

the opportunity of observing the nest linings of about 250 wrens' nests, of which 75 to 80 per cent or more were dummy nests built by the males. By carefully probing with my fingers I was able to see the nest lining without visibly disturbing the nest or contents. In the nests which contained eggs, the lining of the nest extended along the tunnel-shaped entrance and often protruded from the nest opening.

The first wren nest containing Redhead-down feathers was found on May 15 and the last on July 1. A total of six wrens' nests, of approximately 250 examined, contained many Redhead down feathers. The wrens' nests profusely lined with down feathers averaged eight yards distance from the nearest Redhead nest. Other female wrens' nests, fifteen or more yards distant from those containing down feathers, were lined with other marsh-birds' feathers but not Redhead down. Frequently, single Redhead-down feathers were found in wrens' nests, probably wind-blown from the ducks' nests. Undoubtedly the wren's territory in which the Redhead nest was situated played the deciding rôle as to which wrens' nests were down-lined and which were not so lined.

The wrens made extensive use of other birds' feathers, noticeably Coot (*Fulica americana*) and Red-wing (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), with which to line their nests. W. Welter (The Wilson Bulletin, 47: 3-34, 1935, identified feathers of the Red-wing, Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*), American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), pheasant (*Phasianus*), Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*), and domestic chicken in wrens' nests in New York. The variety of feathers and plant debris which line the females' nests in Iowa suggests that the wrens utilized the materials at hand, probably within their own nesting territories. There was no evident correlation noted between the nesting sites selected by the wrens and the sites selected by the Redhead or other species of ducks. However, the fact that six wrens' nests, representing about 25 per cent of the females' nests inspected, were lined with Redhead-down feathers to the exclusion of every other form of lining material, suggests a preference for the down feathers when they are available. The wind, aided by the wrens, was responsible for the gradual disappearance of so much of the down from the Redhead nests that by the hatching date very few of them contained down feathers.—Jessor B. Low, *Illinois State Natural History Survey, Urbana, Illinois*.

Unusual feeding habit of grackles and crows.—That crows would avidly consume fish scraps, is perhaps not particularly surprising because these birds are rather omnivorous feeders. Purple Grackles (*Quiscalus q. quiscula*) also use a wide variety of foods, and we have occasionally observed them feeding in shallow water on stranded insects and even small fishes. To see several dozens of these birds feeding in deep and turbulent water after the manner of gulls and terns, however, was indeed a surprise.

On March 9, 1943, the writer, in company with J. Clark Salyer, William P. Baldwin, and Donald V. Gray of the Fish and Wildlife Service, was at the site of the new power plant at the outlet of newly constructed Pinopolis Reservoir, some 35 miles northwest of Charleston, South Carolina. About 12,000 cubic feet of water per second was passing through the electric turbines, 'boiling up' to form the headwater of the Cooper River. Apparently the turbines were cutting up or otherwise killing large numbers of gizzard shad and other small fishes. These, brought to the surface by the churning water, attracted Ring-billed, Herring, Laughing, and Bonaparte's Gulls, as well as crows, Purple Grackles, and even a solitary Red-wing. Several dozen cormorants were active in the first mile of the

river, and as many Black and Turkey Vultures lined the banks to secure such morsels of food as were washed ashore. The grackles and crows fed over the turbulent water, picking up morsels of food with the skill and dexterity of the typical water birds. The feet and even the breast feathers of many of the crows and grackles were seen to touch the surface of the water momentarily as the birds hovered over this (for them) uncharacteristic feeding place.—CLARENCE COTTAM, *U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago, Illinois.*

Winter insect food of chickadees.—It was recently my good fortune to add to the records of the former Biological Survey the nymphs of two species of insects which are devoured in countless numbers each winter. While making studies in forest ornithology I often pass through open spaces thickly overgrown by sumac of several species. In these openings I had noted Black-capped Chickadees (*Penthestes a. atricapillus*) and several other birds feeding on sumac berries and insect life found within the fruit clusters. But on two species of sumac, *Rhus glabra* (smooth sumac) and *Rhus copallina* (dwarf sumac), I noted that chickadees spent much time picking minute objects from the bark of the stems at many points between the ground and the seed clusters. Examining the birds with close-up glasses, they could be seen eating black specks from *R. glabra* and less conspicuous brown specks from *P. copallina*. With a hand lens it was plain that the two types of scale-like organisms must be different species, as the black ones were differently sculptured and were fringed by a larger number of marginal setae than the brown ones, and that each was found only on its particular species of sumac. I shaved off thin slices of bark with the nymphs attached and sent them to Dr. Muesebeck, in charge of insect identification of the U. S. Dept. Agriculture, and he passed them to Dr. Oman who recognized them as the winter stage of "jumping plant lice," family Psyllidae. The black nymph was that of *Calophya flavida*; the smaller brown one, that of *C. nigripennis*, these being the only species of *Calophya* known to occur in the eastern United States.

In May, I was able to watch the very different and active adult insects emerge from their respective, sedentary nymphal forms which, however, began to crawl around a little before this metamorphosis. Then, indeed, they took on a very different form. The wings of *nigripennis* were very pale at first, soon turning black, while those of *flavida* remained yellowish.

Writing of the matter to Dr. Phoebe Knappen, of the Fish and Wildlife Service, she kindly added these species to the list of insects eaten by chickadees, as they did not appear in the records. Dr. Knappen informed me, however, that in 1927, T. T. Odell published a bulletin in Geneva, N. Y., on "The Food Habits of Orchard Birds with Special Reference to the Pear Psylla." As a result of his studies, Odell found that the Black-capped Chickadee is the most important single bird enemy of Psyllidae in that region.

My own observations show that in winters in which the *Calophyae*, which we may here call sumac psyllids, are very abundant, the chickadees consume enormous numbers of the nymphs of the two species.—RALPH E. DANFORTH, *Noank, Conn.*

Migrant Gray-cheeked Thrushes in song.—During the exceptionally rainy spring of 1943 when bird song seemed somewhat scarce, I was fortunate twice in hearing the song of the Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Hylocichla minima*), a bird which I have always hesitated to list from sight alone. On the first occasion, about eight in the evening of May 11, I was attracted to the bird by its call which was not