

Nest-building adaptability of the Eastern Red-wing.—West Sister Island, Lucas County, Ohio, the most westerly of the Lake Erie island group, is a 90-acre limestone pile which rises abruptly from Lake Erie. It is 8.75 miles north-east of Jerusalem Township, Lucas County, the nearest mainland. Except for one small stretch near the lighthouse, cliffs 10 to 20 feet high are continuous around the island. The top is covered with a rather thin layer of soil. About 20 per cent of the area is grown with bluegrass, patches of nettles, and shrubs. The remainder is predominately hackberry forest. There are no swales or marshes on the island; in fact, not a single cat-tail grows there.

In spite of this situation the Eastern Red-wing (*Agelaius phoeniceus phoeniceus*) is the dominant songbird of the island. On June 16, 1946, Laurel Van Camp and I visited the island with a party of 15 members and guests of the Toledo Naturalists' Association. We found that the Red-wings had adapted their nest-building habits to the character of the island.

All the nests that we discovered held young. Several nests were more or less typically constructed in the bluegrass meadow. One was built in a shrub. Three were on a mat of bedstraw within the forest only a few inches above the ground and several in jack-in-the-pulpit plants. One nest was built in an abandoned Flicker's (*Colaptes auratus*) nest about 5 feet above the ground in an 8-foot-high tree stub, within but near the edge of the forest. The nesting cavity was at least 10 inches deep; it contained three or four nestlings.—LOUIS W. CAMPBELL, 4531 Walker Avenue, Toledo, Ohio.

Bronzed Grackle anointing plumage with orange-skin.—On June 22, 1948, about 6:00 p.m., I saw two Bronzed Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula versicolor*) behaving curiously and watched them for at least 15 minutes. One, an adult female, was on the rear lawn, pecking at something in the grass and apparently anointing her wings. After each downward peck she grasped a primary feather at its base and pulled it through her mandibles. The other grackle, with the dark eyes and brownish plumage of a juvenile, was on a low, flat-topped compost heap about a yard from the adult female, standing among discarded halves of oranges from which the juice had been extracted. It bent down occasionally as if to touch one of the orange-skins but did not go through preening motions. It gave the impression of not knowing what to do. Every few minutes the adult stopped her preening and ran up to the juvenile, which immediately ran to the spot she had occupied. Then they immediately changed positions again, the adult pecking and preening, the juvenile standing among the orange-skins on the compost heap. Apparently startled by an automobile, they suddenly flew, and I investigated the spot in the grass where the adult female had stood. Several halves of fresh orange-skin had rolled from the compost, and one showed several newly-pecked areas from which the oily outer layer had been removed. This was clearly another instance of "anting" with substitute material.

During this observation the adult Bronzed Grackle anointed only the wing feathers, working from the underside, assuming a hunched position. The tail was invisible to me because it was bent downward in the grass.

There was evidence on several days during the following month (July) that fresh orange-skins had been pecked in the same manner, but my efforts to obtain further data were unsuccessful.

There are several instances on record of both Purple and Bronzed Grackles anointing the plumage with ants and various materials. Hervey Brackbill (1948, *Auk*, 65:70-73) observed Purple Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula stonei*) using various species of ants on several occasions during late June, July, and early August. Mary Emma Groff and Brackbill (1946, *Auk*, 63:246-247) report Purple Grackles anting with juice from unripe English walnuts (*Juglans regia*) from early June

until mid-August. Mrs. H. N. Robinson (1945. *Ind.Aud.Soc.Yearbook*, 23:14) describes a Purple Grackle rubbing a grape on its body under the wing and apparently attempting to carry it, pushed upward under the wing.

G. Hapgood Parks (1945. *Bird-Band.*, 16:144) observed Bronzed Grackles in early July pecking green fruits of the cucumber tree (*Magnolia acuminata*), then passing the feathers of wings, tail, and body through the bill. Raymond W. Hill (1946. *Wils.Bull.*, 58:112) saw a male Bronzed Grackle in April repeatedly rubbing a moth ball on wing and body plumage.

Brackbill mentions that when two male Purple Grackles were present on two occasions during anting, both birds indulged in the act of raising the head, pointing the bill upward. At the beginning of my observation before I had made the age distinction, one of the birds pointed its bill upward as they exchanged places.

The field worker may go on indefinitely recording instances of anting with various juices, but no adequate explanation can be found without laboratory work, including an analysis of these materials and their effect on bird plumage.

—AMELIA R. LASKEY, *Graybar Lane, Nashville 4, Tennessee.*

Bird notes from southeastern Texas.—In 1947 I spent some scattered days in the field in southeastern Texas; among the birds recorded, four seem worthy of report. Specimens collected are now in the California Academy of Sciences.

Tringa solitaria solitaria. Eastern Solitary Sandpiper. I took a small adult female April 26 on Galveston Island. Williams (1938. *Auk*, 55:66) reported this subspecies as a common migrant in Texas, but the only specimens reported from the State in recent years, since the subspecific distinctions have been well defined, were from the extreme south, in the Rio Grande valley (Griscom and Crosby, 1925. *Auk*, 42:529-530).

Empidonax virescens. Acadian Flycatcher. I saw the species many times and collected three adults near Willis, Montgomery County, between June 25 and July 30, along a creek in the mixed sweet gum-short leaf pine woodlands. I saw one young just out of the nest July 11. This record seems to represent the southern edge of the breeding range in eastern Texas for this species. Bent (1942. *Bull.U.S.Natl.Mus.* 179:196) lists Houston as the edge of the breeding range, but neither Williams (letter) nor I know of any basis for this.

Hylocichla mustelina. Wood Thrush. At Willis, Montgomery County, south of the known summer range, I heard a Wood Thrush singing July 12 and saw one (at the same spot) July 29. The species was not listed at all by Davis (1940. *Condor*, 42:83) from Brazos County, only a few miles to the west.

Hirundo rustica erythrogaster. American Barn Swallow. On July 8, with George G. Williams, I saw a group of nine Barn Swallows, of which about five were young of the year, around a small wooden bridge over a brackish stream on Galveston Island. Beneath the bridge were two nests—one containing four large young, the other, five eggs (a second laying?). On July 17 I returned and found the four young from the first nest on the wing; the second nest contained only three eggs and had apparently been abandoned. I collected one adult male and one juvenile; Dr. Herbert Friedmann, of the National Museum, confirmed my identification. The Barn Swallow has not previously been reported breeding in Texas east of San Antonio and the hundredth meridian. In Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, the only breeding records are on coastal islands, where the race *insularis* breeds (Burleigh, 1942. *La.State Univ.Mus.Zool.Occ.Papers No.* 11:179-183). George G. Williams has kindly provided the following excerpt from his own field notes: "June 19, 1934. One [Barn Swallow] on Galveston Island. No long tail. Sitting on fence beside road and very gentle. Probably a young bird."—J. DAN WEBSTER, *Jamestown College, Jamestown, North Dakota.*