

flock of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers (*Muscivora forficata*). On a day in mid-September a dozen or more of these lovely birds had gathered in the little willows growing in a small pond, and for some time had been sitting quietly. Suddenly one swooped down to the water, but came up without quite touching it; another did the same, and then another. Finally, one brave bird splashed its breast into the water and flew up to a twig, where it shook itself and began to preen its feathers. Whereupon they all followed suit, sometimes singly, sometimes two or three at a time, darting down quickly—a sudden dip into the water and then up again. The colors on their sides and under their wings shone pink and salmon and ruby in the late afternoon light. It was a rarely beautiful sight—the exquisite birds in their fairy-like evolutions.—MARGARET MORSE NICE, *Norman, Okla.*

On the Nesting of the Blue Jay.—In April, 1925, a pair of Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata cristata*) build a nest in a small evergreen tree about five feet from a garage window. To observe the nest the window was covered on the inside, excepting for a one inch space which was cut out of the pane. The tree was about twenty feet from the highway. The Jays were first observed feeding each other on March 16. Nest building was started on April 7, and was completed on April 12. It was a typical Blue Jay nest, composed of interwoven rootlets in a crotch and plastered with mud in the bottom. The upper part was built of twigs. The first egg was laid April 16, the second at 10:30 A. M. on April 19, the third on April 20, the fourth on April 21, and the fifth on April 23. Four of the eggs hatched on May 7, and the remaining egg hatched on May 8. The first evidence of feathers was on May 14. The young birds first called for food in a very faint and high-pitched tone just audible five feet from the nest, on May 14. The nest was destroyed shortly thereafter by cats, assisted by Sparrow Hawks. The female Jay was not seen afterwards. The male Jays remained in the locality for several days and then disappeared.—E. C. HOFFMAN, 1041 *Forest-cliff Drive, Lakewood, Ohio.*

Birds Excited by a Snake.—While out on a bird tramp, on September 12, 1926, as often happens, we walked for a long distance through what was good territory without seeing a single bird. Then not one, but eight appeared almost at once. First we heard the low call note of the Brown Thrasher and discovered one on a low branch a few feet above the ground, moving slowly down the branch. Just below it was a brilliant red Cardinal. On a plant a foot or so away and a few inches above the ground sat a Catbird. On the ground was a second Brown Thrasher, her feathers more or less ruffled and her wings outspread. She moved backward and forward, beating the ground now and then with her wings somewhat as the Mockingbird does in its courting dance. In a moment her mate joined her on the ground, his wings also outspread. Meanwhile a pair of Hooded Warblers were flying back and forth over the ground near the Catbird and Thrashers. At least one Wood Thrush was watching proceedings from a low limb close by. Then from somewhere on the ground near the Thrashers a Carolina Wren appeared, its plumage so ruffled that the eye-line scarcely showed, and only its tail-tilt proclaimed it to be a Wren. Except for the call notes of the Brown Thrashers that were first heard, none of the birds uttered a sound.

After watching for a few moments and being unable to see the cause of the gathering, we approached near enough to frighten the birds away. At first we could see nothing to cause so much excitement; then we discovered, as we had suspected, a copperhead snake, perhaps twelve inches long. The snake, blending so well in color with the dead leaves of the ground as to be hard to see, even when we knew it was there, lay irregularly coiled, its head flattened down on the body and so motionless as to appear dead. The birds meanwhile utterly vanished. BERYL T. MOUNTS, *Macon, Ga.*

Some Notes on Mutilated Birds.—In the first week in August, 1924, I saw a Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus gramineus*) that seemed to be rather weak, and therefore I made an effort to capture it. As I got nearer to the bird it flew about fifteen rods in the meadow, and it was easily captured. Upon examining it, I found that the bird was without a bill, but for how long, I could not tell. Its tongue was exposed, and how it managed to get its meals on insects or seeds is something to wonder about. I put it in a cage and tried to feed it, but its increasing weakness made that impossible, and it died a few hours after having been captured. This was in Luce County, Michigan.

A few days before getting the Vesper Sparrow without the bill, I saw a bird in a very unusual action. It appeared as if it was tied to a string and had only a few yards to range, like a cow when tied to a stake in the pasture. I at once ran and captured it, and found that half of its right wing was missing, which caused it to be weak on the wing. Its longest distance of flight was not over two feet. Just how long this bird had been this way, and where it was when it happened, is a mystery. In reply to a letter sent to the Biological Survey, I was informed that if I was not able to care for the bird, it had better be killed. I kept the bird and it lived until about April 6, 1926. I have kept a record of what I took to be of the most interest, and am planning on summing it up for a future number of the WILSON BULLETIN. These notes are mostly on its molt, song, and food—OSCAR M. BRYENS, *Three Rivers, Mich.*

Franklin's Gulls in Northwestern Oklahoma.—During the summer of 1925, Franklin's Gulls (*Larus franklini*) were with us more than usual. About 5,000 appeared in early July and among them were a goodly number in immature plumage. During the middle of August a good shower filled a dry pond near our house, and this was used by about a thousand gulls as their headquarters. They made a very pretty sight as they stood in the shallow water with their heads all in one direction against the wind. There was a constant hubbub of mewing and squalling amongst them. Some birds would be flying up to soar in the air above, while others would be sitting down with the flock. Some of them would go through intricate acrobatic aerial maneuvers, pitching and diving, while two different individuals actually banked their wings until they were in a vertical position and then turned over and floated on their backs upside down, righting themselves with a flip as they came on down to the water. The birds seemed much interested in fixing up their plumage and pulled out so many feathers in the operation that the border of the pond was completely lined with them. They ranged from little downy feathers a half inch long up to quills from the wings; most of them, however, were about two inches in length.

The gulls were very assiduous in their search for grasshoppers, and there was a noticeable diminution in the abundance of these insects as a result of