

On March 18, 1937, while engaged in field work at Cape Sable with Mr. Arthur H. Howell, of the Bureau of Biological Survey, and Mr. John B. Semple, of Coconut Grove, Florida, Mr. Semple, at my suggestion, collected a male Turkey Vulture near Flamingo that, from its measurements, apparently represented the southern race. This skin was sent to Dr. Harry C. Oberholser for identification and on being advised by him that it actually was *aura* and not *septentrionalis*, Mr. Semple, with characteristic zeal, collected nine more specimens from this same area for the Biological Survey collection. Of this number, four males, taken March 25, April 1, and April 6, likewise proved to be this southern form; the remaining five were the common Turkey Vulture of the eastern United States. Further study will be necessary to determine the abundance and northern limits of *Cathartes aura aura* in southern Florida, but it would seem now that this southern race, heretofore completely overlooked in this region, is a relatively common bird, at least as far north as Miami. I am indebted to Mr. Semple for the privilege of recording the circumstances under which this species was, for the first time, definitely added to the list of birds known to occur in Florida.—THOMAS D. BURLEIGH, *U. S. Biological Survey, Gulfport, Louisiana.*

**Black Vulture following aeroplane.**—On March 12, 1935, as I was attending to my duck banding in my wildfowl refuge near Avery Island, Louisiana, I heard the noise of an aeroplane, and glancing up, saw what I supposed were two planes—one a little in advance of the other. As they came nearer, coming over me, I looked up and saw that what I had taken for a second aeroplane was a Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) following the plane a little below it, and about two hundred feet behind it. This bird was sailing, and kept, as nearly as I could judge, exactly the same distance behind this plane, as far as I could see it. The thing was so incredible, that I failed to make public note of it.

On December 20, 1937, at fourteen minutes of twelve, I, with my daughter, Mrs. Harold G. Osborn, whose home is in Ponca City, Oklahoma, was out in my wildlife refuge. The noise of an aeroplane attracted our attention, and my daughter said, "There are two of them—one small one a little lower and following the other." As they came nearer, I looked a second time, and saw that what we had taken for a second plane was a Black Vulture sailing at about two hundred feet behind and a little lower than the aeroplane. This bird did not flap its wings, as far as I could see it, and kept, as nearly as we could judge, exactly the same distance behind the plane as when first seen. We watched until they were both out of sight to the east. On both occasions, the plane sighted was the mail plane running between Houston and New Orleans, and the flight was from west to east. According to the Post Office Department at New Orleans, the approximate speed of these planes is from 127 to 160 miles an hour. In order to give positiveness to this statement, I am having my daughter, Mrs. Osborn, sign it with me, as I deem it a most unusual exhibition of bird speed!—E. A. McILHENNY AND ROSEMARY McI. OSBORN, *Avery Island, Louisiana.*

**Black and Turkey Vultures in Westchester County, New York.**—On the afternoon of May 7, 1936, following a week of steady southerly winds, I observed a Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) near the town of North Salem, at the northern end of the county. With the alternate flapping and sailing flight characteristic of the species, the bird circled several times overhead at an altitude so low that its points of identification could be established even without the aid of the eight-power binocular through which it was examined: the wings shorter and broader than in the Turkey Vulture; the circular, silvery patches on the underwing at the base of the primaries

(several of which were broken); the short, spread tail; and even the black head and livid feet. I may add that I am familiar with the two vultures in both the southern States and South America.

More interesting than the addition of another record of the Black Vulture to the very few existing for the State (where it is regarded as accidental or casual by Chapman), has been the phenomenal increase of Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*) in this county during the last decade. Until recent years the species was known from the region by only one record, in 1922. My first was in June, 1925. Since then the bird has become ever more frequently observed in northern Westchester County, until now it must be considered a common transient. With March 17, 1935, as the date of its earliest arrival (recorded by Louis J. Halle, Jr., Pound Ridge, whose experience with the species locally parallels my own), the period of its maximum abundance extends from the beginning to the end of May, when four birds at once may frequently be seen in the sky, rarely as many as six. One or two at a time are met with commonly throughout June and the first three weeks of July. After that it is exceptional to find any until the southward migration, which begins during the last week of August. The species is not quite so common in autumn as in spring. October 12, 1934, is my latest date. The question of whether it breeds here remains open, and the object of this spectacular annual migration is a provoking mystery, deepened by the status of "rare" in the Bronx region, forty miles to the south, accorded it by Chapman in 1932.—CHARLTON OGBURN, JR., *Salem Centre, New York*.

**The proportion of sexes in hawks.**—In the older European literature it is frequently stated that a considerable surplus of females exists among hawks. The proof most frequently quoted is that a female killed at the nest will soon be replaced by a new female, while the nest will be abandoned if the male is killed. This seems to be true for the European Sparrow Hawk (*Accipiter nisus*) and for the Goshawk (*Astur gentilis*), but the fact does not necessarily prove very much. It is possible that one of the biological functions of the male is to hold nest and territory, and that the female will go in search of a new mate if the "holder of the territory" is killed. However, in some of the cases in which the sex ratio was determined in the genus *Accipiter*, the preponderance of females was fully substantiated. Gunn (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, p. 67, 1912) examined two nests of *A. nisus* in England and found in one nest one male and five females, in the other two males and four females. E. Maniquet (Rev. Franç. d'Ornith., p. 423, 1927) examined three nests in France, and found only four males among the fifteen young. The total sex ratio of the five broods would be seven males to twenty females, or three females to every male. Stanley's figures (Journ. Morph., 61: 333, 1937), which seem to indicate an equal sex ratio, are inconclusive because he does not state to how many nests the young belonged nor whether or not all the young of each nest were examined. In the Goshawk flight of 1936-37, among 291 specimens killed in Pennsylvania there were 110 males and 181 females (Auk, 55: 124, 1938). It is of course possible that this unequal sex ratio is due to the greater migratory urge of the females, and only an investigation of nests can establish the true sex ratio.

Hawks are, as a rule, monogamous, but the existence of a surplus of females has led to polygamy in exceptional cases. There are at least two cases known in the Sparrow Hawk (*Accipiter nisus*) where two females laid in the same nest and tried to raise their broods under the protection of a single male. The conditions that apply to certain species of the genus *Accipiter* do not necessarily hold true for the other