

March 2, 1939.—Major E. A. Goldman and Donald J. Nicholson saw four about 9:30 on Lake Eola, and again 15 minutes later. We remained 40 minutes longer and saw them again, but no calls were heard.

April 15, 1947.—At nine o'clock sharp in the evening I saw and heard six Black Skimmers on Lake Eola in the center of the city. I stood on the bank of the lake close to an electric light, and six birds passed within ten feet of me. They were skimming the water with their bills and were within a few feet of each other in staggered formation. Soon they began to come from both directions and in passing, each bird uttered a low but sharp *ut-ut* note. While the birds were travelling in a group going in one direction they were silent, but each time they crossed, *i. e.* birds meeting from opposite directions, each saluted with the double *ut-ut* note. Skies were overcast and it had just finished showering.

There were a number of other sight records of night-visitation to these Orlando lakes that I failed to record, and I think it was a year or two before 1934 that I saw the birds for the first time in Orlando.

Flying a round-trip of 80 miles, with continuous all-night flight over the lakes adding many more miles to their nocturnal wanderings, indicates remarkable vitality. What special foods they might have been seeking in the interior and why it was necessary to make the strenuous trek is most intriguing and puzzling.—DONALD J. NICHOLSON, *Orlando, Florida*.

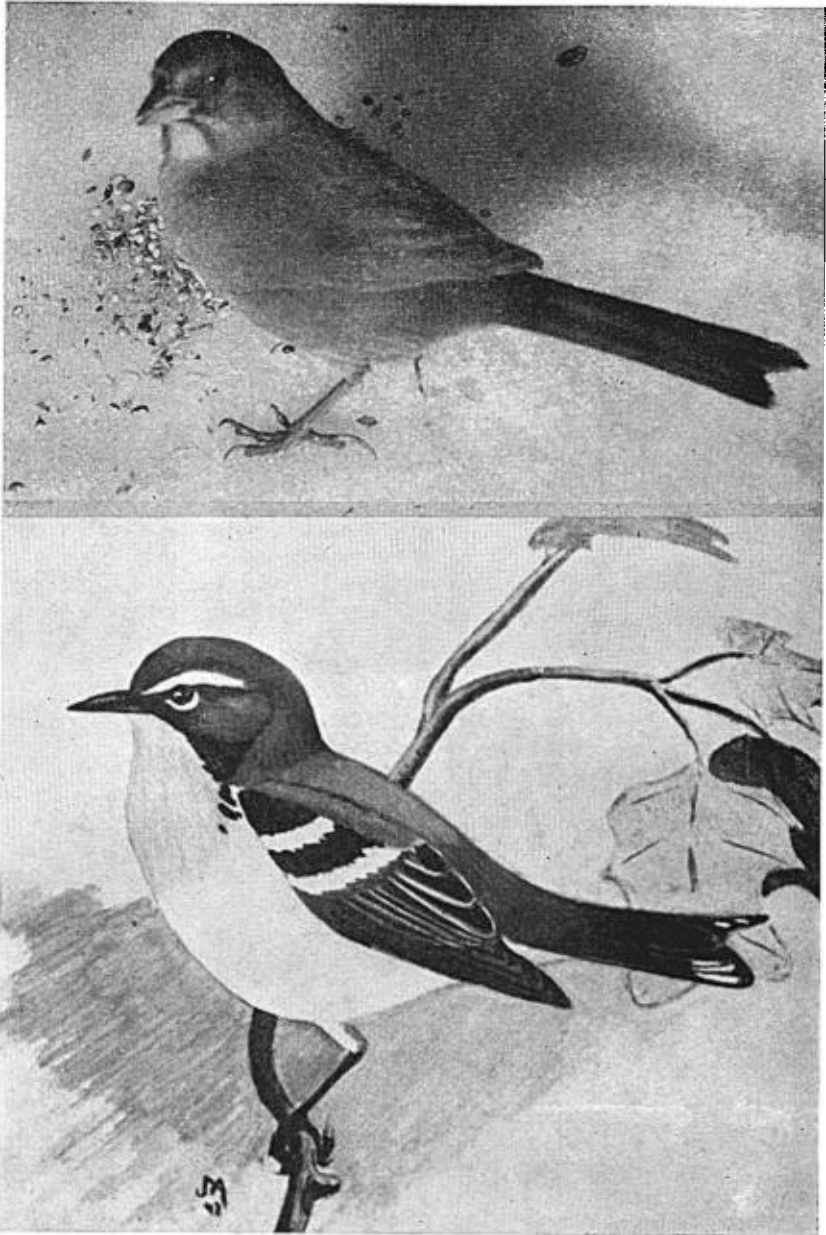
A loose-feathered Nighthawk.—Included among the members of The American Ornithologists' Union there must be at least several banders who have trapped adult Eastern Nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor minor* [Forster]). To those banders and to any other members may I please address this appeal for information?

On June 20, 1945, I trapped a female, the only member of this species I have ever handled. During the banding procedure a conspicuous number of her body feathers loosened and fell at my feet. Since it appeared to be a normal case of molting I failed to give the situation more than passing consideration, nor was it even mentioned in a brief study of this bird's behavior published in *Bird-Banding*, 17 (2): 55-60, 1946.

She returned to nest on the same roof again during the summer of 1946. Upon this occasion she was not trapped, but the band was observed closely enough for certain identification. A 'General Note' in *Bird-Banding*, 17 (4): 168, 1946, reported her return.

This bird nested on the same roof again this season (1947). On June 19, I trapped her and this appeal for information is an attempt to explain an incident which occurred while she was in momentary captivity. When the draw-string was pulled the bird seemed not even to notice the door of the flat trap as it swung shut. She remained motionless, quietly incubating the two eggs over which the trap had been set. In fact, it was not until I had approached within five feet of the trap that she rose from the eggs and attempted to escape. I moved the trap at once away from the eggs to insure against breaking them. While the trap was being moved the Nighthawk hovered, fluttering, in the air. She flew against the chicken-wire sides and top not more than a half-dozen times. She was very tame and at no time was her struggling at all violent.

When the trap was set down the bird came to rest on the floor and crouched there quietly while I reached in and picked her up. While she had been fluttering about, some long feathers became loosened and fell to the floor of the trap. While I held her I discovered several of her primaries and some of her tail feathers were so loose that they fell out of place even while I examined them.



(Upper) ELIOT: GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE IN MASSACHUSETTS. (Photograph copyrighted by Mary S. Shaub.) (Lower) ABBOTT: SUTTON'S WARBLER IN VIRGINIA.

Once the band number had been assured I released the bird and took inventory of the feathers she had lost. They comprised five long primaries from her left wing, three of the longest primaries from her right wing, and two tail feathers. Three small body feathers were also found.

Has this shedding of feathers been observed by other banders who have trapped this species, or did I capture a specimen at the moment of her most active molting? Was the 'throwing' of her feathers the result of a violent nervous shock caused by her capture? I shall appreciate very much learning from anyone who has handled nighthawks whether such shedding is a normal occurrence.—G. HAPGOOD PARKS, *Hartford, Connecticut.*

Green-tailed Towhee at Northampton, Massachusetts (Plate 9).—On December 31, 1946, a very strange bird appeared at the feeder of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Risley, near the southern edge of Northampton, Massachusetts. It consorted with Juncos, but its tail was longer and without white, its body-size larger, and its throat white. For several days they puzzled over it, noting further its chestnut cap, the dark line at each side of the throat, and the yellow-green lining of its tail, and hearing it mew, somewhat like a Catbird. Unable to find anything to match it in the bird-books they possessed, Mrs. Risley finally telephoned to me on January 3, and as she mentioned the above points, one after the other, my imagination synthesized them into a picture of a Green-tailed Towhee (*Chlorura chlorura*), a species which I had never seen alive but only in colored portraits that fortunately stuck in my memory. With keen excitement, therefore, I donned overshoes and tramped through slush and drizzle a mile or more to the Risley home; and after a short wait I saw the bird come to the feed scattered below the kitchen window. Visibility was very poor and the bird's colors appeared very dull, but the notes I made were later compared with the description in Ridgway's 'Birds of North and Middle America,' which made the provisional identification positive and seemed to indicate that the bird was an adult female. It later turned out to be a first-year male, for by mid-March it was occasionally singing.

This was a first-ever record for New England! The only other in the Northeast that I can find was in New Jersey, near Overpeck Creek, December 23, 1939, to January 30, 1940, a significantly comparable season. With the Risleys' consent, I telegraphed or wrote to a number of friends, and word of the unprecedented visitor spread far and wide. About a hundred people signed the guest-book that the Risleys opened for them, and many other observers stayed outside the cottage or hunted up the bird in neighboring thickets. It liked a big forsythia where a manure-heap raised the temperature, and rhododendrons, and piles of brush whereof several remained in the vicinity until spring. Constantly I expected it to vanish, but the winter was less severe than usual, and week after week it was reported to me. For fear of scaring it away, the Risleys would not permit trapping and banding, but it was possible for Mrs. Mary S. Shaub to make several close-up photographs of it—proof to future investigators that it really did occur! (See Plate 9.) From January 22 on, its favorite companion was a White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), and as it matured its behavior towards this female White-throat became more and more devoted. In April it came but little to the feed but could be found near by, always with the White-throat. On April 15, Mrs. Risley had her last look at it, closely following the White-throat and apparently courting it. We supposed that the White-throat went north that evening with the Green-tail in pursuit, but on April 26 a group from Pittsfield found it moping by itself in the forsythia! What happened next, nobody knows.