

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