

GENERAL NOTES

Dexterous alighting maneuver of passenger pigeons.—I saw *Ectopistes migratorius* only once in my life, but I had an excellent view of the flock, and it made a deep and lasting impression. I was 13 years old. My diary of field-sports tells that on September 1, 1888, I was gunning for doves, *Zenaidura macroura*, near York, Pennsylvania. Suddenly there came into sight a flock of 150 to 175 wild pigeons. I had long been watching and hoping for them, and I tried unsuccessfully to stalk them.

What impressed me indelibly, and I have made a mental note of it ever since, was the compactness of their flock formation, their great rapidity of flight, and their alighting maneuver as they sped into a large white oak, standing alone in the corner of a grass-field, about 350 yards from me. Flying toward the tree, slightly above its crest, the compact flock suddenly dropped almost straight down, converged funnel-like nearly against the ground, and then rose sharply, almost against the tree-trunk, spreading into the branches above them.

I have never noted this collective pattern of alighting in any other species of birds. I believe this alighting maneuver was distinctive of the passenger pigeon.—HERBERT H. BECK, *Franklin and Marshall College Museum, Lancaster, Pennsylvania*.

Hummingbird killed by preying mantis.—Late in the afternoon of September 17, 1948, I saw a mantis poised on an orange-colored zinnia. When a hummingbird, *Archilochus colubris*, flew to the flower, the mantis seized the bird. I hastened to rescue the bird, but even after both had been removed to the ground the mantis would not release its hold. As the two were forcibly separated, bits of feathers held by the mantis were torn from the bird. The only blood to appear was from the bill of the bird.—CHRISTELLA BUTLER, *Grant Ave. and Ashton Road, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*.

Hummingbird captured by preying mantis.—In September, 1948, my neighbor, Mrs. O. K. Smith, heard a shrill bird-call early one evening. Presently she saw several hummingbirds, *Archilochus colubris*, circling around a blossom. The calls came from one bird that was being held in the grasp of a mantis poised on a flower. Mrs. Smith took the struggling bird into her hands, and it collapsed. She watched long enough to see it revive and fly away. There was a spot on its head where it was bleeding.—EARL M. HILDEBRAND, *Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, College Station, Texas*.

Scissor-tailed flycatcher in southern Louisiana in winter.—While traveling "Little Caillou Route," along Bayou Petit Caillou between Houma and Chauvin (Terrebonne Parish) in extreme southern Louisiana, Mr. Horace Whitten, biologist of Waubun Laboratories, Schriever, Louisiana, saw a pair of scissor-tailed flycatchers, *Muscivora forficata*, on December 2, 1947. The birds were near the highway and adjoining the Houma Naval Airport and when not in flight alighted on telephone wires and a nearby fence. He reported the observation to me and subsequently saw the birds several times between December 10 and 27. On January 4, 1948, we saw three of the birds at one time. The long, deeply forked tail, though somewhat abbreviated in two of the birds, was that of an adult in the other bird. These flycatchers were seen to very good advantage as they cavorted in the air, and it is my belief that they were a family group.

Oberholser's 'The Bird Life of Louisiana' (1938) lists the scissor-tailed flycatcher as "a rare spring and fall transient, from March 25 to April 10, and from October 4 to