

reported that foot-pox infections were found in the Patuxent Research Refuge in natural populations of the Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottis*), Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) and Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*). Gordon M. Meade, M. D. (*Bird-Banding*, 16: 38) described the foot-pox disease as a virus infection, *epithelioma contaagiosum* and stated that it was particularly common in Chipping Sparrows . . . other sparrows, finches, thrashers, flickers, and others. Paul A. Stewart (*Bird-Banding*, 34: 199) found that 0.9 percent of the 77 Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) he banded had bird-pox on the legs, feet and beak (1 case). Of the females, 1.7 percent were infected but only 0.8 percent of the males.

The only reference I found pertaining to the Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) was by John R. Olive and Vincent Schultz (*Auk*, 69: 90-91) who trapped a male at Arkansas whose leg and feet infection they described as "scaly-leg" the result of a burrowing mite (*nemidocoptes*). The photograph showed long fringe-like scales not similar, to me, to foot-pox lesions.

At my Pennington, New Jersey station on 31 March 1967, I trapped an adult male Red-winged Blackbird. As I banded it (702-88925) I observed and recorded that both feet were covered with large and active foot-pox sores. This male returned to my station 1 May 1970. Examination showed no active foot-pox lesions. Both feet and legs had healed completely. This bird's recovery and that suggested by some Chipping Sparrows at Baldwin's Georgia station (above) suggest that at least some birds suffering from foot-pox disease do recover, and in the case of my Red-wing without adverse effect. Many writers (above) mention loss of feet and toes which was, apparently, the result of previous foot-pox infections.—Kenneth W. Prescott, New Jersey State Museum, Cultural Center, Trenton, New Jersey 08625.

A Melanistic Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*). Alfred O. Gross (*Bird-Banding*, 36: 240) listed 29 species of melanistic North American birds but the Blue Jay was not included. Lester L. Short (*Bird-Banding*, 40: 145-46) describes a melanistic Hairy Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos villosus monticola*) which exhibited a reduction of white on the back, wings, sides, flanks and, of particular interest, the facial pattern was abnormally black.

On 8 November 1969, I banded (# 1083-43848) an HY Blue Jay which had an abnormally black head and throat. The general appearance of the head is predominantly blue with black markings with the blue replacing "normal" white. The blue head feathers are a dull blue and not the richly dark blue of the back feathers. The "normal" white throat is bluish with some black feathers intermingled. A narrow arc of black feathers extend from base of lower mandible along the auricular line to the black nape. The "normal" thin black line behind the eye is abnormally wide and almost equal to the width of the eye itself. The black band extending down the nape of the neck is $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 times as wide as "normal." A broad black band across forehead at base of upper mandible replaces "normal" blue and there is black in front of the eyes. The black band on the throat is approximately 4 - 6 times as wide as "normal", extending down to the buffy-white breast. The remaining plumage is characteristic of an HY Blue Jay.

Subsequent weights and fat class may be of interest:

| Date | Weight (gms) | Fat (0-3) |
|--------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 8 November 1969 (banded) | 88.3 | 1 |
| 16 November 1969 | 95.6 | 1 |
| 6 December 1969 | 96.5 | 0 |
| 22 December 1969 | 96.9 | 0 |
| 25 December 1969 | 97.2 | 0 |
| 31 December 1969 | 92.8 | 0 |
| 22 February 1970 | 99.5 | 0 |
| 20 March 1970 | 98.1 | 0 |

To date, 8 Feb. 1971, this Blue Jay has not reappeared at my banding station.—Kenneth W. Prescott, New Jersey State Museum, Cultural Center, Trenton, New Jersey 08625