

**Belted Kingfisher—Fishing or Bathing?**—While observing a male Belted Kingfisher at the lake in Glen Helen, Antioch College campus, Yellow Springs, Ohio, on October 19, 1931, the writer witnessed the following behavior. The bird splashed back and forth over the water several times near the shore. Twice immediately afterward it plunged into the water and returned to its perch. These plunges were so “flattened-out” over the water as to suggest that the bird was bathing rather than fishing. The next maneuver was more complex: the Kingfisher made a “shallow” dive from its perch, apparently striking the water only with its breast and belly; then it flew a few inches above the surface toward the shore and made a second belly-wetting splash; reversing its direction it again flew low over the water and made a third and final “belly-splash,” after which it returned to its perch. Each maneuver was accompanied by its rattling call. After its first “triple” plunge the bird perched for a minute or more without preening its wet plumage. Was the bird fishing, bathing or “playing”?—LOUIS B. KALTER, 535 Belmont Park N., Dayton, Ohio.

**A Red-headed Woodpecker with Incompletely Ossified Skeleton.**—On August 30, 1931, while driving along a country road near Lincoln, Nebraska, I saw a bird fluttering in a shallow ditch. It proved to be an immature male Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), fully feathered and with considerable red on the head. It appeared to be in perfect health but, although it flapped its wings vigorously, could not fly. Knowing that a bird in such a predicament could not long escape its enemies, I decided to make a study skin of it.

Prior to skinning this bird, about an hour later, I proceeded to stretch out the wings and legs before making the incision. Upon doing so both humeri broke as did the left leg at the heel. The mouth was opened and the mandibles bent well forward of the glenoid fossae. It soon became apparent that the entire skeleton of this bird was very incompletely ossified. When manipulated the skeleton behaved much like bones that have been decalcified for microscopical sectioning. When broken the brittle snap characteristic of normal bones was not evident.

Although I have skinned hundreds of birds, including two other immature Red-headed Woodpeckers, this summer, I have never before observed such a condition, except in the case of very young fledglings. It should be emphasized, however, that this bird was not a fledgling but one that would normally have been actively on the wing for at least a month.—GEORGE E. HUDSON, Dept. of Zoology and Anatomy, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

**The Gray Kingbird in Massachusetts.**—On Nov. 22, 1931 a party of observers was working in West Newbury, Essex County. We had barely recovered from the excitement of seeing a European Teal (see page 79) and were motoring rapidly along a country road bound for another locality, when Allen spied a bird on the telegraph wires, which Griscom thought a large flycatcher. Jamming on the brakes and tumbling hastily

out of the car, we were properly astounded to recognize a Gray Kingbird (*Tyrannus dominicensis*). The rest of the party, Messrs. C. E. Clarke and brother, George Perry, R. J. Eaton, and John H. Baker and his brother, Dr. Myles Baker, came up a moment later, and we all had a perfect study of the kingbird, easily noting all the diagnostic characters. The day was phenomenally warm, and the kingbird was busy hawking for insects, but appeared tame and unsuspecting.

It seemed highly desirable to collect the specimen, but the party was weaponless. Griscom accordingly walked to the nearest house to borrow a shotgun. The owner was cordial and showed a strong spirit of co-operation, but had lent his gun to the owner of the next house. Proceeding there, Griscom obtained the gun, a double-barreled 12 gauge shotgun, but the available ammunition consisted of two No. 2 shells. Armed with this extremely unfavorable equipment, Griscom returned to his party, only to find that the kingbird had made a long flight across country, but Eaton had fortunately lined it up accurately, and it was finally found in an apple tree in somebody's back lot. Griscom was devoid of experience in collecting small land birds with No. 2 shot. The first shot damaged the apple tree to no purpose, but the bird was secured comparatively undamaged with the second. The sudden outburst of heavy artillery in their orchard gave justifiable annoyance to the occupants of the house, but when the object and results were explained to them with proper apologies, they were so good as to overlook our trespass.

The specimen proved to be an adult female, and has been presented to the Peabody Museum at Salem, where it will be mounted and put on exhibition. It is definitely the typical subspecies. The date is the height of the fall migration of the species from the West Indies to South America. A low pressure area which blanketed eastern New England in rain, fog, and mist for five days during the preceding week may have been attended by strong winds farther south. The only other record for New England is based on a bird shot in 1869, also in Essex Co., Mass., and preserved in the Boston Society of Natural History, the latter fact unrecorded by Forbush.—FRANCIS H. ALLEN and LUDLOW GRISCOM, *Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Mass.*

**Status of the Arkansas Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*) in Maryland.**—Investigation of this subject has been prompted by the collection of a specimen of this species near Denton, Maryland, on September 28, 1931, by S. E. Perkins, III.

On the above date Mr. Perkins wrote me in part, as follows: "Today while returning from Preston in this county, I observed a large flycatcher making beautiful curving sallies from a fence after insects. In general it looked like a kingbird or a mocker but was clearly neither. A closer inspection made me think it an Arkansas Kingbird. I returned here (Denton) and verified my suspicions. Returned to the field with Mr. Virgil Moore and his son Charles, hunted it up, collected it, and I send the skin under