

to suggest that this form might prove to be a regular if rare migrant through the eastern portions of our State. Some added probability is given this surmise by the fact that I have just taken two more perfectly typical examples of *praticola* at Great Island near Hyannis, Mass., Dec. 15, 1888. Both are males, one an old, the other a young bird. They were in flocks of *O. alpestris* which very possibly contained still other specimens of *praticola*, but I had neither time nor inclination to settle this point definitely by shooting a large number of birds, the only possible way, for the two forms could not be distinguished when living. As it was I killed twenty-three *alpestris* to get the two *praticola*, but none of the former were wasted.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Molothrus ater in Massachusetts in December.—On Dec. 8, 1888, I shot two female Cowbirds in Belmont, Mass. For records of this bird in Massachusetts in January, see 'The Auk,' Vol. V, 1888, p. 207.—WALTER FAXON, *Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Cambridge, Mass.*

The Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) as a Fly-destroyer.—On the 20th of October my little son shot a male Cowbird, winging it slightly; the bird was exceedingly active and fought most vigorously when taken in the hand, pecking savagely, but the moment it was placed on the floor, or on a table, it quieted down, and would step promptly and fearlessly up to an extended hand, and if a fly were presented, pick it off and stand patiently to wait for more. It caught flies with unerring snaps of its beak, as they flew around its head, buzzed against the window panes, or rested on the floor or table top; it drank freely of water, and delighted in picking up fine grains of earth and sand between its meals of flies. My children began to feed it promiscuously, but it refused everything except flies. They took it from room to room, when it was turned loose, and at once began its incessant war upon flies, soon catching every one that was not roosting on the ceiling. Finally after six or seven days of this captivity the supply of live flies gave out, and the bird was taken into the summer kitchen where these insects were in the greatest abundance and where large numbers were dead, having been whipped by the servants and the children; the Cowbird ate very heartily of these dead flies, and the next morning was found dead in its cage, in which it had been regularly shut up and covered every night.

It became fearless, and was easily taken up in the hand, after it had been in the children's hands about a day; it would stand facing them on a table top, and take flies from their hands as rapidly as they could be passed over.—HENRY W. ELLIOTT, *Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.*

Notes upon the Sudden Appearance in Numbers of the Evening Grosbeak at Fort Wingate, New Mexico.—For four years and more (1884-1888) I have made constant and careful observations during all seasons upon the birds that are to be found in the country about Fort Wingate, New