

area of perhaps two square yards, she walked into taller grass, whereupon the male anted in the same casual manner and for about the same number of times. The birds flew off and I examined the ground, finding many small hills of *Lasius niger* and several individuals of the genus *Formica*.

Ivor (1943) reports the Cowbird as not anting. In answer to inquiries, he writes me that this has been true of an adult female three seasons in succession and of a young male and female tested when 32, 35, and 41-43 days of age; however, the male anted once with specimens of *Tapinoma* sp.? when 46 days old. The failure of his adult bird to ant in the aviary, and the mild manner in which the two individuals I watched performed in the wild, would seem to show that the tendency to ant is weak in *Molothrus ater*. The inconspicuous way in which anting was carried out in this instance makes me wonder whether this behavior may not be more common than is generally supposed; I would not have recognized it had I not previously seen it executed in extreme form by hand-raised birds.—MARGARET M. NICE, *Chicago, Ill.*

Fall migration of the Golden Plover at Fort William, Ontario.—The Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica dominica*) is a regular, but uncommon, autumn migrant at Whitefish Lake, 50 miles southwest of Fort William, where individual birds are occasionally seen during late September and October. Such observations are not unusual, but we were surprised to see 25 of these birds feeding in low, wet fields in Paipoonge Township, eight miles west of Fort William, on October 10, 1941. Only an occasional plover was seen at Whitefish Lake during the fall of 1942, but in 1943, it appeared in large numbers west of the lake-head city. Twelve were noted on September 23 in the same region where they appeared in 1941. On the morning of September 26, a flock flew over the outskirts of the city and that afternoon Golden Plovers were feeding in low fields, cleared of hay and grain, along both sides of the Trans-Canada Highway for about six miles, not only within the city limits but also in the municipalities of Neebing and Paipoonge.

It was difficult to determine how far their invasion extended back from the highway but we conservatively estimated their number at 1000. They were equally common on September 30 but their number had decreased by October 3, when we collected an adult female, now in the Ontario Museum of Zoology, No. 68756. They gradually decreased until October 26, the last date on which they were noted, when only 12 were present. During October they had been such a conspicuous feature that several inquiries came in as to the identity of the "ploverlike birds" so abundant in the region.

The present concept of the autumn migration of the American Golden Plover has been well summarized by Roberts ('Birds of Minnesota,' 2nd ed.: 466-470, 1936). He says: "The main fall migration is first eastwards to Labrador and Newfoundland, thence south to South America, across the ocean . . . a few, formerly many, passed south in the fall, through the Mississippi Valley." In recent years, Roberts reports a slight increase in their numbers during fall migration; adult birds, singly or in small parties, precede later flocks of juveniles. The birds noted at Fort William were undoubtedly following the interior route and probably originated north of Hudson's Bay.—A. E. ALLIN, *Fort William, Ontario.*

Wettable water birds.—That cormorants and anhingas have many peculiarities in common is evident from accounts of their characteristics and relationships. One point that seems to have received little public notice is that, although highly aquatic in habits, these birds have plumage that is not very water-resistant but which in the course of their under-water activities becomes thoroughly wet. This wetting fre-

quently proceeds so far that the birds are unable to fly and must crawl up on a perch where they can dry.

In the case of the anhinga, well-grown young, but largely in the natal down and still flightless, may leave their nests and climb to the tops of their nesting trees when disturbed by man. If further pressed, they plummet downward and swim rapidly away—a strange sight in crystal-clear water. Emerging, they climb on some snag in the vicinity, where their parents feed them until they are able to fend for themselves.

Extended field observations of both birds under a wide variety of conditions indicate that where rough fish and other acceptable aquatic animals are ordinarily plentiful, comparatively little time in and under water is required to satisfy their demands for food, even when there are hungry young to care for. This indicates extraordinary ability in the pursuit of prey, and precludes the idea that these birds are handicapped by the lack of impervious plumage. Their great fishing skill earns them much leisure and for hours on end they sun, preen, and stretch on the dead trees and other perches in the vicinity of their fishing grounds.

This getting bedraggled would appear to be a hiatus in their adaptation to aquatic life, which in various other respects seems so complete. Both groups have oil glands, but possession of those organs evidently is not the whole secret of the resistance of plumage to water. Most aquatic fowl, after submerging, pop to the surface where the little water they carry with them immediately rolls off; normally they are practically unwettable. Most of these birds spend far more time in water than do the subjects of this sketch. The wettability of the cormorants and anhingas may indicate an even closer relationship between these groups than is currently admitted, one that possibly entitles them to rank as a suborder of the Steganopodes. Their obvious and great differences, however, inform us in this, as in so many other instances, that we are dealing with far-evolved entities—tip of twigs of the tree of life, of which the branches connecting them with the main trunk have been lost in the chaos of things that were.—W. L. McATEE AND HERBERT L. STODDARD. *Chicago, Illinois, and Thomasville, Georgia.*

Color change in *Ramphocelus flammigerus*.—In December, 1941, the Chicago Zoological Park at Brookfield, Illinois, received two pairs of tanagers from a dealer in New York. One pair was called "Scarlet-rumped Tanager" and the other, "Orange-rumped Tanager." The male of the former was velvety black with light scarlet rump; that of the other was black with the under parts sparingly marked with traces of the yellow color of immaturity, while the rump was light orange yellow. The two females were very much alike, with blackish head and upper parts, bright orange yellow rump, orange band across the chest, and light yellow belly. We identified all four birds as *Ramphocelus flammigerus*, the Variable Tanager.

After a few months, the scarlet-rumped male and one of the females died, but the other two birds survived and eventually molted. In this molt, the male lost all traces of the yellow feathering on the under parts and acquired a much deeper color on the rump, comparable to Flame Scarlet in Ridgway's 'Color Standards and Color Nomenclature.' Now, over two years later, it still has this area decidedly vermilion.

It thus appears that at least some of the variability in the color of the rump of males of this species is due to the different ages of the individuals.—KARL PLATH, *Chicago, Illinois.*

Whip-poor-will endurance.—The Eastern Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus vociferus*) is a regular and locally numerous breeding species on Staten Island