

still on the windshield, having been forced behind the windshield wiper. The feathers remaining on the windshield were carefully removed and wrapped and were later sent to the American Museum of Natural History where they were identified as those of the American Goldfinch. The average weight of this species is approximately 12.5 grams.

I am informed by the American Museum of Natural History that these birds are relatively high flyers and that their migrations also take place at night. I might point out that it was just beginning to get light at 4:30 on this particular morning. It is surprising that this species should have been migrating at such an early date as most American Goldfinches begin their migrations during the latter part of September.

An interesting sidelight was brought out by computing the impact. Due to the lack of information necessary in accurately computing the foot-poundage of the impact, we made computations based on assumptions as to the thickness of the remains of the bird and the area that they covered upon impact, and arrived at a figure of 100 lbs. pressure in the area of impact.

I want to thank Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy of the American Museum of Natural History for his kindness and help in preparing this note.—CAPT. V. H. BROWN, *American Airlines, Memphis, Tennessee.*

Aortic rupture in Field Sparrow due to fright.—On June 6, 1943, I found the nest of a Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla pusilla*) on a one-hundred-acre tract of land in Pennfield Township, Calhoun County, Michigan, where I have been making an extensive study of the species. The nest was placed underneath a tuft of grass on a side hill and contained four eggs of normal size and weight. The female was observed to be unbanded, so early on the morning of June 7 a small hair-net was placed to one side of the nest and the female Field Sparrow frightened from the nest into the net in a short time. This has proved a very effective means of capturing Field Sparrows during the six summers that I have studied them, and over 200 adults have been thus captured for banding.

Although there is considerable variation in the behavior of individual birds of one species, due to fright, just as there is with humans, I have never encountered a bird quite as frightened as was this particular Field Sparrow when I removed her from the net and banded her. She was so frightened that she breathed in gasps, similar to the panting of a dog. Immediately after banding her I opened my hand and released her, but she fluttered to the ground. I picked her up and again released her, but she dropped to the ground once more and when I picked her up for the third time I found that she was dead.

Dissection revealed a clot in the region of the heart about 5 or 6 mm. in diameter, and on closer examination it was found that the wall of the lower side of the ascending aorta had ruptured about 2 mm. from the heart. This rupture was about 1 mm. wide, and even though it might have been produced by an aortic wall weaker than normal, it was, of course, caused by the fright produced when I captured the bird.—LAWRENCE H. WALKINSHAW, *Battle Creek, Michigan.*

The Robin does not change its tail spots.—During banding activities, a study was made of the white tail spots of 162 trapped Eastern Robins (*Turdus m. migratorius*) from 1938 to 1943. These rectricial spots varied greatly in size, shape, and the number of feathers involved. One adult Robin had no indication whatever of white on any feather and one had only one millimeter of white showing

on the outer feather; 56 birds had the white only on the outer feather, 71 on the outer two, 28 on three feathers, three on the outer four rectrices, and three on the outer five. In none was the white mark on the first rectrix over, or much over, one centimeter in length. The involvement of the adjoining feathers decreased markedly. Exact sketches were made of the size, shape, and amount of the white areas in all tail feathers of the 162 Robins. There were no two alike in the proximal outline of the main spot. Only eight of these Robins returned to the traps in subsequent years, a return percentage of five, about equal to the general average return of Robins banded at all ages.

One Robin, 39-250343, had the basal three centimeters of all rectrices white—the only such specimen seen. Another, trapped in 1942 and again in 1943, had gray tips to the outer feather, no white on any. Two Robins, trapped, sketched, and banded in 1940 and retrapped in 1941 and 1943, gave excellent opportunity to compare the configuration and extent of the white markings, and three others which made I-returns and II-returns, in each set, also helped in the study. A careful comparison of the drawings, and some collected feathers, showed that by subsequent molts there was no increase in the number of feathers involved in any individual, nor was there any appreciable difference in the shape or in the proximal outline of the white areas. These rectricial white spots in the Eastern Robin are therefore constant in amount, and appear in the first feathers developed.—HAROLD B. WOOD, 3016 North Second St., Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Extraordinary Fatality to a Blue-winged Teal.—On March 12, 1944, while looking at water birds on a small pond south of San Antonio, Texas, I noticed a duck hanging from the telephone wires along the highway. Examination showed that the bird, a female Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*), had evidently flown through the wires at high speed with its beak open. The open beak had scooped in two wires, and the velocity had been sufficient to split the corners of the teal's mouth open and drive the wires back to the base of the skull. The victim was left hanging from the two wires which were forced into its skull.—MAJOR CLIFFORD PANGBURN, *Randolph Field, Texas.*

The Woodcock at San Antonio, Texas.—On March 5, 1944, I was watching a flock of Wilson's Snipe (*Capella delicata*) which were feeding at the edge of a small pond just south of San Antonio. A Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) suddenly appeared from behind a grass clump. It was not more than 50 yards distant in full moonlight, and was easily identifiable through my 8X binoculars.—MAJOR CLIFFORD PANGBURN, *Randolph Field, Texas.*

Great Black-backed Gull kills adult Black Duck.—It has long been the conviction of some of the old-time duck hunters at Newburyport, Massachusetts, that the Great Black-backed Gull will attack and kill adult Black Ducks. This has seemed incredible, knowing the prowess and swift flight of the Black Duck. Bent, in his 'Life Histories of North American Gulls and Terns' (1921), does not mention its taking live waterfowl other than young eiders on the breeding grounds. Forbush, in his 'Birds of Massachusetts and other New England States' (1929), reports from his own observations and those of others that the Black-back kills Dovekies and other small birds, young ducklings, and American Coots, and has been known to carry off full-grown scoters.