

SCREAMING COWBIRDS TAKEN IN MARYLAND

By Robert T. Mitchell and Brooke Meanley

Two Screaming Cowbirds (*Molothrus rufo-axillaris*), natives of South America, were trapped in Maryland by personnel of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducting investigations on blackbirds. Both were in traps with Brown-headed Cowbirds. One was taken at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center on July 22 and one at Lyons Creek on July 31. The traps were about 20 miles apart in the Patuxent River Valley.

An agency in Washington, D.C. reported loss in transit of an unknown number of cowbirds from a South American shipment. The Screaming Cowbirds trapped in Patuxent Valley were almost certainly from that source. Other escapees may still be alive, so EBBA banders should be on the lookout for them.

The Screaming Cowbird is slightly larger than our Brown-headed Cowbird. The sexes are alike, solid bluish black with a few small chestnut colored axillary feathers.

Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Md.

THE ECONOMY OF SUNFLOWER SEED

Professor Benjamin P. Burt of Syracuse, New York, writes: "In the May-June 1960 issue of EBBA NEWS Merrill Wood described an experiment which showed that the black and striped sunflower seeds are equally good as bait. One other question which may occur at times to persons buying large quantities of sunflower seed is, with which size seed do I get the most for my money?"

"I believe the large, medium and small sunflower seeds are all just about as attractive to birds. However, there is quite a bit of difference in the weight of the husks in the three types of seeds. By weighing 100 sunflower seeds of each type and then removing the husks and weighing the seeds again it was determined that the medium sunflower seed is approximately 50% husk and the small sunflower seed only 38% husk. Since sunflower seeds are usually sold by the pound and since the larger the seed, the higher the price, it would seem to be much more economical to purchase the smaller sunflower seed."

ANNUAL MEETING

It is not too soon to start planning to go to the 1961 Annual Meeting, which will be held April 21-23 at East Stroudsburg, Pa. in the Poconos. The Council will meet Friday evening, and we are told the cost will be \$5 per person, including breakfast. Full details will appear in the January-February issue of EBBA NEWS; elsewhere in this issue is a Call for Papers, and those who wish to appear on the program should advise Vice President Merrill Wood as soon as possible.
