

breast and belly buff with dark bars; bill yellow; outer edge of facial disk, black; eyes, yellow.

The sun was shining brightly but the bird apparently saw and watched me closely, frequently turning its head as if to look directly at me. On its second flight, it was off before I had come within forty yards of it. The books generally state that this bird is "blind" in bright light.—CHARLES W. TOWNSEND, *Boston, Mass.*

An Ornithological Engima.—For several years I have heard accounts of a band of Parroquets existing in the country along the edge of the open Everglades west of Palm Beach and Lake Worth. Last spring I heard again and this summer I asked an old hunting companion of mine to go in, locate the band and, if possible, shoot a single specimen for purposes of identification. This he did. He found the birds, about a dozen in number, extremely shy and wild and feeding on the "cones" of high cypress trees. He had no easy time in stalking and securing an example which he sent me and which upon being examined by Mr. Outram Bangs, proved to represent *Aratinga holochlora holochlora* (Sclater) a form occurring over Eastern Mexico and Guatemala.

I have no knowledge whatsoever which leads me to suppose that this bird is frequently brought into captivity and still less reason, at present, to suppose that anyone in Florida may have had specimens which could have escaped and established themselves. The possibility that anyone has released a flock of Parroquets seems even less likely, although I believe that from time to time some birds have either escaped or been liberated from the aviaries which Mr. Deering maintains near Miami. The other possibility, namely that these birds may have always existed in Florida, I regard as practically inconceivable, while at first sight the chance that the band might have been blown from Mexico and established in the Everglades seems almost equally improbable. An escaped pair may have been breeding, however, and this in itself is of no little interest.

The record, in any case, has provided a fascinating opportunity for speculation to all of us hereabouts.—THOMAS BARBOUR, *Mus. Comp. Zool., Cambridge, Mass.*

Notes on the Nesting Habits of the Northern Pileated Woodpecker.—The nesting-hole was in Petersham, Worcester County, Massachusetts in a dead poplar bole bare of limbs, over fifty feet high, in mixed woods of white pine, hemlock, red oak, white, yellow and sweet birch, sugar maple and poplar. The hole was oval in shape about five feet from the top on the north side. Around the base of the bole numerous large chips were scattered. On June 11, 1924, I spent five hours within twenty-five feet of the base of the stub, unconcealed, and on June 14, six hours, but after the first hour I took up a position about fifty yards away, partially concealed by bushes.

My observations may be summarized as follows: the young were fed eleven times at the first visit, four times at the second when the adults

acted in a very shy manner. As a rule the female fed the young, but on three occasions the male was identified at the hole by the greater extent of the scarlet crown anteriorly and by the scarlet stripe at the base of the bill.

Alighted at the side of the hole, the large black bird with its long narrow neck, its conspicuous scarlet crest extending to a point behind, its sharp defined black and white face markings, its yellow irises and its long pointed bill made an unusual and striking bird picture. A small triangular patch of white on the upper surface of the wings alone broke the black of the rest of the plumage.

As a rule the adult appeared suddenly at the hole, flying noiselessly through the forest. Occasionally it alighted below the hole and rapidly ascended by hops, or it alighted on some neighboring tree, and often calling like a Flicker, glided on motionless outstretched wings in a graceful curve to its young. The flight away from the hole was always direct after a preliminary downward glide and lacked the usual Woodpecker undulations. As seen from below, the white markings on the wings were conspicuous.

The three young crowded to the hole as soon as a parent appeared anywhere in the neighborhood and eagerly stretched forth their heads and necks. Their red cockades, black mustachios and pointed noses reminded me of an old caricature of French soldiers. They were always hungry and screamed with rasping voices for food, once or twice they uttered low whinnies. The adult inserted its bill to its full length into the throats of the young and vigorously regurgitated and pumped in the nourishment. The mandibles of the young reached up on the side of the adults' face. This method of feeding was used on both occasions. On the last time the young appeared two-thirds grown. After feeding the young, the female on several occasions, the male on one, entered the nest, to emerge after a minute or two and glide away. Once I detected a white piece in the bill, once, something dark, but the other times nothing at all. Once the female, after feeding the young who remained unsatisfied and were eagerly reaching out for more, started to enter the hole to clean it, and was obliged to push back the young who kept boiling over and out as fast as she pushed them back. Finally, amid a confused turmoil of red cockades and black and white face markings, she managed to push them all back and enter the hole.

Twice, when Crows flew by the nesting hole, cawing on one occasion, the young appeared at the hole and eagerly looked up at them. At another time a Hairy Woodpecker alighted, calling, on the stub and ascended it for a few feet, tapping vigorously, but the entrance hole remained vacant.

Pileated Woodpeckers seem to be able to detect borers in the hearts of trees apparently sound. One may find a white pine in full leaf with large mortised holes, a foot long and six or eight inches deep, in the sound wood, but such trees when cut down are sure to show white ants or other borers in the centre. Professor R. T. Fisher of the Harvard School of Forestry, at Petersham, made to me the ingenious suggestion that these

birds detected borers by percussion, for a sound tree when struck gives forth a peculiar ringing note, while one whose heart is riddled with borers sounds dull and dead. The forester in this way is able to distinguish the unsound from the sound. It is possible that the bird with its sensitive beak may also feel the difference as does the expert physician in percussing a chest.—CHARLES W. TOWNSEND, 98 Pinckney St., Boston, Mass.

Habits of the Flicker.—On August 24, 1924, I observed at Guelph, Ontario, Canada, a Migrant Shrike fly into a small tree in which were four or five Northern Flickers as if it were about to attack them, but they paid no attention to the Shrike and the latter did not venture to attack, and in a few minutes a Sparrow Hawk flew into the tree among the Flickers and they paid no attention to the Hawk. A few minutes later the Sparrow Hawk flew into another tree upon which was sitting a male Northern Flicker. The Hawk flew to a twig within twelve or fifteen inches of the Flicker. The latter immediately faced about so as to point his long bill at the Hawk, but otherwise seemed to ignore the latter and remained motionless. The Hawk faced the Flicker for a few seconds and then began to preen its feathers and in a few minutes flew away leaving the Flicker undisturbed. In both cases the Shrike and Hawk swooped down on the Flickers as if they meant to attack and then hesitated and decided they had better not.—HENRY HOWITT, Guelph, Ontario.

Will the Starling Learn to Migrate in this Country?—During the last week of March and the first week in April, 1924, several interesting observations were made on the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) on or near the Homewood Campus of Johns Hopkins University.

At the time mentioned, the Purple Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula quiscula*) had already begun to arrive from the south. The flocks observed were usually small, numbering on the average about 20-30 birds. On March 30, 1924, it came as quite a surprise to discover that the Starlings were flocking with the Grackles in about equal numbers.

By the last of April flocking activities had largely given way to the preoccupation of nest life, for two nests of Grackles and three of Starlings were observed on the college campus. At the time, only brief notes were made of the incident and the matter then quite forgotten.

Upon returning to Baltimore (September 26, 1924) to resume academic activities, great flocks of Grackles were observed about the campus and nearby parks, and were reported to have been in the neighborhood in flocks for about three weeks previous to my arrival. Toward evening smaller flocks augmented the larger one already in the wooded section, and added their voices to the din of noisy chortlings made by the assembled birds. An estimate as to the numbers would probably be inaccurate, but there must have been at least three or four thousands of them. During the day the main flock broke up into smaller flocks of a hundred or more, and could be observed in various places on the campus at almost any time until the 18th of October when most of the birds had left the neighborhood.