

two tiny birds. I believe the young birds were hatched on June 24, thus taking about sixteen days for the incubation. July 9, I judged by its whitish throat that one of the young birds was a female, and by the darkish hue of the other's that it was a male. The female was then exercising her wings, and seemed stronger than the male. Authors differ as to the length of time the young birds remain in the nest. One author says, "In a single week the young are on the wing," and another, "but I have become convinced that they remain in the nest only ten days." July 12, at about eight o'clock in the morning, the young female left the nest. At 7 o'clock in the evening the young male was still there, but by seven o'clock the next morning he had departed. Thus the young had remained in the nest about twenty or twenty-one days.

Since Berne is in the Helderberg mountains, and we had the proverbial forty days of rain after Ascension day, conditions may have caused a variation in the length of time of the hatching and of the young remaining in the nest.

I noticed the female bird on the nest hundreds of times. She was the one that built the nest, hatched the eggs, and fed the young. I saw the male bird near the nest but twice, once on June 17, and again on June 24, when the female was on the nest.

From time to time I watched the latter. She did not constantly sit on the nest while hatching the eggs, but was off and on it during the day. On June 18 I counted her movements and within twenty minutes she had flown off and come back six different times.—D. A. HINMAN, *Berne, N. Y.*

**On the Cooing of the Crow.**—In my 'Courtship Notes of the Crow' (*Auk*, XLIV, 1927, p. 551) I had supposed that I was the first to record "the pleasing sound which suggested the cooing of a Pigeon or the note of a cuckoo clock, but softer and more liquid." Since then I have discovered that two have preceeded me, and I am glad to record this here, not only to do them justice, but also to confirm an observation which seems almost unbelievable to those who have not made it.

Mr. C. J. Maynard in his 'Birds of Eastern North America,' ed. of 1896, p. 155, says: "I was once watching a pair of Crows that were building a nest in a small grove of white pines in Newtonville, Mass., and as I had succeeded in gaining a place of concealment not far from the birds, without attracting their attention, had a fine opportunity of observing their movements while they were entirely unconscious of my presence. The first thing that I noticed was a peculiar sound that resembled the cooing of a Dove, but it was far more musical. . . He would move sideways on his perch, bow his head, spread his tail, and droop his wings, at the same time uttering the cooing notes."

The second recorder is Mr. L. M. Terrill of St. Lambert, Quebec, who, in the '*Montreal Star*' for April 17, 1926, writes: "A low-toned liquid 'coo-loo, coo-loo', rather musical than otherwise, immediately takes my attention. . .

I had also heard it on a few other occasions without tracing the source, and now at last I knew the author to be a Crow—one of the group on the tree top which attracted my casual attention when I first sat down.”—CHARLES W. TOWNSEND, *Ipswich, Mass.*

**The Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) in western North Carolina.**—On August 16, 1928 at Boone, county seat of Watauga County, N. C., a flock of 55 Starlings was seen, and watched for some time, in a wide meadow, on the outskirts of the town. The birds were feeding upon grain, and were very shy, leaving sentinels on top of haystacks, while the rest of the flock was feeding below on the ground. By approaching behind other stacks, a close view was obtained of the birds, both with the unaided eye, and through 6 and 8x glasses. The elevation at this point is 3332 ft.

I was in company with Dr. J. J. Murray, of Lexington, Va., who is thoroughly familiar with the birds, seeing them daily about his home, and for some years, hundreds have roosted in the trees of his yard. We took no birds but our knowledge, was sufficient to identify the birds while at some distance and closer views were unmistakable. On August 17, Dr. Murray saw four Starlings in the town of Blowing Rock, Watauga County, ten miles from Boone, the elevation here being 4090 ft. We returned to Boone on the same afternoon, and again saw the flock in the meadow in which they were first noted. So far as the writer is aware, the Starling has not been reported at this altitude, and locality in western North Carolina. ALEXANDER SPRUNT JR., *Charleston, S. C.*

**Are the Boat-tailed and Great-tailed Grackles Specifically Distinct?**—The two forms of the Boat-tailed Grackle occurring in the United States, *Megaquiscalus major major* and *Megaquiscalus major macrourus*, are universally regarded as only subspecifically distinct and slight color and dimensional differences are recorded for their separation.

A winter spent in Florida a few years ago gave me the opportunity to study the Boat-tailed Grackle in life and I was considerably surprised on meeting the Great-tailed form during the past winter to find what a very different bird it was.

Two equally striking distinctions are the color of the iris and the shape of the tail.

In *major* the former is always dark brown and the latter is an ordinary strongly graduated tail.

In *macrourus* the iris is pale straw color in both sexes and the much longer tail is strongly plicated or folded at all times in life as in Blackbirds of the genus *Quiscalus*, in fact the bird looks like an enormous Purple or Bronzed Grackle.

The outline of the ends of the tail feathers is very different when unworn examples of each are compared.

Also *macrourus* seems to me to be a much noisier and more vivacious bird than *major* with a far larger repertoire of notes and it may be found