

frequently seen it perched on the horse's back. I am familiar with this species, having observed great numbers in Spain, Florida, and Puerto Rico.

The only previous Mexican report of the Cattle Egret appears to be the recovery on the mainland of the Yucatan Peninsula at Laguna Om, near Chetumal, Quintana Roo, on December 16, 1956, of a bird banded as a nestling at Lake Okeechobee, Florida, on June 10, 1956 (F. J. Ligas, Fla. Nat., 31: 25, 1958).

Paynter's invaluable "Ornithogeography of the Yucatán Peninsula" (Peabody Mus. Bull. 9: 36, 1955) includes no records for this heron, and states that on the Yucatan Peninsula the Common (American) Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) is less common than the Snowy Egret (*Leucophox thula*). During my three weeks stay on this peninsula, December 23, 1958 to January 10, 1959, I observed many egrets in parties of from three to eight, around the mangroves between Progreso and Sisal, up the Champoton River, in a marsh between Campeche and Champoton, on the ocean front at the town of Campeche, and along the west coast of Cozumel Island. With the exception of two Snowy Egrets and the Cattle Egret mentioned, all the remainder appeared to be Common Egrets.—REGINALD DENHAM, 100 Central Park South, New York 19, N. Y.

The Wing Molt and Systematic Position of the Genus *Gampsonyx*.—In a recent paper (J. f. Orn., 99: 81–88, 1958) I reported on my studies of primary molt of Falconidae. They yielded the result that all birds of prey which Sushkin (1905), for osteological reasons, had included in his family Falconidae (as opposed to his Accipitridae), had in common a peculiar mode of molting the primaries. In opposition to all the rest of his order Accipitriformes (Falconiformes), the Falconidae (in the sense of Sushkin) start by dropping the fourth primary (from within). Groups studied showing the *Falco* type molt were *Herpetotheres*, *Micrastur*, *Microhierax*, *Polihierax* (including *Neohierax*), and all the "caracara" genera: *Polyborus* (*Caracara*), *Milvago*, *Daptrius*, *Ibycter*, *Phalcobaenus*.

Inadvertently I also mentioned the neotropical *Gampsonyx* (Pearl Kite) among the genera belonging to Sushkin's Falconidae. I had been misled by consulting Peters' "Check List of Birds," vol. I, p. 281, 1931. Not Sushkin, but Peters had removed *Gampsonyx* from the kites (*Elanus*, etc.) and had placed it among the Falconidae near *Polihierax* and *Spizapteryx*—a treatment adopted also by Hellmayr and Conover (Field Mus. Nat. Hist. Zool. Ser., 13, pt. 1, no. 4: 288–289, 1949).

Having at that time at my disposal only five skins of *Gampsonyx swainsoni* in primary molt, of which only three were in a significant molting stage, I fell a victim to the impossibility of telling positively the age of the three innermost primaries. I ventured to rank them among the "old" feathers in specimens 1, 2, 3 of my list (*op. cit.*: 86). They belong, however, in the category of recently molted primaries. This became apparent when I examined 29 molting *Gampsonyx* in the British Museum (July 1958) and in the American Museum of Natural History (October 1958). There can no longer be doubt that in this genus the wing molt always starts with the first (innermost) primary and proceeds to the tenth (outermost) in a quite regular ("descendant") way—the usual order in the Accipitridae. This sequence proves conclusively that *Gampsonyx* does not belong to the Falconidae. Its nearest relatives are obviously *Elanus*, *Elanoides* and other genera of the "kite" assemblage, as had been accepted by all authors previous to Peters (1931).

I had already reached this conclusion, when my attention was drawn by Dr.

Maria Koepke to a paper dealing with the same question: Ruben Plótnik, "Afinidad entre los géneros *Elanus* and *Gampsonyx*" (Revista de Investigaciones Agrícolas, 10, no. 3, pp. 313-315, Buenos Aires, 1956). After comparing various morphological characters, chiefly the bill, nostrils, and scutellation of tarsus and toes, this author concluded the correct place of *Gampsonyx* was not among the falcons, but near *Elanus*. This view had also been taken by Friedmann (U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull., 50, pt. 11: 68, 1950). We are thus in complete agreement, though approaching the subject from different sides.—VESTA STRESEMANN, *Wandalenalle 38, Berlin-Charlottenburg, Germany.*

Reverse Mounting in Red-bellied Woodpeckers.—A report on pair formation of Red-bellied Woodpeckers (*Centurus carolinus*) (Killham, Auk, 75: 318-329, 1958) discussed reverse mounting observed in this species. In June 1958 I observed the female of a nesting pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers mount the male on four occasions. The first three incidents occurred during the incubation of the eggs, the fourth after the young had hatched. A second successful brood was brought off the nest in September by this pair, the male of which was marked by a large head scar. Starlings harassed the pair at the nest hole all through the summer, but the male parent brought young of both broods to my feeders.

Each incident of reverse mounting followed the return of the male to the nest area after an absence of from thirty to sixty minutes. The male shared, almost equally during the day, the incubation duties, although he was apparently much more restless than the female during these attentive periods. The male usually returned to a stub at the top of the broken decaying tree and called "churr", at which the female would come out of the nest hole and inch up the tree stump to join him. The return of the female to the nest was never accompanied by any kind of greeting ceremony. The female usually flew right to the nest hole and waited by it for the male to emerge. Only after the young had hatched did the male fly directly to the nest hole, bringing food.

The first incident of reverse mounting was followed immediately by a brief attempt at coition, after which the female flew away. The other three incidents in which the female "covered" the male appeared to have no sexual significance, but gave the impression that they were an expression of "affection," or perhaps a greeting by the female on her mate's return to relieve her at the nest. Rather than inviting coition, reverse mounting might, on some occasions, be a gesture playing a part in keeping active the family tie.—DORIS C. HAUSER, 309 *Sylvan Road, Fayetteville, N. C.*

Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker in central Pennsylvania.—An adult male Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, *Picooides arcticus*, was collected December 2, 1958 in Centre County, about 22 miles north of University Park, Pennsylvania, and now is study skin MW1249 in the ornithology collection of The Pennsylvania State University. This specimen was discovered by and secured through Mr. Henry A. Fraser, Mr. Carl Holt and Mr. Russell Fisher of Bellefonte, Pa. Dr. Earl L. Poole of the Reading Public Museum has called to my attention that while this species has been seen before in Pennsylvania, 1928 and 1956 (Cassinia, 42: 22-23, 1957) and 1957 (Redstart, 24: 82, 1957), this seems to be the first one collected.—MERRILL WOOD, *The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa.*