

A congenitally one-legged cowbird.—Congenital anomalies occur in all animals but unless they appear in man or in some domestic species they are seldom observed, particularly if they interfere with normal living. It seems that the lack (especially congenital) of a leg in a bipedal animal such as a bird would be serious enough to

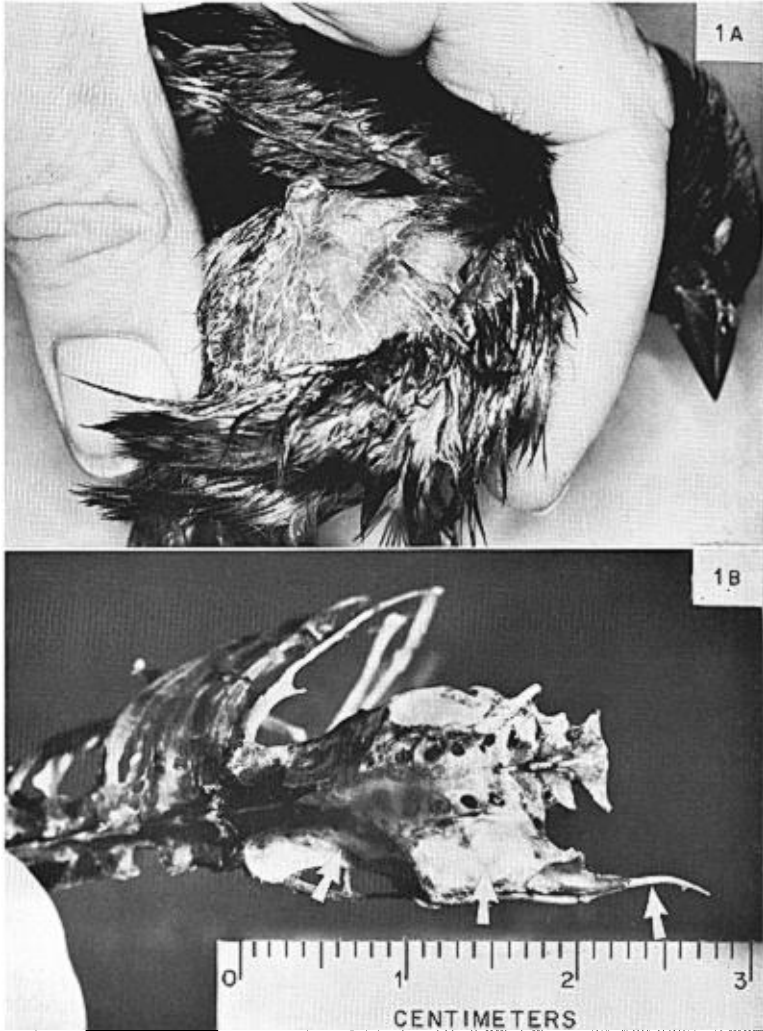


Figure 1. A. The region of the body where the right leg should have emerged. There is no evidence of injury and scarring, as there would be had the defect been due to accident. B. The pelvic girdle and associated structures, showing underdeveloped right ischium and ilium, with complete absence of the pubis. For comparison, arrows on the normal left side indicate (left to right) ilium, ischium, and pubis.

threaten survival. I was, therefore, surprised to find a one-legged, adult male Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) in one of my traps in Fayetteville, New York, on 7 May 1963.

The bird was kept for seven weeks prior to sacrifice for anatomical examination. During this period it was as lively as any of six normal cowbirds in neighboring cages and appeared to do about as well with its one leg as its fellows did with two. It ate well (diet of finch seed mixture) and maintained its weight of about 50 g.

Examination revealed that the right leg was completely missing and there was no indication that it had been lost by accident. The skin was entirely normal and there was no scar tissue at the point where the femur would have left the body in a normal bird (Figure 1, A). Autopsy revealed a somewhat defective development of the right ilium and ischium and, apparently, a complete absence of the pubis (Figure 1, B). There was also no trace of the musculature normally associated with the proximal end of the femur.

That a cowbird with one leg led an apparently normal existence is interesting when one considers some aspects of this bird's life. Feeding is done on the ground, where the bird is subject to attack by predators and to harassment by other cowbirds (they are conspicuously quarrelsome among themselves); the male acquires and defends a territory. This bird, an adult, had presumably made at least one round trip to its winter range (southern United States or perhaps northern Mexico). Further, when the defect is congenital it must be a handicap to the young in the nest.

Although I have trapped thousands of birds, including at least 1,500 cowbirds, this is the first time I have seen such a gross congenital defect.—REGINALD D. MANWELL, *Department of Zoology, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.*

First House Finch collected in North Carolina.—On 26 February 1963, I collected a male House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) in my yard at Zebulon (about 35 km east of Raleigh), North Carolina. It was first observed on 22 November and returned on 5, 7, and 9 December 1962 and 26 January 1963. On these dates the bird was too wary to be obtained. All observations were during inclement weather and coincided with a temporary increase in the number of Slate-colored Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) in the feeding area. Apparently the House Finch was associating with a flock of wintering juncos which visited the feeders only in severe weather. The bird was taken during a snowfall and there was a 10 cm accumulation of snow on the ground. It had appeared quite suddenly among 20 to 25 Purple Finches (*C. purpureus*) at my sunflower-seed feeder.

The finch was prepared by David A. Adams, Curator of the North Carolina State Museum at Raleigh, who tentatively confirmed my identification.

At the U. S. National Museum, George E. Watson identified it as a male *C. m. frontalis*, "probably not fully adult since the red on the forehead is not well developed." Watson added that: "This is said to be the subspecies which is established in southern Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey, although very few specimens have been critically identified." The specimen is now U.S.N.M. no. 477529 and appears to represent the first record for North Carolina.

Although the House Finch is virtually nonmigratory in its native Mexico and far western United States, a pattern of migration seems to be developing in the dispersal of the introduced Atlantic coast population (Cant and Geis, *EBBA News*, 24: 102-107, 1961). Cant and Geis cite recoveries of banded birds as evidence that some House Finches which spend the summer in the Connecticut-Long Island area winter in the