been acquainted with the bird for seventeen years past, and the following additional information was furnished by Miss Irene Tillinghast. The bird was hatched in Kandy, Ceylon, in May, 1925, and arrived at the museum early in 1927. Therefore, his age at the time of his death was eighteen years and nine months.—G. WILLETT, *Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles, California.*

Nesting of a Song Sparrow on a salt marsh.—Coastal salt marshes are very favorable feeding grounds for song birds because of the abundance of insects and seeds to be found there. Such marshes make treacherous nesting territory, however, because they are periodically inundated, for the most part, with the spring high-tides which occur bimonthly. Notwithstanding, an Eastern Song Sparrow, *Melospiza melodia melodia* (Wilson), built her nest on a salt marsh where it was found on July 3, 1936, along the Annisquam River (tidal inlet) in Gloucester, Massachusetts. It was a typical nest, placed on the ground and hidden under an overarching tuft of the marsh grass *Spartina patens* (Ait.), resembling greatly that of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow. It contained five eggs. At the time of discovery, it was eleven days after one inundation and thirteen days before the next one was due. A daily watch was made to determine if nesting would be completed before the next period of spring tides. After several days, however, the eggs disappeared with only fragments of shell remaining, and the nest was abandoned. If timed properly, such nesting could be completed successfully between inundations, but otherwise the nest would be flooded out.—RALPH W. DEXTER, *Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.*

A fishy bird story.—In the spring of 1940, I was working as a fire guard on the Shasta National Forest in northern California. My station was located on a mountain stream called Shovel Creek, which is heavily stocked with trout fry each year by the California Division of Fish and Game.

A few days after several cans of fish had been planted a few hundred yards below my station, a fisherman came to me with a strange story. He said a Robin was hopping around in the shallow water catching the young trout. Having been trained that forest guards should treat the sportsman and camper with respect, I gave a courteous answer but felt like telling him that he was abusing the fisherman's license to exaggerate. However, being much more interested in wildlife than in forest fires, I chanced leaving my telephone to ring unheard and went in search of the outlaw but resourceful Robin.

I didn't have to search. The first thing I saw upon reaching the spot was a brightly-colored Robin hopping from stone to stone and picking something out of the stream. I ran back to my station and in a few minutes returned with my eight-power binoculars. For the next half hour or more, telephone and forest fire were out of my mind, for I was watching a male Robin very deftly catching young trout and taking them to young in the nest. He would stay on the dry stones most of the time but occasionally hopped into the water deep enough to cover the tarsus. He did not return to the nest with each fish but would usually catch two or three, holding them crosswise in his bill, before leaving the stream.

The red-breasted fisherman continued his activity for at least a week, during which time several people were taken down to observe the spectacle. I started to build a blind in hope of photographing the bird with fish in his bill, but was called to help fight a forest fire and did not return for several weeks. The Robin was no longer catching fish when I returned.

This is admittedly a most unusual observation but, for the sake of my reputa-

tion, I am happy that several reliable witnesses can be named. At the time of the occurrence I corresponded with Dr. T. S. Roberts, under whom I had studied. Since then, he has reprimanded me each time I have visited him for never having written the story for publication. That is why, after three and one-half years, I have finally written the account, although it should have been done sooner.—JAMES W. KIMBALL, *Senior Biologist, Nebraska Game, Forestation, and Parks Commission, Pierce, Nebraska.*

Are the seasons changing?—It is often said that the seasons are changing, but here is a bit of evidence to the contrary. At Williams College, situated in Williamstown, Massachusetts, there are official weather reports from 1816 to date. The early ones were made by Prof. Chester Dewey and, along with weather data, he noted other happenings including dates of arriving spring birds. These make interesting comparisons with my own records of birds made one hundred years later in the same place. In the first volume of records from 1816 to 1838, the average date of the first Robin was March 15 and my records from 1916–1938 give exactly the same average date. The dates of the first Robin ranged from March 3 to April 2 a century ago, and from March 1 to March 30 in the latter group of years. For the Bluebird, the early records averaged March 14 for the first one seen, and mine average March 18, with a range in those previous twenty-three years of March 5 to April 1 and in the corresponding years of this century it was March 7 to April 14.—WM. J. CARTWRIGHT, *Williamstown, Massachusetts.*

***Cractes* vs. *Perisoreus*.**—Ridgway (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., 50, pt. 3: 750, 1904) proposed the use of *Cractes* Billberg (Synop. Faun. Scand., 1, pt. 2: 14, 1928) as an earlier valid name for *Perisoreus* Bonaparte (Giorn. Acadico, 49: 42, 1831), and cited *Corvus infaustus* Linnaeus as type species. The A. O. U. Committee on Nomenclature rejected this proposal on the grounds that *Cractes* was simply a substitute name for *Garrulus* Brisson (*see* Auk, 25: 394, 1908), but Sharpe (Hand-L. Gen. Spec. Birds, 5: 614, 1909) adopted Ridgway's arrangement as did Hartert (Vög. Pal. Fauna, Ergänzsb.: 22, 1932). More recently, Amadon (Amer. Mus. Novitates, no. 1251: 5, 1944) has reopened the discussion by similar use of *Cractes* instead of *Perisoreus*.

In order to examine the case at first hand, and lacking a copy of Billberg's exceedingly rare work, I wrote to Dr. W. H. Thorpe of the University of Cambridge, England, where a copy is preserved. Dr. Thorpe most kindly sent me a transcript of the original account of *Cractes* which deserves reprinting here in order to make the evidence accessible to interested workers. The original description is contained in a footnote to which reference is made in the generic heading, as follows:

"G. 6 CRACTES*), *Sv.* Skrika.

. . . . . .

"*) Hab. Gener. *fere* Corvi; *sed capite proportionaliter majore et multo minore; pennis capitis longis pro lubitu erigentibus.—Sine omni dubio hoc Genus distinctum; sed nomen genericum* Garrulus Brissonis *speciebus pluribus avium ut triviale attributum, ineptum est, unde* Cractes, *e voce* Κράκτης (clamator), *adoptavimus.*"

From this paragraph it is clear that Billberg was simply proposing *Cractes* as a substitute for *Garrulus* to which he took exception. He designated no type for his genus. Consequently the type first to be established for either generic name