

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.