

to be *G. t. ignota*, the breeding race of Florida and the extreme southernmost parts of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

I thank John Aldrich and John Weske of the USNM for looking at the aberrant female and offering comments.—WALTER KINGSLEY TAYLOR, *Department of Biological Sciences, Florida Technological University, Orlando, Florida 32816*. Received 3 October 1975, accepted 12 October 1975.

**Anting by a Scarlet Tanager and Two Blue Jays in Massachusetts.—**

In a table listing known incidents of anting by wild birds in North America, Potter (*Auk*, 87: 692, 1970) includes no records from New England. Although reports of Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) anting are not uncommon, there are few descriptions of anting by Scarlet Tanagers (*Piranga olivacea*) (Potter, op. cit.; Whitaker, *Wilson Bull.*, 69: 195, 1957). In late September 1974, I observed a Scarlet Tanager and two Blue Jays anting in Boxford, Massachusetts.

The first incident occurred on 21 September at 1400 when a male Scarlet Tanager landed on my front lawn and exhibited anting behavior. Through a binocular I saw many ants swarming from crevices in a retaining wall and onto the grass. The tanager was picking up individual ants with its beak and inserting them among its feathers, primarily in the axillary regions and the sides of the breast. All the bird's movements were rather slow and deliberate. Ants were held among the feathers only a few seconds, rather than for 1 to 1½ minutes, as is described in the first published record of a Scarlet Tanager anting (Groskin, *Auk*, 60: 55, 1943). Between insertions of ants among the feathers, the bird wiped its bill frequently on the grass. As far as I could determine, no ants were eaten. After anting for about eight minutes, the bird flew off.

When I examined the anting site, immediately after the tanager left, I found some crushed wingless ants among the numerous uninjured winged and wingless forms. Some of the latter were collected and identified by E. O. Wilson as *Lasius* (*Chthonolasius*) *umbratus*, a species found in Eurasia and North America, and abundant from New England to North Carolina (Wilson, *Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool.*, 113(1): 159-160, 1955).

The second anting episode occurred on 28 September at 1130. Two Blue Jays landed on the lawn, about 7 meters from the tanager anting site, and began to pick up ants and insert them among their feathers. Both jays applied the ants to the axillary regions, the undersides of the primaries, and the sides of the breast. Occasionally they brought their tails forward and attempted to touch the undertail coverts while holding ants in their bills. This action was done awkwardly, and each bird fell over several times while attempting it. All the movements of the jays were much more rapid and vigorous than those of the tanager. Frequently the jays called stridently during their anting, whereas the tanager had been silent. The episode lasted about six minutes, after which both jays moved several feet away from the ant swarm, preened for about two minutes, and then flew off. Again I examined the anting site, finding crushed and uninjured ants of the same species that the Scarlet Tanager used.

In most descriptions of anting by birds the species of ant involved is not identified. The ant *Lasius umbratus* is reported to have been used only by the American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*), and Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*), all three reports from Maryland (Brackbill, *Auk*, 65: 66, 1948). Therefore this report adds the Scarlet Tanager and Blue Jay to the list of birds that use this ant species.

Potter (op. cit.) and Potter and Hauser (*Auk*, 91: 537, 1974) correlate most anting with high humidity, particularly after prolonged wet weather, and suggest that molting birds tend to exhibit anting behavior. Both anting episodes described here occurred on humid days. At the time of the 21 September observation the sky was cloudy and the temperature was 20° C. The two preceding days had also been humid, although no rain had fallen. On 28 September the sky was partly cloudy and the temperature was 21° C. Rain had fallen two days previously and fell again on 29 September. Although none of the birds appeared to be molting, I cannot say with certainty that they were not, because their plumage was not examined.—STEWART DUNCAN, *Biology Department, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts 02215*. Received 16 October 1975, accepted 30 October 1975.