

physical contact between competing males. Since this is apparently also true of the Starling (Kessel, op. cit.), further explanation is needed for the above observation.

As defined by Van Tyne and Berger (1959. "Fundamentals of Ornithology"), primary song is the term given to the full-voiced utterings of a bird that serve to attract a mate, or warn away competing males; the secondary song is low and inward, inaudible beyond a few yards, and has no territorial significance. It was this latter "whispering" song that was rendered by both Starlings during the fight. However, this song occurred only during passive periods, not during the actual fighting—thus, it could be interpreted as another instance of "emotional song," given during the resting periods of an intense encounter. This explanation exceeds the terms of "emotional song" as given by Van Tyne and Berger (who include it as a type of primary song): ". . . a variety of songs that cannot be associated directly with securing a mate and defense of territory." But—it was a subsong, it did appear "emotional," and it was certainly, in the broadest sense, given in defense of territory.

I wish to thank Dr. Andrew J. Meyerriecks for his valued advice and assistance in the preparation of this manuscript.—JAMES BAIRD, *Massachusetts Audubon Society, South Lincoln, Massachusetts, 27 April 1961.*

**Dowitcher attacks Willet.**—On 3 July 1961, at Beach Haven, N.J., a small group of shore birds were resting and feeding at high tide when I noticed that a Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*) had hold of the tarsus of a Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*) with his bill. The Willet tried to escape by running on one leg and fluttering. The dowitcher kept bracing himself to hold back the Willet. The Willet dragged the dowitcher about 200 feet in about four minutes. Finally, after the Willet fell down the third time, the dowitcher released the foot and grabbed the Willet by the neck, holding on about three seconds before the Willet escaped and flew away. The original flock, including about 10 Willets and 30 dowitchers seemed unconcerned.—E. I. STEARNS, *206 Lynn Lane, Westfield, N.J., 19 July 1961.*

**An opossum-titmouse incident.**—On the morning of 2 May 1961, while checking a grid of rodent livetraps at the south end of Lake Carl Blackwell, near Stillwater, Oklahoma, I noticed a pair of opossums (*Didelphis virginiana*). Startled by my presence, they at first remained still; but when I made no further movement they wandered off slowly in the dry oak leaves, amid poison ivy and coralberry. The female stopped and rooted something edible from beneath the leaves. The male followed and attempted to mate, but the female turned and bit him. Followed by the male, the female then climbed a 30–40-foot blackjack oak, to a horizontal limb some 25 feet from the ground. At the same time, I moved to a closer vantage point. Each time the male approached the female too closely, she repulsed him with mouth agape or with a quick sharp bite to the head or ear.

After observing this behavior for 45 minutes I saw a pair of Tufted Titmice (*Parus bicolor*) fly to the tree. Without much hesitation, the bird believed to be the female flew to the back of the male opossum and began plucking out hair. The opossum, at first somewhat startled, made various movements to chase the bird, which flew to a nearby branch, only to return for more hair. Each time the opossum moved she flew away, but soon returned to either the back, the rump, or the base of the tail to pull out more hairs. When the male opossum became too restless the bird flew to the back of the female for hair. After 15 or 20 trips to the back of either opossum, then to a branch