

High mortality at the Washington Monument.—A total of 576 individuals, the largest number of birds to strike the Washington Monument, Washington, D. C., in a single night in recent years, was picked up at the base of the shaft on the night of September 12, 1937. All came down in the hour and a half from 10.30 p. m. to midnight. I identified twenty-four species, represented as follows: Long-billed Marsh Wren, three; White-eyed Vireo, eighteen; Yellow-throated Vireo, one; Red-eyed Vireo, 209; Philadelphia Vireo, two; Black and White Warbler, ten; Blue-winged Warbler, one; Tennessee Warbler, two; Parula Warbler (subsp.), twenty-three; Magnolia Warbler, thirty-four; Cape May Warbler, one; Black-throated Blue Warbler, one; Black-throated Green Warbler, twenty-two; Blackburnian Warbler, four; Chestnut-sided Warbler, eight; Bay-breasted Warbler, two; Black-poll Warbler, one; Palm Warbler (subsp.), one; Oven-bird, thirteen; Connecticut Warbler, two; Yellow-throat (Maryland and other subsp.), 189; Yellow-breasted Chat, one; American Redstart, twenty-seven; Scarlet Tanager, one.

September 12 was a clear day; the temperature dropped from a high of 75° at 3 p. m. to 63° at midnight; the wind was from the north and it increased in velocity from eight miles per hour at 8 p. m. to ten miles at 12 p. m.; the humidity was 65% at 8 p. m., 70% at midnight; the moon set about 10.30 p. m.; a slight mist enveloped the top of the shaft.

The average yearly mortality at the Monument since 1932 is 328 individuals; thus it can be seen that 576 in one night is quite out of the ordinary.—ROBERT OVERING, *Landover, Maryland.*

An orgy of ants.—On April 29, 1938, I found a group of birds feeding in a driveway near a house in Crum Creek Woods, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. They ate as if there were an abundance of food spread before them. Robin, Blue Jay, Cardinal, and Brown Thrasher fed side by side without any sign of animosity. Wondering what common food would attract a vermivore, an omnivore, a graminivore, and an insectivore, I disturbed the birds long enough to find that their feast consisted of winged ants. A nest of these subterranean insects must have existed under the macadam driveway, for a procession of brand-new imagines was emerging from several small holes in the hard road-surface.

Retreating to a distance of about a hundred feet, I watched the birds return to their table. There were two Blue Jays, two Thrashers, three or four Robins, and apparently only one Cardinal, a male. The birds did not feed all at once, but came and went intermittently, each one staying three or four minutes at a time, returning at intervals of from ten to fifteen minutes. Sometimes there was no bird on hand for a five- or ten-minute period, at the end of which the road would be covered with several hundreds of ants. At these times a number of the ants would be successful in reaching the edge of the driveway, where they could climb up grass stems and fly away.

When the birds returned to such a large congregation of ants, they would eat at top speed. The Thrashers consumed seventy ants per minute; the Robins, fifty; Cardinal, forty; and Blue Jay only twenty-five.

A record of one hour's watching follows:

<i>Species</i>	<i>Arrived</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>Ants consumed</i>
Robin, M	9.10	9.16	300
Cardinal, M	9.12	9.14	80
Robin, F	9.12	9.17	150
Thrasher	9.14	9.20	420
Robin, M	9.20	9.24	200
Cardinal, M	9.21	9.22	40
Robin, F	9.25	9.30	250
Robin, F	9.45	9.51	300
Robin, M	9.45	9.49	200
Blue Jay	9.45	9.49	100
Cardinal, M	9.45	9.49	160
Thrasher	9.47	9.52	350
Thrasher	9.51	9.52	70
Robin, M	9.55	9.56	50
Thrasher	9.56	9.56.5	35
Cardinal, M	9.57	9.59	80
Thrasher	10.02	10.05	210
Robin, M	10.07	10.08	50
		Total	3155

After this the ants appeared in smaller numbers; and I have no way of knowing how long they were emerging before I discovered them. But is it any wonder that insects must be prolific, when, during one hour, these three thousand souls were of necessity sacrificed on the altar of avian voracity in order that fifty or a hundred might fly away during the confusion?

Had there been any flycatchers about, this scene would have been reminiscent of the tropical association of varied bird species with army ants and their winged prey. But there were no flycatchers; a Wood Thrush, singing in a nearby bush, failed to join in the slaughter; and, strangest of all, the Flicker, or 'Ant-eating Woodpecker,' drummed, oblivious, on a tall tulip poplar in full view of the carnage.—C. BROOKE WORTH, *Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.*