

familiar to me, and, although I did not have my binocular with me, I was able to approach the apple tree in which it perched and see readily that it was a thrush of the Olive-back type. While I watched, it began to sing and I recognized at once the song of the Gray-cheeked Thrush, recalling the description of the song I had read. In some fifteen years of birding, I have found Olive-backed Thrushes (*Hylocichla ustulata*) singing in migration nearly every year, frequently in our yard, and am also familiar with the song of the Veery (*Hylocichla fuscescens*), a summer resident of this territory. This song resembled both, but differed from the pattern of either. It was soft—some notes almost whispered and seemingly coming from a great distance. In a few minutes the bird dropped to the ground where it sang a low song almost constantly as it fed. There were some lower, rather harsh notes, not thrush-like but more like those interspersed in the Catbird's song. I was under the impression at the time that this was probably not the song in its full glory—that it was not so inspiring as the Veery's song which it resembled the most. The bird sang in the rain as long as I remained to listen.

On May 19 I heard the second Gray-cheeked Thrush, this one, too, singing as long as I cared to listen. When I first heard the song, about six in the morning, it echoed from the stone walls of a vault in a cemetery here, giving these beautiful notes an unusual resonance. Rhododendrons surrounding the vault prevented my seeing the bird then as it sang. The song was shorter than the first bird's, had a more definite pattern, and was louder. It contained several notes similar to the beautiful 'double' flute-like notes of the Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla guttata*), which I have heard twice during migration, and a few notes that reminded me of a Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). While the general impression was that of a song on a descending scale, yet a portion of it was not. I regret that I cannot put into words an adequate picture of the song.

The thrush ceased its song as I approached the vault, but as I remained quiet it commenced again, softer this time—more like the first bird's. This time I watched it sing through my binocular as it perched in a tree on the hill above the vault. It was still singing when I left the scene. During the entire time spent listening to the Gray-cheek, an Olive-back sang no more than sixty feet away. There seems to have been a good migration of Olive-backs through here this spring, and probably there were also more Gray-cheeks.—ROBERT E. BALL, 2622 Tuscarawas St. W., Canton, Ohio.

Cowbird behavior.—An observer in the rice fields of Texas marvels most, perhaps, at one phenomenon—the immense flocks of Cowbirds that are continually wheeling and settling over the fields. Yet of all the teeming millions, not one ever built a nest, hatched an egg, or fed a fledgling. All began life as doorstep babies cared for by many different species. The mystery is that these babies should depart from their varied rearing, and flock together with birds of their own kind. Why?

Three observations I have made suggest an answer. Several years ago I caught a young Cowbird which a male Cardinal had been feeding about the house for several days. I liberated the captive on a large screened porch, where the Cardinal paid it two or three indifferent visits, and came no more, but an adult female Cowbird began visiting the young bird. At first she would call from a flowering quince a few feet away. The spirited response of the captive to her was very different from the begging response to the foster-father. Later, she would come closer, and alight on the screen or hop along the protruding floor of the porch

where nothing but the wire separated her from the young bird. Then she would fly away, calling as if coaxing it to follow, and repeat this performance over and over. A male Cowbird lingered in the vicinity and showed interest but never came closer than the flowering quince. After a few days I freed the captive in the old birds' absence. Shortly afterward, however, I saw the young bird and the adult female together. For a week or two the young bird would fly away out of sight with the adult, but would return alone for two meals daily from my hand. Finally, on a Fourth of July, it failed to return.

Some years later (June 5, 1938) I observed a pair of Parula Warblers feeding a Cowbird fledgling. On June 12, at the same place, I heard a commotion above me, and saw three Cowbirds actively flying about in a large tree. A Parula Warbler in a nearby tree appeared interested and was much excited. After one or two minutes, the three Cowbirds flew away together in a confused manner.

A few days later (June 18) I heard a similar commotion in a tree. A male Cardinal and three Cowbirds (a male, a female, and an immature bird) were flying excitedly from limb to limb over and through the tree. The Cardinal was much agitated. Soon he flew to some vine-covered elders about thirty feet away. The three others came after him in a close group, but turned abruptly before they reached the elders, and alighted in an elm. Then they started again for the elders, missed them, gained elevation, and alighted in a hackberry tree, a hundred feet in the opposite direction. They soon flew again, with the male bird just behind the other two, as he had been in the previous flight. After some zigzagging, it which it seemed that the middle bird was trying to get away from the others, the three passed on out of sight.

It would be interesting to know how the old birds induced the young one to accompany them and if they could have recognized it as their offspring if, indeed, it was their own.—A. K. MCKAY, *Cove, Texas*.

Cooper's Hawk carrying a nest of young Goldfinches (*Plate 14, right figure*).—The following observation of an unusual feeding behavior of a Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*) was made at the Rose Lake Wildlife Experiment Station in Clinton County, Michigan. On the afternoon of August 25, 1942, a brood of eight half-grown Ring-necked Pheasants was flushed in a field of idle ground. An adult Cooper's Hawk, which apparently was but a few feet from the pheasants, flushed with them. Expecting to find evidences of a pheasant kill, a search was conducted over the site. Instead of the expected pheasant kill, however, a songbird nest and the scant remains of several nestling young were found. Portions of the viscera were still moist and unclotted blood was noted which indicated that the kill was very recent. The construction of the nest, lateness of the brood, and feather remains showed quite conclusively that the nest and young were of the Eastern Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis tristis*).

In the immediate vicinity of where the nest was found, the sand flat was largely barren and the few scattered plants were mostly horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis*), goldenrod (*Solidago altissima*), and ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*). The nearest plants which might conceivably have held the nest were mulleins (*Verbascum thapsus*), the closest of these being about twenty-five to thirty feet away. A small patch of elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*), the nearest growth in which the nest would logically have been located, was about seventy-five feet distant. In either event the nest with the contained young was carried by the hawk at least twenty-five feet, more probably seventy-five feet, to the point where the young were eaten.—J. P. LINDUSKA, *Game Division, Dept. of Conservation, Lansing, Michigan*.