

The specimen was sent to Professor Joseph Bequaert at the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy for identification. In view of Professor Bequaert's determination of the parasite as the species *O. vicina* (Walker) and the fact that many records of *O. confluenta* have been published for passerine, strigiform, and falconiform birds, it seems advisable to make known his conclusion. In correspondence he advises that the species *O. confluenta*, as defined by Say, is restricted to wading birds and that the species occurring on passerines, falcons, and strigids should be designated as *O. vicina* (Walker) since it appears to be distinct from the species so far known to occur on the wading birds.—L. M. BARTLETT, *Massachusetts State College, Amherst, Massachusetts.*

**Waterfowl grounded at the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge, Texas.**—That waterfowl may share with the airplane difficulty in taking off from a wet field was the observation of the writer during the winter of 1945–1946 when he watched wintering ducks attempt to arise from muddy fields at the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge, Texas. Following the mid-January snowstorms, the clay soils of dry lake bottoms where the ducks gathered daily to rest became surprisingly viscous, adhering tenaciously to their feet and legs with the result that when many attempted to fly they were so weighted down with the sticky mud that they could not rise and fell easy prey to predacious birds. Struggling created puddles about the birds and in many instances added to the accumulation on wings, breasts and legs to such an extent that death undoubtedly resulted from exhaustion. Representative examples were the Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*), one of which had acquired 14 ounces of mud on its feet and legs, and a Pintail (*Anas acuta tzitsihoo*), from which one pound 11 ounces of the gumbo were removed. Before prairie winds altered the condition by drying the wet surfaces again, an estimated 500 ducks were lost.—EDWARD J. O'NEILL, *Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge, Muleshoe, Texas.*

**Purple Martins killed on a highway.**—Much has been written concerning the mortality of Tree Swallows by cars along the highway. The following account concerns a similar type of destruction of another member of the swallow family. On September 10, 1940, while driving down to Bull's Island, S. C., with Dr. Edward Fleisher and Mr. Irwin Alperin, we passed over a low bridge spanning Albemarle Sound, N. C. We noticed hundreds of dead birds all along the bridge, but due to its narrowness, did not stop the car until we reached the other side. Upon returning on foot, we identified them all as Purple Martins. There were no live birds present, nor were there any dead birds along the road, except those present on the bridge. Our only deduction that seemed plausible in explaining this mortality was that the martins had chosen the bridge railings to roost at night, and flew into blinding headlights of cars as they traversed the sound.—DR. M. A. JACOBSON, *New York, N. Y.*

**Hooded Merganser and a watersnake.**—On August 21, 1941, while birding along the shore of a small lake at Glen Spey, N. Y., about fifteen miles from Port Jervis, a considerable commotion about three hundred yards distant, on the otherwise very placid lake surface, attracted my attention. Wishing to investigate at a closer range, after an unsuccessful view with my binoculars, I leaped into a near-by boat and rowed out to the site, and came in time to fish out a female Hooded Merganser with a common watersnake entwined about its neck. I had forcibly to remove the snake, which when finally loosened, slithered its three and one-half feet back into the lake. The merganser appeared in labored breathing, and made but feeble attempts to escape my hold with its bill.

When I arrived at shore the bird seemed to be gasping its last few breaths. On stethoscopic examination, the heart sounds were barely discernible. We attempted an intra-cardiac injection of adrenaline which apparently had no effect. A second dosage still showed no change in the bird's condition, and shortly afterward it succumbed. Whether we did succeed in inserting the hypodermic in the heart muscle is a matter of conjecture. Then again, we employed a very small dosage of the drug, which might not have been sufficient.

We did not perform a post mortem, so I can not state in just what manner the trauma inflicted by the snake, caused the bird's demise. Nevertheless, I have never heard or read of any previous duel between these two animals, and thought this note might be of interest. The final analysis of the event would lead one to the obvious conclusion that the merganser had attempted to make a meal of the snake, with an unfortunate reversal!—DR. MALCOLM A. JACOBSON, 57 W. 57th St., New York, N. Y.

**Starlings catching insects on the wing.**—In summer, it is common to see the Starling (*Sturnus v. vulgaris*) catching insects on the wing as does a flycatcher around its perch. However, I believe it is an unusual behavior for the Starling in full flight to feed on insects, as is customary for a swallow.

On April 12, 1945, at the Quebec Zoological Garden, Charlesbourg, Quebec, I saw in the distance a flock of birds circling rapidly like swallows. Knowing that the swallows at that time were not yet back from their wintering grounds, I approached the birds more closely, and with my binoculars, at about 200 yards, I saw that they were Starlings. It was about 11 A. M., the sky was clear and the temperature was from 65° to 70° F. Many insects, mostly Coleoptera, were slowly flying about in the calm, warm air.

About 15 Starlings were flying at a height of 75 to 100 feet, circling overhead, but remaining in the same general area. Some were zigzagging, giving sharp and quick strokes of the wings at each turn; others, likely having missed their prey, fluttered their wings on the spot a few seconds, and shortly pursued the prey vertically toward the sky or to the ground in swift gliding flight. That performance lasted two or three minutes with the entire flock taking part in it. Later in the day, the same flight performance was repeated by single birds at or near the same place. The performance was not observed later in the season, though that particular flock of Starlings nested in the vicinity and was observed almost daily throughout the summer.—RAYMOND CAYOUILLE, *La Société Zoologique de Québec, Charlesbourg, Québec.*

**Birds that eat Japanese beetles.**—Although the Japanese beetle (*Popillia japonica*) has for some years been one of the East's worst summer insect pests, the only list of its bird enemies that I have been able to find is that of Hadley and Hawley (U. S. Dept. Agric., Circ. 332: 19, 1934), who term the Purple Grackle, European Starling, Cardinal, Meadowlark, Catbird, English Sparrow and Robin "some of the more important" feeders on adult beetles, and credit the grackle, Starling and Crow with feeding on larvae. I have already (Wils. Bull., 55: 79, 1943) mentioned the Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*) and Louise F. A. Tanger (Bull. Lanc. Co., Pa., Bird Club, No. 7: 5-6, 1945, mimeog.) mentions the Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) as feeding on adults.

Observations in Baltimore in 1945 and 1946 enable me to add the Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*), Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*), Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) and Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) to the roll of feeders on adult beetles. Of these, the Red-headed Woodpecker has been the heaviest feeder; a few of the birds visited a badly infested elm