

second record tends to validate Brüggemann's specimen and locality. Thus *C. m. orru* must be presumed to occur in north Celebes. Why it should be so rare in that well-worked locality is an interesting question. Perhaps the strong competition of *C. enca celebensis* is the answer, or perhaps it is merely a straggler to the island from the western Moluccas.—S. DILLON RIPLEY, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

Seasonal changes in color of the gape of male Purple Finches.—I have looked through many bird books and have yet to find any comment on the changes in color of the skin of the gape in male Purple Finches. I have many Purple Finches here in spring, summer, and fall; and a few now and then in winter, and have banded many thousands; consequently I have been able to check the color at all seasons.

In winter the skin of the gape is dull brownish. It then gradually brightens and becomes yellowish, later changing to orange. The orange gradually reddens until, shortly before molting time, the skin is quite bright red-orange and in some cases becomes a bright blood-red. After the molting season the color gradually works back until, late in November or early December, it is back to the dull brownish of winter. Crimson males are not so bright in the fall as in the following spring. The reason is that the new feathers after molting have whitish barbules but, by wear, these are mostly removed by spring and consequently the reddish color of the feathers looks much brighter. If any reddish feathers are lost and new ones replace them, the new ones will not be red if at the time of growth of the new feathers there was no red showing in the skin of the gape. I believe this is the reason that so many crimson males are found in the spring showing a few yellowish-brown or olive-brown feathers. By checking the color of the skin of the gape you can tell how bright the birds will be in the spring. The first sign that a brownish bird is a young male of the previous year and not a female is the appearance of red in the skin of the gape.—M. J. MAGEE, 603 South St., Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

Starlings and woodpeckers.—Presumably a search through the literature would disclose many specific instances of damage by Starlings to our native bird population, but I do not recall having noted much more than casual reference to it. How serious a competitor is the Starling, to just which of our birds in different sections, and what are its methods?

Starlings are, of course, abundant at all times of the year in the suburbs of Baltimore, where I live. In food habits they are highly beneficial to me personally. In pairs they search the lawns for cutworms, and in flocks they deploy through the longer grass of the meadow, to my advantage. I raise nothing that they damage.

Close to my house are two large silver maples with dying stubs, handy for observation from living room, dining room, bed room and bath. In one or the other of these trees a pair of Flickers has endeavored to nest for the last five years, and a pair of Downy Woodpeckers for three. The usual procedure is for the Flickers to start an excavation at a height of some 30 feet, but before the hole is completed a pair of Starlings is often to be seen, early in the morning, on nearby twigs. When the nest is finished one of the Starlings enters the hole and remains more or less continuously. A Flicker will enter and after a space from a few seconds to a minute or more, emerge with the Starling clinging to it. The Flicker endeavors to fly off, but flutters half way to the ground before both birds