the National Audubon Society can not be persuaded to give Mr. Horner some kind of aid or at least moral support.—CLELL T. PETERSON, *Murray State College, Murray, Kentucky, 21 February 1964.*

Stylized behavior in the Turkey Vulture's courtship dance.—Mating among Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) is often preceded by a gregarious "dance." V. Coles (1938. unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University) has described such a dance: a number of vultures gather on a cleared area where they go through a series of hops with wings outstretched; one bird hops toward its neighbor, which in turn hops until it approaches a third, etc. E. L. Tyson (MS.) has described this act as one bird lowering its head and chasing another, which in turn goes through the same actions to chase a third, etc.; meanwhile, other vultures perched in nearby trees drop down to join the dance, while some dancers break away.

In early March 1961, the authors came upon such a gregarious dance of the Turkey Vulture on a sandbar in a small Florida Panhandle river. The birds flew away immediately as we approached them. However, we examined the "dancing ground" and discovered evidence that these dances may be much more elaborately stylized than had been suspected.

Examination of the vultures' well-marked tracks on the sand disclosed two discrete, contiguous circles which formed a figure eight. One of the circles was about 6 feet in diameter, the other about 8 feet in diameter. They were well defined, with marks of trailing wings at the periphery. Each trail was approximately 15 inches wide. There were no tracks visible within the circles and very few at the outer margins. The general impression was that vultures participating in the dance obviously performed within the 15-inch width of these contiguous circles, neither breaking into the center nor standing close to the sidelines.—HORACE LOFTIN, *Florida State University Canal Zone Program, Ft. Clayton, C.Z.*; AND E. L. TYSON, *Dept. Biological Sciences, Florida State University, Tallahassee, 4 June 1964.*

American Oystercatcher and Black Skimmer nesting on salt marsh.—On 30 June 1963, my wife and I discovered a pair of American Oystercatchers (*Haematopus palliatus*) nesting on a salt-marsh island that was devoid of the sand substrate usually associated with this species. The island, called locally Ham Island, is located in Little Egg Harbor Bay, Ocean County, New Jersey. The nest was found in the upper driftline of dead grasses and eelgrass about 15 feet from the western edge of the island. The drift was situated atop Spartina grasses, which in turn, were growing in salt-marsh peat. There was no sand or similar material anywhere in the area. The nest itself consisted of a very slight depression in the drift grasses and contained two eggs. Common Terns were nesting in similar situations about 35 feet away.

We returned to the island on 14 July. The birds were stationed about 100 feet north of the nest location and were very agitated at our presence. The nest was empty. Despite considerable searching, we were unable to locate any young birds.

During June and July, we visited most of the islands between Barnegat and Beach Haven Inlets. At a number of these we discovered Black Skimmers (*Rynchops nigra*) also nesting in the driftline over salt-marsh grasses without association with sand. The nests were slight depressions in the drift material. This type of nest site was even used on islands which contained some areas of sand beach in addition to the salt marsh. It was also used on islands composed entirely of salt marsh. The skimmers were successful in hatching and raising young in these locations.

I have not been able to find reports of this type of nest location for either of these species.

Beyond being an apparently new nesting substrate for these species, I believe there may be significance in their choosing this type of nest location. The sand areas in the coastal regions near the metropolitan centers are receiving increasingly heavy human use. On the islands in use by the skimmers which contained both sand and salt marsh, the sand areas received constant intrusion by boating parties. If these birds can successfully use the less visited salt-marsh islands to nest, it could have significant survival value. For the oystercatcher, it might aid its continued recapturing of range.—ROBERT C. FROHLING, *Belle Mead, New Jersey, 29 April 1964.*

Additional records of Brown Thrashers parasitized by the Brown-headed Cowbird.—Friedmann (*in* Bent 1948. *U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull.* 195:370) states that the Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) is the largest passerine bird parasitized by the Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*), and "a decidedly uncommon victim" of the parasite. The observation in 1868 by J. A. Allen on a Brown Thrasher feeding a cowbird in western Iowa remained unique until recent years. In 1943, Moore (1956. *Auk*, 73:558) saw a thrasher feeding three young fledged cowbirds. Nickell (1955. *Auk*, 72:88–92) found three pairs of Brown Thrasher nests which had young cowbirds. One nest contained three thrasher eggs and one cowbird, and another nest held two thrashers and two cowbirds. The third nest contained four young Brown Thrashers and one young cowbird. More recently, Friedmann (1963. *U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull.* 233) gives 31 records of cowbird parasitism on the Brown Thrasher; reports that range from certain parts of Canada, to Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Illinois, Michigan, and Iowa to Minnesota, Wisconsin, Kansas, North Dakota, Nebraska, Missouri, Tennessee, and Oklahoma.

While conducting research on the avian fauna around Ruston, Louisiana, three incidents of Brown Thrasher parasitism by the Brown-headed Cowbird have been recorded. To our knowledge, these are the first records of cowbirds parasitizing the Brown Thrasher in the state of Louisiana. The first nest, containing two Brown Thrasher eggs and one egg of the cowbird was located on 18 April 1964. The following day three eggs of the host and the one egg of the parasite were in the nest. The third observation of the nest was on 23 April 1964. There were four eggs (the completed clutch) of the thrasher and no cowbird egg. In this particular observation, apparently after the clutch of the thrashers had been completed, or shortly thereafter, the adult thrasher may have disposed of the cowbird's egg.

The second nest was in the vicinity of the first. When this nest was found (18 April 1964), it contained one thrasher egg. On 26 April 1964, an examination of the nest revealed three Brown Thrasher eggs and two eggs of the Brown-headed Cowbird. Three days later, three eggs of the host and the two eggs of the parasite were in the nest. By 2 May 1964, the two cowbird eggs had hatched, along with the two eggs of the Brown Thrashers. The third thrasher egg was pipped. The young cowbirds were not more than 1 day old. Further observations of the nest were made on 3 May 1964. The nest contained the two young cowbirds and three young of the Brown Thrashers. The next day, the young cowbirds were gone, but the young thrashers remained in the nest. In that the nest was not destroyed and contained the young thrashers, it is suspected that the adult thrashers removed the two cowbirds. How the nestling cowbirds were removed is unknown.

The third record of parasitism was found when a vacated nest of the Brown Thrasher was located containing one cowbird egg, which had been covered over with grasses and other vegetation to the extent that a new nest had been built over the old one. We have