

**Repeated anting by a Song Sparrow.**—During July, 1947, a Song Sparrow was watched at Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, New York, visiting almost daily a stand of dock (*Rumex*) that was infested with aphids. The bird would hop or fly to one of the large, lower leaves, look around carefully until it saw one of the ants that was attending the aphids, seize it with its bill, and then go through the well-known anting performance. The bird usually did not have a very good hold on the stem of the leaves and threatened to fall off its perch nearly every time. This stand of dock was outside my laboratory window, and it was thus easy for me to check on the repeated visits of the bird. The most striking aspect of the behavior was that the anting seemed almost like part of the bird's daily routine. When approaching the stand of dock the bird acted as if it knew exactly that it would find ants there which would permit it to indulge in anting.—E. MAYR, *American Museum of Natural History, New York, N. Y.*

**Gulls feeding on flying ants.**—The following observation may be added to the rather scanty reports on gulls feeding on flying insects. On September 2, 1947, between 6:00 and 7:30 p. m., E. S. T., a flock of about 100 Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*) and fifteen Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) were wheeling about 100 to 300 feet high above the lawns and gardens around the southeast shore of Cold Spring Harbor Bay, Long Island, New York. The flight behavior of the birds was so peculiar that a number of laymen took notice of it. The birds acted as if they were catching something in the air. Close observation finally revealed that winged males and females of ants (apparently a species of *Lasius*) were hatching simultaneously throughout the area above which the gulls acted so peculiarly. The large winged females flew straight up in the air and it was these that the gulls and terns were catching. The flight area covered a stretch of about half a mile in length. It is estimated that each gull may have caught 100 ants or more during this period.—E. MAYR, *American Museum of Natural History, New York, N. Y.*

**Courtship of the Northern Blue Jay.**—Tyler, in Bent's 'Life Histories of N. A. Jays, Crows, and Titmice' (1946), says that the literature provides little information on the courtship of *Cyanocitta cristata bromia*. For this reason, and because the performance which I happened to witness differed from those described by Bent, it seems desirable to place the following observation on record.

About 8:30 A. M. on March 30, 1946, at Detroit, Michigan, I noticed two Blue Jays about 60–70 feet up in an old elm. One of them repeatedly hopped straight up and down on the limb, moving rapidly, with 5–12 hops in each series. When the 'hopping' bird came within a few inches of the other and repeated the performance the onlooker flew off. During one such performance the displaying individual pecked once at the limb as it alighted from each hop of the series, and then pecked vigorously and repeatedly at the limb after the completion of the series. No vocalizations were noted.—J. ROBERT MILLER, 1523 E. Jefferson Avenue, Detroit 7, Michigan.

**Nest-robbing behavior of the Purple Martin.**—On May 11, 1947, my brother, Wray H. Nicholson, stated to me that he had seen a Purple Martin (*Progne subis subis*), fly into a gourd which had been placed on a pole, and emerge with a tiny young Southern Crested Flycatcher in its bill. Flying away with the tender young nestling, it dropped it a short distance away. It returned again and entered the gourd, and both flycatchers furiously attacked the invader as it stuck its head out of the opening in the gourd, but the martin appeared to be able to fight off the infuriated parents. Mr. Nicholson stated that he saw the martin carry away but one young, but it may have already taken out others so far as he knew. Naturally

the purpose was to evict the flycatchers to enable the invaders to possess this gourd for their own nesting activities. This is the only instance of this character which has come to my attention and I never would have suspected such a peaceful species of such conduct.

I might state here that I have seen numerous instances of the martins dipping into our city lakes as they flew low over the water, but whether to drink or to wet their under parts, or both, I am unable to say. I have seen the Fish Crow repeatedly fly down in the center of a lake and dip its bill in the water (one bird would do this several times), but they did not otherwise touch the water with their bodies. About ten years ago at Tallahassee, Florida, in company with the late Charles E. Doe, I saw a number of Chimney Swifts repeatedly fly over the surface of a large lake, dipping their bodies a number of times and trailing along several yards before arising. Whether merely wetting their bodies or drinking and bathing I cannot be certain.—DONALD J. NICHOLSON, *Orlando, Florida.*

**Baltimore Oriole in Florida.**—Although I have lived in Florida for 54 years, it was not until April 27, 1947, that I saw and heard my first Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) which was noted on the east shore of Lake Washington, Brevard County, Florida. Howell records one bird seen at Eau Gallie, just seven miles away, on April 13, 1910. The bird was a male in full breeding plumage and singing at the time of discovery. Apparently the Baltimore Oriole follows the coast lines during migration, else I certainly would have noted it at some time during all these years.—DONALD J. NICHOLSON, *Orlando, Florida.*

**Berry-feeding of the Ring-billed Gull.**—In Orlando, Florida, which is about 45 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean, thousands of Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) now winter in the city, frequenting the many fresh-water lakes and school grounds, plowed fields, etc. They usually appear the last week in November, but rarely an individual is found by November 15 or 17. They remain until about May 15, but a few birds linger late into June or July.

This gull made its appearance in Orlando after the great storm of 1930 when the hordes of Dovekies were driven as far south as Miami. That year about 50 birds remained all winter, but each year since then they have gradually increased until now several thousand birds regularly return each season. They have become extremely tame as they are fed by the residents, sometimes taking bread from the hands of the feeder. Rarely a few immature Herring Gulls mingle with the Ring-bills, but thus far no mature Herring gulls have been seen. From one to six of the larger gulls are sometimes present, but never more.

On numerous occasions I have noted many gulls hovering over the cabbage palms, plucking ripe fruits, but I have also seen them alight in the palms, with waving wings, trying to balance themselves while they picked the fruits. They have been seen also feeding on the ripe berries of the cherry laurels in the parks. How several thousand sea birds can find sufficient food inland is puzzling, and I suspect that many have rather empty stomachs at times. There is not enough available food in our lakes for large numbers of these birds. The ratio of immature birds to full-plumaged white adults is perhaps around 75%.—DONALD J. NICHOLSON, *Orlando, Florida.*

**Loose-feathered birds.**—The note in the April, 1948, issue of *The Auk*, Vol. 65, No. 2, page 300, entitled 'A Loose-feathered Nighthawk,' by G. Hapgood, has prompted me to relate my experience with the Caprimulgidae and other families. In the Washington zoo we have several examples of *Chordeiles virginianus* and the frogmouth (*Podargus cuvieri*). At best they make passive exhibits, but they lend