

during incubation, the female spent 14 away from the tree that held the nest-box. During eight of these I could not tell whether the male made feedings. During six he did, and at least sometimes he made repeated ones; I saw two during a five-minute inattentive period, and three during a six-minute period. There may well have been more each time. In addition, the female foraged for herself.

On the other three occasions, upon the male's arrival with food, the sitting female left the box simply to be fed and after one-fourth, one-half, and one and three-fourths minutes returned to the eggs without having been fed again or doing any foraging herself. These three occurrences were successive ones on the afternoon of May 13, when I thought hatching was near; except for these brief respites, the female made a sitting of 71 minutes.

*Female's behavior when fed.* When the female was fed on the nest I noticed no calls or begging display, although I regularly watched from a distance of only 20 feet. Off the nest, the female begged for food by quivering her wings and giving calls 'dee, dee, dee; swee-dee-dee; chick-a-dee-dee-dee' while her mate was foraging near by, even when he seemed to be out of her sight, and while he was approaching and delivering the food.—HERVEY BRACKBILL, 4608 Springdale Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland.

**House wrens feeding a cowbird.**—On July 12, 1947, while on a field trip along Duck Creek, Scott County, Iowa, I came upon an immature cowbird, *Molothrus ater*, perched on a low limb of a tree. The cowbird gave low calls. I concealed myself to wait and see who the foster parents were. A few seconds later a western house wren, *Troglodytes aëdon*, flew to the fledgling cowbird and fed it. The wren was soon joined by its mate which also fed the cowbird. My presence was detected by the wrens and they gave the usual alarm and scolding calls, but the cowbird gave no heed to the excited house wrens and kept calling for more food. The wrens flew to some underbrush 50 feet away, and the cowbird immediately followed them. While watching this trio through field glasses, the cowbird was fed several more times.

This is the first time I have found the house wren to be a molothrine victim. Frances Hamerstrom reported (Wilson Bull., 59: 114, 1947) a similar affair, but his wrens were nesting in boxes while the wrens that I observed were nesting, so I believe, in the wild state. The wrens use deserted woodpecker holes and natural cavities as nesting sites, making it much more difficult for a cowbird to deposit eggs in their nests.—JAMES HODGES, 3132 Fair Avenue, Davenport, Iowa.

**Catbird's defense behaviorism.**—We have hanging on one side of our yard a suet "stick" for the birds. Among other species the blue jay and the catbird, *Dumetella carolinensis*, are fond of the suet. After the blue jays brought forth their young, they became very possessive of the "stick" and drove away any other birds caught feeding there. When the catbird was so attacked, it squaled like a lusty, young bird and launched forth from the tree like a fledgling with half-open, feebly-fluttering wings—sinking rapidly until it nearly touched the ground and then rising up until it gained the branch of an apple tree on the other side of the yard. There it paused briefly, shook itself, looked around alertly, and flew off in normal fashion toward its nesting area. The psychology of the action reminds me of the way a puppy will roll over on its back when approached by a strange dog, submitting as its sole defense the fact that it is just a puppy.

This catbird went through this performance many times this summer. It would be interesting to learn if this is normal behavior for all catbirds or just the particular reaction developed by this individual.—F. J. FREEMAN, Itasca, Illinois.