

**Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) in Northern Ohio.**—While driving along the Bay bridge swamps about five miles west of Sandusky on the east side of Sandusky Bay, on May 11, 1934, my attention was called to a strange bird perched on a reed in a swampy meadow. On second glance, with 8 x binoculars, the bird proved to be a Yellow-headed Blackbird. I had the opportunity of observing its white wing patches as it flew across the road in front of me and lit in a tree with Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) about twenty feet from where I stood. Then the bird pointed its bill straight up and with apparent physical effort, produced its peculiar rasping note.

The other records of this bird's occurrence in this state are as follows:—

One in collection of F. Frey of Sandusky; six seen passing over Oberlin October 9, 1896 and one reported from McConnellsville (Jones, Birds of Ohio, 1903). A pair south of Groveport, summer of 1873 (J. M. Wheaton, Birds of Ohio, 1882). One in flock of Red-winged Blackbirds, February 26, 1925 (E. S. Thomas, Wilson Bulletin, 1926, p. 118).—EMORY SAWYER, 18186 Clifton Road, Lakewood, Ohio.

**Color of the Iris of the Purple Grackle.**—The young Purple Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula quiscula*) has the iris brown, the adult, pale lemon color or almost white. The adolescent bird shows regular gradations from dark to light, depending upon the age of the bird. The sexes are alike in their irid coloration. Emotion or other factors besides age have nothing whatever to do with the color of the iris. An adult bird in the sunlight will appear to have a whiter eye than one in a shadow because bright lights contract the black pupil and thereby the iris becomes more broad and noticeable. The same thing occurs when the bird accommodates its vision, by decreasing the size of the pupil to look at near objects. The brown coloration of the young iris is due to a deposit of brown pigment in front of the lemon-white ground color of the iris, having the same arrangement as the brown coloration of the human eye. In the Grackle this pigment is in exceedingly fine dots, visible only with a microscope. It is not entirely evenly distributed, there being less abundance in the middle concentric third of the iris. As the bird becomes older, the pigment in this area is absorbed, leaving the middle third of the iris pale lemon color and the pupillary and peripheral thirds still dark brown. Two parallel concentric reddish brown lines become visible in the center of this whitish area (shown in Grackles banded A 361365, A 361367 and A 361369) showing the pigment granules being collected within the lymphatic channels, to be carried away to the nasal area of the ciliary body. The brown pigment becomes more and more absorbed, the outer and inner brown bands of the iris become smaller as the bird grows older; in later stages only large masses or dots of pigment remain, the final disappearance being in the nasal areas of the iris. The bird when almost of full growth will show a narrow band of brown lastly at the extreme edge of the iris at the pupil, which appears quite thin. The fully developed Grackle has a completely pale

lemon colored or whitish iris extending from the then thick edge at the pupil entirely to the black sclera under the edge of the lids and orbit. This investigation of numerous Purple Grackles examined under a microscope definitely explains numerous contentions which have been debated at some length in 'The Auk.' All trapped birds with white irides were fully grown and with complete adult plumage. One male Grackle, A 361356, with coarse brown dots on the white iris was full size but had immature plumage—lesser wing coverts purple, median brown and the greater with tips purple iridescent. Measurements show the smaller birds to have more pigment and the larger birds a greater degree of whiteness. In banding at my residence there have been three per cent trap returns of Grackles banded as adults but no returns of birds banded when having a brown iris.—HAROLD B. WOOD, M.D., *Harrisburg, Pa.*

**The Summer Tanager Nesting Near Washington, D. C.**—During the course of our work on the early stages of the Gold-banded Skipper (*Rhabdoites cellus*) we visited once a week from May to the middle of July the woods just north of the unpaved section of the Conduit road about half a mile beyond the point where the paved road turns abruptly north up the hill to reach Great Falls (Md.) by a circuitous route.

In this general region we noted three pairs of Summer Tanagers (*Piranga rubra rubra*) constantly present and undoubtedly breeding.

The birds were not at all shy, and kept down in the lower branches of the trees in contrast to the Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga erythromelas*) which, though more numerous and constantly heard singing, was seldom seen.

Another interesting bird nesting in this region in fair numbers is the Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*).—AUSTIN H. AND LEILA F. CLARK, *U. S. National Museum.*

**Eastern Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperiphona v. vespertina*) at Williamstown, Mass.**—The Evening Grosbeak was recorded for the first time in Williamstown, Mass., on March 19, 1916. Since then it has been a very occasional winter visitor till this year. During the extreme cold spell in the last week of December, 1933, a few appeared and were attracted to a feeding station at the home of John Treadway. The flock soon grew in numbers till forty were counted at one time. They came every day to feed on sunflower seeds and raw peanuts. By early February some also appeared at other feeding stations being seen chiefly in the early mornings. They continued to make daily visits in large numbers till the end of April, when the size of the flocks gradually diminished and they made their final visit May 24. As spring weather came on they uttered their call-notes with louder voice, were rather pugnacious among themselves and showed some courtship actions. They also made soft notes and trills that seemed like attempts at song. The yellow of the males became brighter and they were less conspicuous in leafy trees. In 'Birds of Massachusetts' Forbush gave May 20 as the last date of their appearance in this