

piece of canvas tacked to the upper part of the screen and hanging down loose against it. Only a few inches separated the stalk and the canvas.

The female oriole began the nest by attaching yucca fibers to the stalk and working the other ends of the material through a small hole of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch existing in the canvas. As I was afraid the canvas would separate from the screen, I tacked the top down more securely. This did not disturb the female, as she continued to work on the nest soon after I had left.

On June 9, only a few more strands of fiber had been added; but by June 11, the nest was the shape of a shallow basket. By June 16, the nest was nearly completed, except for the lining. On June 17, the female was seen working on the lining of the nest. The lining consisted of horse hair and other unidentified hair. On June 23, the nest contained 3 eggs, and on the morning of June 25, there were 4 eggs. The male was seen at the nest but not observed bringing nesting material. Apparently the female built the entire nest. The nest was about 8 feet from the ground.

It seems strange that the pair used this location, as there was a big cottonwood and other trees close to the house that they might have used as a nest site. On June 22, two pairs of Hooded Orioles and their semi-pensile, basket-shaped nests were observed in cottonwoods at the Sala ranch house in Granite Springs Canyon. Unfortunately I left the area soon after the eggs were laid, so I could not follow the completion of this nesting. The Hooded Oriole is the western oriole most likely to be found near houses. In southern California it has been reported nesting in ornamental palms and banana plants (Huey, Condor 46: 298, 1944; Ewan, Condor, 46: 205, 1944), but I have found no account of a nest attached to a building.—JOHN J. STOPHLET, 2612 Maplewood Ave., Toledo 10, Ohio.

**Common Grackle Kills and Eats House Sparrow.**—In early August of 1955 I was walking around the Duck Pond at the Bronx Zoological Park in New York, when I stopped to watch a small group of perhaps fifteen House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) dust-bathing and sunning themselves on the shore near the water edge. Soon a Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) began walking toward them after alighting some twenty feet away. He was picking and searching for food as he approached. The sparrows seemed not alarmed at the nearness of the larger bird.

The grackle had now come to a position near the shore where rocks and small holes made many small puddles, in one of which a sparrow was bathing. The next instant the air was full of cries and fury. Because of the rapid movements and the unexpected attack, I cannot say how the grackle seized the sparrow. The excessive flapping of wings and the agitated movements left too many details to the imagination that the eye could not see. The grackle was now astride the sparrow holding it tightly in its feet and under the water, while repeatedly pecking at the head. The sparrow fought with all its strength to raise its head above the water and to gain shallower ground. This it did because of its constant movement and the unsure balance of the grackle. The grackle then released its hold, hopped off and with its bill dragged the sparrow back into deeper water, again mounted its back and held tightly so that the entire body was submerged and continued pecking the head. Again the sparrow through frantic movements had gained shallower ground with head above water. Again the grackle dragged it back to deep water, remounted and continued pecking. Movements of the sparrow now became less agitated and its cries weaker until within a space of seven or eight minutes it was drowned.

At the moment of attack all of the other sparrows, at the first cries of their own kind, flew to surrounding trees and shrubbery. During the entire incident only

three or four ventured within a few feet of the action, uttered scolding cries and retreated to the foliage cover.

Still standing on the now lifeless form of the sparrow in the water, the grackle began to peck and tear at the head, breaking the skin. Tearing small pieces of flesh from the head it proceeded to eat them. Not once did it try to drag the bird from the water to dry land but remained in the pool which had been the center of action. When I left the grackle had consumed a considerable portion of the head, possibly the brain, and had started on the back. From what I could see, it did not eat any feathers but only flesh and tissue. Since I did not stay I cannot say how much more it consumed before it was satisfied. Several somewhat similar instances of predation by grackles of House Sparrows were reviewed by Poor (Proc. Linnaean Soc. N. Y., Nos. 54-57: 54, 1946).—KENNETH TAYLOR, 128 Charles Street, New York 14, N. Y.

#### Indigo Buntings in Lazuli Bunting Habitat in Southwestern Utah.—

During the period June 6–August 1, 1957, two pairs of Indigo Buntings (*Passerina cyanea*) were observed along Leeds Creek at about 5,000 ft. elevation in the Pine Valley Mts., Washington Co., southwestern Utah. Behle (Univ. of Utah Biol. Series 7, no. 5: 70, 1943) cites three records of the Indigo Bunting in Washington Co., Utah, one supported by a specimen. He regarded the species as one of casual occurrence in this region. The A.O.U. Check-list (1957) mentions no Utah records, but indicates that this species ranges west into the Great Plains, where it overlaps the range of the Lazuli Bunting (*P. amoena*) and hybridizes with it.

The males were in adult breeding plumage, dark blue throughout without wing-bars. There was an extended opportunity to compare these birds with Lazuli Buntings, from which they differed markedly in plumage, and to a lesser extent in song pattern. The females associated with the Indigo Bunting males lacked wing-bars, differing thus from Lazuli Bunting females. One of the Indigo Bunting females was considerably disturbed by the observer's presence, but no nests or young birds were found.

During June, one of the male Indigo Buntings was seen fighting with a male Lazuli Bunting. The two birds would take up singing perches on trees about 100 feet apart and sing back and forth until one took off in vigorous pursuit of the other. After about June 20, the Lazuli Buntings disappeared from the Indigo Bunting areas, although still sparingly present at both higher and lower elevations along Leeds Creek, in essentially the same type of habitat.

The vegetation at this altitude (5,000 ft.) is a closed stand of evergreen chaparral, ca. 1–2 meters high (*Quercus turbinella*, *Garrya flavescens*, *Arctostaphylos pungens*, *Ceanothus greggii* and other sclerophyllous shrubs). Dwarf conifers form a sparse overstory, the scattered trees averaging 3 to 5 meters in height (*Pinus monophylla*, *Juniperus osteosperma*); along Leeds Creek, birch and willow are entwined with wild grape (*Betula fontinalis*, *Salix* sp., *Vitis arizonica*). Edge effects were provided by the stream, by a dirt road, and by some large clearings bordered by groves of deciduous oak, 3 to 5 meters high (*Quercus gambelii*). The two pairs of Indigo Buntings were spaced about a half-mile apart along the road, in both cases near clearings. The favorite singing perches were the relatively tall birches (to 7 meters) along the creek, overlooking the cleared areas, but they also sang from junipers and were seen foraging in all the plant communities of the area.

Perhaps originally a bird of successional vegetation within the Eastern Deciduous Forest of North America, and of the oak openings along the prairie-forest ecotone, the Indigo Bunting was undoubtedly restricted in numbers by the relatively closed