

This is the only case I have knowledge of in some seventeen years of study locally, there appear to be no other records for Ontario.—R. D. USSHER, *Nancy Lake Farm; King, Ontario.*

Hosts of the Cowbird, *Molothrus ater obscurus*.—The recent article by Friedmann (Auk, 55: 41–50, 1938) on the hosts of the parasitic cowbirds prompts me to contribute the following data on this highly interesting phenomenon. During the spring and early summer of 1930, I made an intensive survey of the nesting birds in the vicinity of Oroville, Butte County, California. I was afield practically every day from the beginning of the nesting season in January until its wane in mid-June. During this time I located only five nests parasitized by cowbirds, as follows: Western Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea amoenissima*), three; Western Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus strigatus*), one; and Western Trail's Flycatcher (*Empidonax trailli brewsteri*), one.

The interesting part of my findings, to me at least, is the difference in the incidence of parasitism observed in the Western Gnatcatcher and the Western Lark Sparrow, both of which were common breeding birds in the area. Of six nests of the former three (50 per cent) contained eggs of the cowbird. One set, collected May 8, consisted of five eggs of the host and one of the parasite; the second, collected May 23, held one of the parasite and three of the host, as did the third set, collected May 26. On the other hand, only one of the ten nests of the Western Lark Sparrow was parasitized. The set consisted of four eggs of the host and one of the parasite. One is led to wonder if the Western Gnatcatcher is not handicapped by its small size in this struggle. Certainly, its nest is less conspicuous than that of the Western Lark Sparrow, at least to man. The nest of the flycatcher, located May 27, contained two eggs of the host and one of the parasite. On the ground below the nest were two broken eggs of the host, a circumstance suggesting that the cowbird removed them from the nest in order to make room for her own.

I should like to point out here that the cowbird in the vicinity of Oroville appears to be *obscurus* (see Condor, 39: 227–228, 1937) rather than *artemesiae* as Friedmann (*loc. cit.*, p. 48) states. This circumstance necessitates transferring *Agelaius p. californicus* from the host-list of *artemesiae* to that of *obscurus*.—WILLIAM B. DAVIS, *Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College, College Station, Texas.*

Nelson's Sparrow in eastern New York.—It was my fortunate experience to view on October 14, 1937, two Nelson's Sparrows (*Ammospiza caudacuta nelsoni*) along the banks of the Mohawk River, a few miles east of the city of Schenectady, New York. As I wandered along the river bank during the course of one of my daily excursions, my attention was attracted to a small cinnamon-buff sparrow, feeding along a marshy section of the shore line. After observing the bird during the course of its quick movements, I flushed it into a small cluster of cat-tails nearby. During its flight the opportunity for a further view of its identifying marks became available. It was approximately eight feet from me when it landed; then it became rather inquisitive, returning to view each time that I emitted an occasional squeak. I knelt down, making a few notes relative to the sparrow and as I did so, the bird went to the top of the cat-tails, apparently in order to secure a better view. The cinnamon buff of breast and sides, along with the stripes above the eyes, and the slightly obscure stripes on the breast and sides were easily visible. The back was mostly gray with some white stripes. The abdomen was grayish and the under tail-coverts were buff; the upper mandible was a dark reddish and the lower one yellowish.

Upon the completion of my observation I left the bird, and moved slowly along the

shore line, seeking additional ones. However, I did not find any in the direction that I followed. Retracing my steps to the first point of contact, I found the original Nelson's Sparrow and another one identical with it. Further observation firmly established the identity of both of these sparrows; flushing them eventually, they flew down the river in erratic flight. Clarence Houghton, of Albany, New York, a distinguished authority in this part of the State, has recorded the only other appearance of the Nelson's Sparrow in this part of New York. His record discloses that on August 28, 1920, nearly eighteen years ago, at Lake Cassayuna, approximately sixty miles from here, he established the first Nelson's Sparrow record. Investigation leads me to the thought that possibly some of these birds use the Mohawk Valley of New York State as a channel of migration for their annual flight from the Mississippi Valley to the Atlantic coast each fall.—JOSEPH JANIEC, 663 Crane St., Schenectady, New York.

Eastern Snow Bunting in South Carolina in summer.—Late in the afternoon of June 21, 1937, my wife and I were watching a colony of Wilson's Plovers (*Pagolla wilsonia wilsonia*) on the eastern end of Sullivan's Island, when our attention was attracted by a small black and white bird which I recognized as a fine male Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis*). We observed it for several minutes at close range until it made a long flight into the Fort Moultrie rifle-range reservation. The next morning, Messrs. E. Milby Burton and E. Burnham Chamberlain, of the Charleston Museum, and I hunted unsuccessfully for it; but on June 24, Mrs. E. H. McIver notified the Museum that the bird had been in the backyard of her Sullivan's Island cottage for several days and that she was feeding it. On the morning of June 25, Messrs. Chamberlain, G. Robert Lunz, E. B. Chamberlain, Jr., and I observed the bird for an hour in Mrs. McIver's yard. Mr. Lunz took a dozen photographs and I made several pencil sketches. The bird sang frequently from its favorite perch on an electric wire. We agreed that the song reminded us somewhat of that of the Nonpareil (*Passerina ciris*). Mrs. McIver's house is nearly a mile from the spot where the bunting was first seen; later it disappeared and has not been reported again.—E. VON S. DINGLE, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.

A modern bird fatality.—While in La Mesa, California, June 1937, with Mr. Archbold, preparing for our 1938 New Guinea Expedition, a curious bird fatality in connection with the experimental radio was called to my attention. I was not there at the time and am indebted to Mr. Harold G. Ramm, the radio operator, for the following details. A bird, apparently a Mockingbird from the description, alit on the single insulated wire of the transmitting antenna. When the power was turned on the bird dropped dead, killed by the high radio frequency. The antenna was carrying 500 watts with a radio frequency of 7000 kilocycles at the time. The bird alighted on or near a current node where the current was lowest and the voltage highest, the only place dangerous for it.

A number of men working about powerful broadcasting stations have been reported killed by radio frequency but this is the first instance of a bird's death in such a manner which has come to my attention. It is unlikely that this new hazard to bird life is of great enough extent to be important, but it is possible for birds alighting on the transmitting antenna of any radio station to be killed.—A. L. RAND, *American Museum of Natural History, New York City.*

Deaths from electricity have been reported from time to time. Mr. J. Warren Jacobs sends a clipping from the 'Morning Observer,' Washington, Pennsylvania, of October 29, 1937, concerning a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) which had