

records it only in the Button Quail (*Turnix*), the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), and, under artificial conditions, the British Robin (*Erithacus rubecula melophilus*).

At a nest of Robins watched in Baltimore in 1943, I imperfectly saw one apparent instance of normal courtship feeding, and clearly saw one instance of the inversion—the male sought food from the female, and although she had none to give him she made the motion of feeding. These birds differed greatly in coloration, and sex had been determined earlier in the nesting.

NORMAL.—On the day (June 20) after the third and last egg was laid, I looked up from jotting a note about the sitting female to find the male perched on the nest rim and the heads of the two birds together. I could not see plainly what was occurring, but felt morally sure that the male was feeding the female. A few seconds later I did plainly see the female pick at the male's bill or chin, and see the male swallow, as if both were disposing of remnants of food. Shortly afterward, the male flew away. This, incidentally, was the only time during about nine hours' dry-weather watching of incubation that I saw the male visit this nest.

It should be noted, however, that the date indicates this nest to have been a second-brood one, for that raises the possibility that instead of being true courtship feeding, the behavior I saw was an example of confusion on the part of a male still feeding first-brood young; cf. my record (Wils. Bull., 55: 78, 1943) of an anachronistic feeding incident early in incubation at a second-brood nest of the Wood Thrush (*Hyllocichla mustelina*) which resembled courtship feeding.

INVERTED.—The inverted feeding behavior accompanied an also abnormal instance of egg-covering by the male, during rain. The day (June 29) was the twelfth of steady incubation; the first egg was just about to hatch. The rain was a succession of heavy showers connected by drizzles and mistings. At a time when the fall was light, the female left the nest, but soon after she had gone it turned moderately heavy. Then I discovered the male, partly hidden by foliage, on the nest rim, and as the rain continued he went onto the nest in normal incubating position. Less than a minute later the female returned. The male, still sitting, held up his open bill toward her, and when she made no response he pecked at her closed, empty bill. Thereupon she put her bill inside his and he 'sucked' at it—drew his mandibles down over hers—a number of times. Then, half a minute after she had arrived, he rose and flew away and she went onto the nest—**HERVEY BRACKBILL, Baltimore, Maryland.**

Purple Grackle kills English Sparrow.—The captive animals in the National Zoological Park, Washington, D. C., require constant attention, but at times I have an opportunity to observe the unrestricted fauna of the park. While walking in front of our bear dens the other day (June 11, 1943), I was surprised to see a Purple Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula quiscula*) stalking in almost cat-like manner an English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus domesticus*). The sparrow was not long out of the nest, but was able to fly and take care of itself. A few days later I walked along this same area, and saw the kill. The grackle approached the sparrow and as the smaller bird flew away, the attacker seized its prey in its beak and gave it several hard shakes, with the body of the sparrow hitting the hard concrete pavement. At this moment passersby frightened the grackle away, but later the bird returned to eat the viscera of the sparrow.

In April, near the hunting ground of this grackle, I discovered the nesting site of several of the species. Their bulky but rather compact nests of mud, lined with fine grasses, were about thirty feet up in a group of conifers.

Near our large-mammal house a Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina passerina*) has established territorial rights and greets me as I walk along the path that leads to the animal house. This little fellow is very friendly and follows me until I drop a few grains of canary seed (*Phalaris canariensis*) upon which it feeds. One afternoon this little bird came up to me and by its behavior I knew it to be in distress. A large seed had become lodged in its beak. The bird had attempted to eat it but, due to its size, was unable to swallow it. As well as I could see, the attempted meal appeared to be a small coffee bean.—MALCOLM DAVIS, *National Zoological Park, Washington, D. C.*

Parrots and vitamin B.—Last winter I fell heir to five cacique parrots—three black-headed and two yellow-headed. The yellow-heads and one black-head were compatible and had been kept in a common cage at the Hershey Zoological Garden. One of the yellow-heads on arrival was found to be pretty well denuded of feathers and this one, having practically finished the picking job, extended these services to the other two birds, producing an unsightly mess. Change of diet and other treatment produced no relief.

In the meantime a large yellow-headed Amazon, a family pet for more than a quarter of a century, became droopy, listless, and 'dopey,' and it occurred to me to apply some of the much-vaunted and advertised vitamin-B complex. All of our birds are very fond of toast soaked in coffee. Administration of the drug, therefore, was a simple matter. A large drop of syrupy stuff was placed in a deep saucer, coffee was poured on it and mixed, and the toast was soaked in this. The birds apparently were unaware of the dose. Result: the Amazon picked up promptly and, still more surprising, the three smaller birds are again (June 16, 1943) almost in full feather, and picking and denuding appears forgotten or at least interrupted.

I am mindful of being told by a keeper of birds at the zoological garden that there was practically no remedy for this 'bad habit.' It is for this reason that I wish to bring our experience to the attention of people suffering from similar misfortune.—PAUL BARTSCH, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

Kingbird behavior.—The note in 'The Auk' for January, 1943, on Kingbirds' disposition of excrement leads me to write of an exactly similar case to which my attention was called two years ago in North Berwick, Maine. A pair of Kingbirds (*Tyrannus tyrannus*), nesting near my sister's house, brought all the excrement of the nestlings to her bird bath and dropped it in the water. Although frequently washed out, the amount was so profuse that she finally covered over the bath.

Some years ago an interesting nesting of the Kingbird occurred in the eaves-gutter of this house, which is very high—three tall stories. A pair of Kingbirds built in the gutter. For fear that the nest and young would be washed out in the first rain, attempts were made to frighten them away. However, there was a bad drought and just before the first rain, four little Kingbirds sat in a row on the ridge-pole! I believe a similar case was reported in Bird-Lore.—DR. ANNE E. PERKINS, *Berwick, Maine.*

Nesting of the Laughing Falcon.—Over most of Tropical America, the Laughing Falcon [*Herpetotheres cachinnans* (Linn.)] is not uncommon, although much better known through voice and reputation than by sight to the average human inhabitant of its territory. It figures prominently in native folklore and superstition and is regarded as a bird of many accomplishments, the most universally known