

court. It is my belief, shared by others who saw the hawk, that it somehow became bewildered and unable to recognize that freedom was easily accessible if it flew upward.—FRANK C. CROSS, 9413 Second Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland.

#### SHRIKE ATTACKED BY BARN SWALLOWS

The Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica erythrogaster*), though normally a peaceable bird, appears to lack no courage in attacking its enemies. Bent (1942, *U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull.* 179: 452) reported that he once saw a pair of Barn Swallows attacking and chasing a Sharp-shinned Hawk which had approached their nest too closely.

On August 2, 1949, I saw 5 Barn Swallows attack a Migrant Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) near Colesville, Maryland. They harrassed the shrike, which was perched on a telephone wire, until they forced it to take wing and flee across a field with its tormentors in hot pursuit. This attack seemed to be entirely unprovoked; the date was well past the period when Barn Swallows are known to nest in the vicinity. Apparently, they merely recognized the shrike as an enemy and set upon it for no other reason.

Recognition of the shrike as an enemy is evidently not universal among small North American birds. About one month earlier, near Osborne, Kansas, I had seen a Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) and a Redwing (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) calmly sharing a stretch of telegraph wire less than 6 feet long with another shrike. These 2 species are not listed by Miller (1931, *Univ. of Calif. Pub. in Zool.* 38-2: 198, 200) among the victims of shrikes, but he lists other birds, including the Mourning Dove, Cardinal, Robin, and quail, which are as large or larger.—FRANK C. CROSS, 9413 Second Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland.

#### PECULIAR BEHAVIOUR AT THE NEST OF *FLUVICOLA PICA*

The small white and black tyrant (*Fluvicola pica*), known in Surinam as the Cotton Bird frequents banks of ditches and watercourses and is quite common in the coastal area. It builds its domed nest with a side entrance in branches overhanging the water. At a nest found on July 24, 1946 near Nieuw Nickerie I observed a peculiar behavior of one of the parent birds. The nest was lined with white feathers and contained one egg and one newly hatched chick. The parent birds were not present. I was much surprised to see suddenly one of the parent birds hopping nervously on the branches near the nest with a large white feather in its bill, but it did not actually enter the nest. At this stage of the breeding cycle the lining of the nest seemed quite out of place. So I attribute this behavior as the outcome of nervous agitation caused by my presence, when the bird returned to its nest. It seems to me to be a typical example of a "displacement activity", a behavior so common among birds. Armstrong (*Bird Display and Behaviour*, 1947) mentions many examples of fidgeting with nest material by birds in a great variety of situations and my observation of *Fluvicola pica* seems to be another example.—FR. HAVERSCHMIDT, Paramaribo, Surinam, Dutch Guiana.

#### RED-WINGS FEEDING ON WHITE ASH

A review of the literature shows few examples of Red-wings (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) feeding on seeds of trees. Beal (1900, *U. S. Biol. Surv. Bull.* 13: 41) lists "fruits of the wild cherry", beechnuts, and gives a personal account of Red-wings extracting seeds from pine cones, which he considers a case of necessity.

On October 15, 1949, I observed 2 male Red-wings (second year birds) feeding on the seeds of a White Ash (*Fraxinus americanus* L.) near a marsh at Lake Waubesa, Madison, Wisconsin. Both birds remained in the tree for half an hour, during which time they continually seized, manipulated, and dropped ash fruits. At first it appeared that the birds were simply picking off the fruits in play, so quickly did they handle them, but closer examination showed that they