

There is no doubt that a newspaper is not the best medium for the publication of new names. However, Ramsay had apparently no available channel for publication and Peters and other authors have accepted other newspaper names of Ramsay. The International Rules contain nothing that would invalidate Ramsay's name. We must therefore accept *amabilis* Ramsay as an earlier name for *aureicinctus* Layard.—E. MAYR, *American Museum of Natural History, New York, N. Y.*

**Unusual "pigeonries" of the domestic pigeon.**—While collecting data for a life history study of *Falco mexicanus* Schlegel, "street" pigeons or hybrids of *Columba livia*, *C. affinis* and possibly other species of the genus *Columba*, were found in an apparent reversion to a wild state.

A number of colonies have been observed in recent years in the bluff and cliff formations in southeastern Wyoming and eastern Colorado; these "pigeonries" often are situated on the open plain, many miles from the nearest human habitation, and the birds to all appearances subsist independent of man.

One of the largest colonies located was on Bear Mountain, Goshen County, Wyoming, where eighteen adults were counted. Two nests were found containing two eggs each. These nests were composed of small sticks and twigs placed well back in small potholes in the cliff. These potholes had openings of about six to eight inches and were slightly over a foot in depth. The accumulations of fecal matter indicated that similar potholes were used as roosts.

In northeastern Colorado a pair of blue checker pigeons with white primary feathers was observed in the company of a male *Falco sparverius sparverius*. All three landed on a ledge and relationships were on an apparently harmonious basis. The cock pigeon was driving the hen to nest and the Sparrow Hawk followed them from ledge to ledge. The eyries of *Buteo regalis*, *Aquila chrysaetos canadensis*, *Falco mexicanus*, and *Falco sparverius sparverius* have been located within the immediate vicinity of these colonies.

The observations have been confirmed by Harold M. Webster (personal communication), Tucson, Arizona. "I have found wild pigeons in several sections of cliff living right along with nesting falcons and an eagle in one case. They are especially common in the Garden of the Gods, the Larkspur area, the Park of the Red Rocks, and in South Boulder Canyon (Colorado). It is not unusual to see one taken by a falcon, but as you know the falcons prefer to eat ground mammals instead. The pigeons I have seen in the cliffs adjacent to falcon eyries were all well blooded birds and showed remarkable ability in keeping ahead of the falcons. In flying, these pigeons came in like comets, not giving the falcons much opportunity to stoop at them."

There is yet, however, little available information as to the habits of these pigeons, or even as to whether the colonies are permanently established.—RALPH B. WILLIAMS, *Wyoming Public Health Laboratory, Cheyenne, Wyoming.*

**Aircraft collision with a goldfinch.**—At about 4:30 on August 11, 1944, while in the vicinity of Dayton, Ohio, the ship that I was flying, a Douglas transport weighing twelve and a half tons, struck a bird with the windshield which was cracked badly. We were descending at the time and our speed through the air was between 170 and 180 miles per hour after corrections for temperature and altitude errors. The indicated altitude at the time of the impact was between 1,000 and 1,200 feet above the surface of the ground. The surface elevation in that area is about 1,000 feet above sea level.

Upon arrival at the airport, examination revealed that some of the bird was

still on the windshield, having been forced behind the windshield wiper. The feathers remaining on the windshield were carefully removed and wrapped and were later sent to the American Museum of Natural History where they were identified as those of the American Goldfinch. The average weight of this species is approximately 12.5 grams.

I am informed by the American Museum of Natural History that these birds are relatively high flyers and that their migrations also take place at night. I might point out that it was just beginning to get light at 4:30 on this particular morning. It is surprising that this species should have been migrating at such an early date as most American Goldfinches begin their migrations during the latter part of September.

An interesting sidelight was brought out by computing the impact. Due to the lack of information necessary in accurately computing the foot-poundage of the impact, we made computations based on assumptions as to the thickness of the remains of the bird and the area that they covered upon impact, and arrived at a figure of 100 lbs. pressure in the area of impact.

I want to thank Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy of the American Museum of Natural History for his kindness and help in preparing this note.—CAPT. V. H. BROWN, *American Airlines, Memphis, Tennessee.*

**Aortic rupture in Field Sparrow due to fright.**—On June 6, 1943, I found the nest of a Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla pusilla*) on a one-hundred-acre tract of land in Pennfield Township, Calhoun County, Michigan, where I have been making an extensive study of the species. The nest was placed underneath a tuft of grass on a side hill and contained four eggs of normal size and weight. The female was observed to be unbanded, so early on the morning of June 7 a small hair-net was placed to one side of the nest and the female Field Sparrow frightened from the nest into the net in a short time. This has proved a very effective means of capturing Field Sparrows during the six summers that I have studied them, and over 200 adults have been thus captured for banding.

Although there is considerable variation in the behavior of individual birds of one species, due to fright, just as there is with humans, I have never encountered a bird quite as frightened as was this particular Field Sparrow when I removed her from the net and banded her. She was so frightened that she breathed in gasps, similar to the panting of a dog. Immediately after banding her I opened my hand and released her, but she fluttered to the ground. I picked her up and again released her, but she dropped to the ground once more and when I picked her up for the third time I found that she was dead.

Dissection revealed a clot in the region of the heart about 5 or 6 mm. in diameter, and on closer examination it was found that the wall of the lower side of the ascending aorta had ruptured about 2 mm. from the heart. This rupture was about 1 mm. wide, and even though it might have been produced by an aortic wall weaker than normal, it was, of course, caused by the fright produced when I captured the bird.—LAWRENCE H. WALKINSHAW, *Battle Creek, Michigan.*

**The Robin does not change its tail spots.**—During banding activities, a study was made of the white tail spots of 162 trapped Eastern Robins (*Turdus m. migratorius*) from 1938 to 1943. These rectricial spots varied greatly in size, shape, and the number of feathers involved. One adult Robin had no indication whatever of white on any feather and one had only one millimeter of white showing