

the control of this pest (see Forbush, 1929, "Birds of Massachusetts, etc.," Part 2, p. 383). In April and May, one pair of Blue Jays will destroy hundreds of the cocoons to feed the pupae to their nestlings, thus eliminating potential thousands of eggs due to hatch on fruit trees the following spring.

I first observed Blue Jays gathering the cocoons in 1948 while watching a jay nest near my house. As the food brought to the nestlings was always carried inside the mouth instead of between the mandibles, it was necessary to watch the adults as they foraged to find out what they were bringing to the nest. With binoculars, I could see them carry a small white object to a brush pile, hold it between the toes, and pound it with the bill. Something was then tossed into the mouth as the white object was released to float off in the breeze or cling to the twigs. After two or three repetitions of this performance, the parent jay flew to the nest to feed the young. Examining the white objects, I found them to be the silky cocoons woven by the adult tent caterpillar. The birds had opened each one at the end to extract the developing pupa.

Each year since, I have noted that Blue Jays hunt these cocoons about the wild cherry trees.—AMELIA R. LASKEY, 1521 Graybar Lane, Nashville 12, Tennessee, July 22, 1953.

The cause of partial albinism in a Great-tailed Grackle.—The presence of white feathers in certain areas, on a bird normally colored elsewhere, is a common and well-known phenomenon. The frequency of partial albinism (if we may really apply the term "albinism" here), usually very low, varies with the species; it is highest in the young of the Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*), but is also rather high in the Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), and Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*). On the other hand, it is very low in such groups as the flycatchers (Tyrannidae), warblers (Parulidae), and the cardueline finches. But despite its widespread occurrence, we know little about the causes of partial albinism.

On November 26, 1952, a female Great-tailed Grackle (*Cassidix mexicanus*) was collected in some newly cleared fields between Las Varas and the Boca de Chila, on the coast of southwestern Nayarit, México. On picking it up, I found that it was white on the left side of the face in the lores, the rear of the malar area, and most of the intervening subocular region. On skinning the bird, thirty hours or more later, I found a large yellow cyst directly under the skin at the same point, in the muscular area beside the rear of the lower jaw. The bird's health was evidently unaffected, as it weighed 121.8 grams even though without fat (which condition is not unusual at this season).

The only preservative at hand was 70% alcohol. Nevertheless, the tissue was preserved and, through the kindness of Dr. Louise Micklewright of the University of Arizona, was prepared for sectioning. She found, however, that it would not slice properly because of a very hard sliver in the center. She then cut some sections by hand and stained them. Nowhere in the preparation are any cell nuclei visible. Thus it appears that the sliver had become accidentally embedded in the jaw muscles, and a very hard fibrous cyst had then developed around it.

These results fall short of what might be desired; but they do suggest that our knowledge of partial albinism might be advanced if collectors made a point of preserving the tissues lying directly under the affected areas. Some abnormalities may not be so obvious, macroscopically, as was this one. It must be admitted that I, for one, have neglected opportunities of this sort in the past.—ALLAN R. PHILLIPS, *Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff, Arizona, July 17, 1953 (Contribution No. 203).*