

"In view of this I recommended a balanced mineral yeast combination put out by the Harris Laboratories. The yeast provided the B Complex vitamins which build up muscle tone.

"Considering the possibility of Coccidiosis being present, a 5% iodine solution in organic combination was added. Iodine destroys coccidia in the intestines, and also stimulates the glands, primarily the thyroid. It helped to supply the iodine lacking in the bird's diet. (Why iodine should have been lacking, it is hard to say. Could it have been possible that the gull had learnt to feed on garbage about the town of Wellfleet, and therefore have missed a sufficiency of sea-food?) In view of anemia resulting from either cause, a 5% compound of ferrous iron and copper in organic combination was recommended to be fed twice a week.

"I further recommended that the bird's daily diet of raw fish be soaked in a concentrated form of cod-liver oil."

Mrs. Day supplied the medicines, and I followed her instructions to the letter. Within two days the gull was standing up and seeming to retain its food which, with the medicine, had to be forcibly fed.

Within three or four days the gull was already beginning to feed freely, to bite the hand that fed it, and its feet, heretofore a greenish blue as I have described, took on a pinkish tinge. Within a week its keel-bone was markedly less obvious; it was consuming close to half a pound of fish a day. Within ten days it was fighting to get out of its cage.

By Saturday, the 12th of January, a month since I had taken it at Wellfleet, I was satisfied that it had recovered sufficiently to be liberated—that it had enough excess strength and medication to carry it from Cornwall to whatever seaboard it chose.

I 'fought' the bird out of its cage (there is no other word than 'fought' which can describe the healthy temper of the bird at this point). As soon as it was free, it began running down the snow-covered lawn against the wind and toward the valley in our view. But both because its wings were doubtless stiff and because it tripped over a footprint in the snow, it failed to clear a fence beyond the lawn. It then walked up-lawn from the fence where it had fallen. It seemed contented with its lot, 'roused out' its feathers several times, and consumed large quantities of snow although I had taken care to water it freely all the time that it was caged. It remained sitting on the snow throughout Saturday night.

Close-by where it sat there is a pigeon cote, and it is interesting to note that the presence of the gull, on the ground though it was, terrified the pigeons. I wondered whether the excessive fear of the pigeons might have in some way betrayed an atavistic fear of the Great Black-backed Gull *per se*, and thereby lend credence to the statements that such gulls do at times eat young birds.

Sunday morning was much colder, and by the time I came out of the house it was snowing hard. I had in my hand a piece of fish which I tossed to the gull. It did not deign to look at it, but with now-strengthened wings ran down the length of the lawn, cleared the fence easily, and was away, seeming—so large was its wing-spread—more like a pterodactyl than a gull.

The snow necessarily obscured my vision, making it impossible for me to see whether the gull alighted near by, and snow the following day, as well, made any search for it impossible. Tuesday, dawning clear, betrayed no signs of the gull at all. I like to think it found its way by river to the sea.—MONTGOMERY HARE, *Cornwall Bridge, Connecticut.*

Purple Grackles 'anting' with walnut juice.—The recent discussions of anting and supposedly substitute activities by birds make it seem worth while to de-

scribe the behavior of Purple Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula stonei*) in anointing themselves with a juice, apparently an acid, from the hulls of English walnuts (*Juglans regia*). This activity has been noticed casually in a number of trees just beyond the southwest edge of Lancaster, over a period of about 15 years; large and noisy flocks of birds have gathered to spend hours at it, day after day through much of each summer. In 1945, the grackles were repeatedly watched at their performance for the particular purpose of presenting an account.

The grackles, of both sexes, began to come to the walnuts when these were about three-fourths developed—during the first half of June. The activity was at its height during July. After that it waned sharply, but was continued by a few birds until about the middle of August. On some mornings the birds had already gathered at 4:40 o'clock, Eastern Standard Time; on one evening the last did not leave until 7:25 o'clock. As many as 20 and 30 birds worked at a time in single trees. The numbers were largest on hot, sunny days. Sometimes the activity went on even during light rains; hard downpours stopped it, but as soon as the trees had dripped off a bit the birds were back.

The walnuts grow in clusters of as many as five and six, at the ends of branches. The grackles would alight upon these clusters—just one bird to each—and begin pecking a hole in the sticky hull of one of the nuts, usually throwing away the pieces of hull they gouged out but occasionally seeming to swallow a piece. When a good-sized hole had been made, the birds would dip their bills into it, undoubtedly wetting them against the pulpy interior, and then thrust their bills over and into their plumage. A great part of the body was thus anointed—the breast, the under and upper surfaces of the wings, the back, and very often apparently the rump at the base of the tail. Sometimes the birds made just one stroke of the bill after a dip into the nut, and sometimes many. Occasionally, after a period of this activity, they would shake themselves vigorously and then begin it all over again. When they had finally finished they would often move to a branch and preen.

Particular birds that were watched worked as long as 10 to 15 minutes at a stretch. Many males sang at intervals, with display, and there was also much noise because of commotion among the birds, two or three of which would often contest for the same cluster of nuts.

Neighboring black walnut trees (*Juglans nigra*), which contained nuts during this same period, did not attract the grackles. It is to be noted that the hulls of black walnuts are extremely hard, and also dry in contrast to the gumminess of the English walnuts. The indication that it was an acid the birds were using was obtained when one of the English walnut hulls was cut open and litmus paper quickly placed against it; the paper instantly gave a strong acid reaction.—MARY EMMA GROFF, *Charles Road, Lancaster, Pennsylvania*, and HERVEY BRACKBILL, *4608 Springdale Avenue, Baltimore, 7, Maryland*.

Chipping Sparrow's nest without hair lining.—In the vicinity of New York City, especially in suburban areas, there has been a marked decrease in nesting Chipping Sparrows (*Spizella passerina*) in the last 30 years, possibly correlated with the decreasing availability of horsehair with which they used almost invariably to line their nests. In this connection a 1945 Chipping Sparrow nest from Millwood, N. Y., brought to the writer by Dr. Libbie Hyman, is of interest. It is normal, of fine twigs, dried grasses and what appear to be rootlets, but there is no differentiable lining, or trace of hair in its interior, which is of material similar in character to that of the rest of the nest only finer, more exclusively of the 'rootlets,' and more smoothly moulded. The nest, which is very frail though deep, was sheltered on a flat area in