternoon shadows the young became active and sometimes squealed for food, but the parents never began feeding before twilight.

On May 23, a friend and I posted ourselves under the apple tree so as to watch the interesting family. With a chuckle the smaller parent, probably the male, swept out from the tree and crossed the creek. The larger parent, however, stayed in the tree for some moments, then flew to a nearby elm where, silhouetted against the sky, her movements were easily followed. At first we were somewhat mystified by her actions. Soon we made out, however, that she was capturing insects which were flying about the peripheral twigs of the tree. Some of these she evidently snatched from the twigs or leaves with her feet; others she caught in mid-air, with her beak. Since I had never known Screech Owls to capture prey thus I changed my position so as to be able to see the bird more clearly. From my new station under the elm tree I saw the bird catch thus, Flycatcher-wise, at least twenty insects, most, if not all of them, the large beetles locally called June bugs or May beetles. We watched her for at least three quarters of an hour. She caught about two insects a minute, returning promptly to feed the noisy young. The other parent did not return during our period of observation. I think he was searching for larger quarry.

On the night of June 20, a friend and I watched a Screech Owl in the yard swooping toward the ground. We both received the definite impression that the bird was capturing fireflies in its beak. Once, as the bird sat still for a moment, a captured beetle, held in the beak, flashed its light for an instant and disappeared. We think that the beetle was swallowed. If the Screech Owl regularly eats these insects it is the only bird in the vicinity which does so, to the best of my knowledge.

This habit of capturing insects with the mouth, on the wing, instantly called to my mind the characteristics common to the Orders Strigiformes and Caprimulgiformes. Birds of both Orders have soft, lax plumage permitting noiseless flight; both are at least to a degree, nocturnal, possessing relatively large eyes. The mouth of the Screech Owl, while hardly to be compared with that of the Whip-poor-will from the standpoint of size, is,

nevertheless, relatively large or wide, and the hair-like feathers of the nasal portion of the facial disc probably perform the same insect-catching function as the enormously developed rictal bristles of the Whip-poor-will.—GEORGE MIKSCH SUTTON, *Bethany, West Virginia*.

Ani (*Crotophaga ani*) Wintering in Florida.—I would like to give some additional observations on the Ani which was reported by Mr. William G. Fargo in the *Auk*, Vol. XLVI, pp. 388-389. Not until I read his article did I know that Mr. Fargo had found this same bird in Florida.

This Ani was first seen by me on January 24, 1929, among the mangroves surrounding a small pond, east of the Don Ce-Sar Hotel, near Pass-a-Grille, Pinellas County. It was seen at the same place two days later, January 26, when I returned to try to collect it. After passing up a good shot to study the bird more closely I was then unable to get within range of it again. The third observation of this Ani was not until February 17, and I then decided to see how long the bird would continue to stay. I looked for it again on March 3 and 17, not knowing that it had been collected in the meantime by Mr. Fargo on February 25. We therefore know that this Ani was present for at least a month during the winter.

The Ani is rather similar in appearance to the Boat-tailed Grackle but the heavy blunt bill is quite apparent and diagnostic. Its short jerky flights from one mangrove clump to another were confined to a very limited area. The only notes I heard were harsh and discordant whistles.

Dr. Harry C. Oberholser of the Biological Survey sent me the following summary of the occurrences of the Ani in the United States:—"The only records of the Ani (*Crotophaga ani*) outside of Florida are those from Philadelphia, and Edenton, North Carolina, and several records from Louisiana in Saint Bernard and Plaquemine Parishes. The most northern record of its occurrence in Florida is Brevard County, made in the early spring. A number of the records of this bird from Florida are for the summer season but it apparently occurs at all times of the year."—PHILIP A. DU MONT, *Wilton, Connecticut*.

Feeding Habits of Chimney Swifts.—Last summer, 1928, I had an unusual opportunity to watch at close range the feeding of a brood of Chimney Swifts. It may have been a second brood, as the time was late July and early August. Our home near Lawrenceville, Virginia is in a very old house that has two large stone chimneys, with fire-places that will take a four foot back log, and with a "throat" large enough to admit in reality, a fairly good sized Santa Claus. In these old chimneys there is an offset, or ledge, at the top of the back-wall of the fire place, which in this case is about a foot wide.

At midday July 25, a heavy rain dislodged a nest containing four young Swifts, and both nest and nestlings fell to the ledge at the top of the back-wall. The cries of the young very soon attracted my attention to them, and by sitting on a low stool on the hearth I could look under the arch of