Siskin (*Spinus pinus*), prompt me to report a strange case of the nesting of the Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus purpureus*), here during the summer of 1920.

On June 25, 1920, two boys came to me, telling of the nesting of some "red sparrows" in the Red Cedar trees (*Juniperus virginiana*) in their front yard. I, of course, went with them, and found their report to be true, there being four nests of the Purple Finch in the trees, three in one and the fourth in another near by, all four nests containing four eggs each, and all being placed from ten to sixteen feet high, some eighteen to thirty inches from the tree trunk, on the smaller limbs. They successfully raised the first brood, in spite of the many visitors coming to see these strange "sparrows," which may be the reason they vanished as soon as the young birds were old enough to fly well.

The nests, which are before me at this time, are very similar to those of the Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina passerina*), only more frail than the usual Chippy's nest.

Locally the Red Cedars, as well as all other evergreens, are not native, and these birds are only rarely seen here, although during the past winter, and occasionally on other winter days, they appeared here in great numbers. As far as I can learn this is the only record of the bird nesting this far south, and it is the only time that they have remained here during the breeding season. The latest date at which they have ever been recorded here, with the exception of the 1920 season, was this year, when a large number of these birds were observed feeding on buds of various trees on the 14th of April.—J. D. BLACK, *Winslow, Ark.*

The Holboell's Grebe in Iowa in June.—As there apparently is only one very late spring record of the occurrence of the Holboell's Grebe (*Colymbus holboelli*) in Iowa (Fenton, WILSON BULLETIN, XXVIII, 1916, p. 131), and that one, May 26, 1916, evidently doubted by Ira N. Gabrielson (WILSON BULLETIN, XXIX, 1917, p. 97), I would like to record two recent observations of this species in central Iowa in June.

On June 6, 1928, Messrs. Arthur T. Watson and Kenneth Nelson of Des Moines, and the writer saw a pair of "large Grebes" at Long Pond, seven miles west of Perry, Dallas County. As the three of us are all familiar with this species in life, having seen it many times on the Atlantic Coast in winter, we recognized these birds immediately as Holboell's Grebes. After circling the pond to gain better light, we discovered that the first pair had joined with four others, and the six birds continued to swim and dive repeatedly within range of our glasses.

We were at a loss for an explanation of this late migration of a species classed by R. M. Anderson (Birds of Iowa, 1907) as "very rare in Iowa." One year later to the day, on June 6, 1929, the same observers found a single fully plumaged male of this species on Brenton's Slough, four miles west of Camp Dodge, Polk County. Do not these observations establish the Holboell's Grebe as a casual late spring migrant through Iowa?

Details of the field characteristics of the bird at this time of year may be of interest. The rufous throat patch is quite conspicuous and contrasts sharply with the white of the belly, especially when seen in flight. While the bird is at rest on the water, the long neck, the long pointed bill which is of a lighter shade than that of a loon, and the white of the upper throat and cheeks sharply cut by the black crown, can be seen plainly. The white on the secondaries is noticeable

only when the bird is flying and it is less extensive than in the female Red-breasted Merganser, a species with which it might be confused. As Ludlow Griscom (Birds of the New York City Region, 1923, p. 56) points out, this grebe holds the head and neck bent downward slightly in flight.—PHILIP A. DUMONT, *Wilton, Conn.*

A Query About a Nest Habit of the Pine Siskin.—A point of special interest arises in view of the observations recorded by Mrs. Dales and Mr. Bennett in the June, 1929, number of the WILSON BULLETIN.

In our yards here in California, if they are at all rustic, we have two fringillids which nest commonly. They are the House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus* subsp.) and Arkansas Goldfinch (*Astragalinus psaltria* subsp.). Superficially, these birds have little morphological resemblance.

In certain of their habits, however, they tie-in very closely. In both, with the approach of the breeding season and during incubation, the male feeds the female by regurgitation. The parents of both species feed their young by regurgitation. The young of both appear to be raised entirely on seed food, mostly seeds "in the milk." The nest of each species is apparently (I have not caught the parents in the act) kept clean by the parents during the first days after the young emerge from the eggs. By the time the young are half grown, such effort is abandoned, and the rims of the nests become filthy with fecal matter. The feces of the young of both at this stage are without membranous sacs and are, for this reason, less readily eaten or carried off.

In the article above referred to on the nesting of the Pine Siskin, the program was complicated by the introduction of the young of a species whose hereditary habits and functional processes probably vary widely from those of the Pine Siskin. The Cowbird is one of a group some, at least, of whose juvenals pass feces in sacs during the nest period and of whose parents maintain clean nests.

The habits of the Pine Siskins are essentially the habits of goldfinches. In other words, as the young Pine Siskins developed, the parents might be expected to cease nest sanitation, with the result that feces deposited on the rim by the young would remain there. The article in question states that the "excreta" were carried away on about the fourth day after hatching, which might still be within the period when these dainty fringillids keep their nests clean.

It would be of added interest, it seems to me, to have on record the behavior of Pine Siskins and other fringillids, the feces of whose young are without sacs in the late portion of the nest period, when these species are compelled to adopt a youngster whose phylogenetic ancestors presumably carried away sacked feces throughout the nest period.

Such sacked feces as I have seen have come from nestlings whose diet appeared to be entirely insectivorous. Would the juvenal whose phylogenetic groove called for insect food and feces in sacs, when forced to accept a granivorous diet, fail to provide the membranous sac for its waste products, or, passing sacked feces, would its foster parents become model housekeepers? Truly, the nestling Cowbirds will bear watching.—J. EUGENE LAW, *Altadena, Cal.*

The Status of Certain East Coast Red-wing Blackbirds.—The *Auk*, XLV, p. 155, April, 1928, carries the results of "A Study of the Red-winged Blackbirds of the Southeastern United States," by Howell and Van Rossem. Part of the conclusions as there set forth I beg to differ with.