fluttering of a female Cardinal. She was in a squatting position with crest erect and wings and tail outspread with wings fluttering and beak raised. As we watched, the male flew up and alighted about two feet from her. She then stood upright and slowly swayed back and forth sideways, in the meantime displaying the red portions of her plumage. At the extremity of each sway, she would hold her pose for a moment. The latter part of the display was accompanied by a "whispered" song on her part. Although the song was very faint, her throat could be seen working. The song was a whistled *'chew-chew-chew.'* The male in the meantime showed a lively interest and looked down into the feeder, as though possibly searching for a suitable seed to feed to her. He then flew off in the midst of her posturing, and she immediately followed.

Although the temperature was about 38° F., the day was cloudy and far from springlike which might otherwise account for this behavior.—F. J. FREEMAN, *Itasca, Illinois.*

First Winter Occurrence of Painted Bunting, *Passerina ciris*, in South Carolina.—Due to the extremely unseasonable warm weather of January in much of eastern United States, it is probable that extraordinary instances of avian occurrence will be reported. The writer has obtained, thus far, the first winter record of *Passerina ciris* for South Carolina.

On January 27, 1949, Mrs. Gertrude Miles and her husband, of Pineola Plantation, McClellanville, S. C., saw two males of this species about 15 miles north of Charleston on U. S. Highway 17. The birds were at the shoulder of the road, in bright sunlight at a range of a few yards. Mrs. Miles is a native of the Carolina low country and has been familiar with the "nonpareil" since childhood. The high temperature of the day was 78° F.

The Painted Bunting usually arrives in Charleston about April 16, and the earliest record, hitherto, was March 21. The writer is indebted to Mrs. Miles for making this occurrence known.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *The Crescent, Charleston, South Carolina.*

Carpodacus Finches Feeding on Nectar.—During the flowering season of the various domestic cherries in the Willamette Valley of western Oregon, the Purple Finch, *Carpodacus purpureus*, becomes an agricultural pest that at times assumes considerable importance. Flocks of these finches can destroy a large number of flowers in a few hours' feeding. Single trees about residences seem to suffer most severely, but extensive damage has been observed in several commercial orchards.

The birds pick a blossom from its peduncle, crush and maul it in their bill, and then drop it. Examination of many flowers has revealed a uniform pattern of feeding, there being no part of the flower missing, but rather the receptacle and base of the calyx and corolla are thoroughly crushed. Since there is no preliminary examination of the flowers, and a single bird will pick each flower within reach as it moves up or down a limb, it seems certain that these finches are extracting the small quantity of nectar present in the flower. When this behavior was first noticed I hoped to find that these finches were feeding upon small insects present in the flowers, but subsequent investigation did not substantiate this belief.

Beal (Yearbook U. S. Dept. Agr. for 1904: 247) noted that White-crowned Sparrows, *Zonotrichia leucophrys*, and House Finches, *Carpodacus mexicanus*, destroyed numerous blossom buds. Later, Beal (U. S. Biol. Surv. Bull. no. 30: 15, 1910) stated that both House Finches and Purple Finches destroyed "buds and blooms of fruit trees instead of the fruit itself." He further remarked (*op. cit.* 16) that he found

little evidence of fruit blossoms in the stomachs of House Finches and concluded: "It is probable that but little of the alleged mischief to fruit blossoms is done by this bird." This lack of evidence is of course due to the birds' practice of dropping the blossoms after crushing them. Beal suggested that this type of feeding was restricted to domestic fruit trees, which may not be entirely true.

On July 26, 1948, I observed at least three Cassin Finches, *Carpodacus cassinii*, feeding on the flowers of the delicious blueberry, *Vaccinium deliciosum*, in subalpine meadows on the northeast side of Mount Rainier, Washington.

In the area around Eugene, Oregon, the Evening Grosbeak, *Hesperiphona vespertina*, feeds regularly upon the flowers of the broad-leaved maple, *Acer macrophyllum*, during the early spring, much in the same manner as the Purple Finch feeds upon cherry blossoms.

These observations suggest that nectar feeding may be wide-spread among species of *Carpodacus* in North America, and perhaps in the finch subfamily Carduelinae.—GORDON W. GULLION, *5400 Huber Ave., Richmond, California.*

Bird Cooperation in Time of Danger.—Emerging from a thicket of white pines into a small clearing one day in late June, 1947, in a mountain valley near Linville Falls, North Carolina, I heard a noisy commotion among several species of birds. A number of sparrows could be seen on the ground, flying up and jumping around. Through my binoculars I could see Chipping Sparrows, *Spizella passerina*, and Field Sparrows, *Spizella pusilla*. In the nearby shrubs the Cardinals, *Richmondena cardinalis*, Bluejays, *Cyanocitta cristata*, Mockingbirds, *Mimus polyglottos*, Catbirds, *Dumetella carolinensis*, and others were crying out, flitting from shrub to shrub and flying low over the spot. The cause of this was soon noticed, a six-foot black snake, *Coluber constrictor*, was after baby Chipping Sparrows on the ground. The adult Chipping Sparrow was tumbling within inches of the snake's mouth, and the snake was striking at the mother bird, but missing each time. Other Chipping, Field, and Song Sparrows, *Melospiza melodia*, were going through the same antics, and all the time the snake was being led away from the baby sparrows. The birds mentioned above were also cooperating in leading the snake away. I watched this for a half-hour and by this time the snake was about 15 feet from the young sparrows. I entered the the scene and the snake left.—DAVID L. WRAY, *510 Dixie Trail, Raleigh, N. C.*

The Seabirds of Soemoe Soemoe and Vicinity, Northern Moluccas.—From June 5 until September 13, 1945, Richard Bowen of Warren, Rhode Island, and I were stationed on Soemoe Soemoe, one of the reef islands fringing the coast of southwest Morotai. Soemoe Soemoe lies two miles west of the southwest coast of Morotai and ten miles east of the northern tip of Halmahera at approximately two degrees north latitude. From this base we patrolled the east and west coasts of northern Halmahera. The following is an account of the observations made over this entire area. Both land and seabirds were noted, but only the latter will be included in this paper since the landbirds of the region are well known. As references while we were in the area we used Mayr's 'Birds of the Southwest Pacific' (1945) and Alexander's 'Birds of the Ocean' (1928). I also wish to express our indebtedness to Dr. Mayr and Dr. J. T. Nichols of the American Museum of Natural History for their assistance.

The climate of the region is tropical with relatively mild and predominantly southwesterly winds, usually from five to seven knots. Most of the area covered here was on the lee side of the mountains of Halmahera, which tended to protect it from storms. Evening rains were the rule, but they were usually of short duration. On August 14, however, there was a severe storm with flooding rains and relatively high winds,