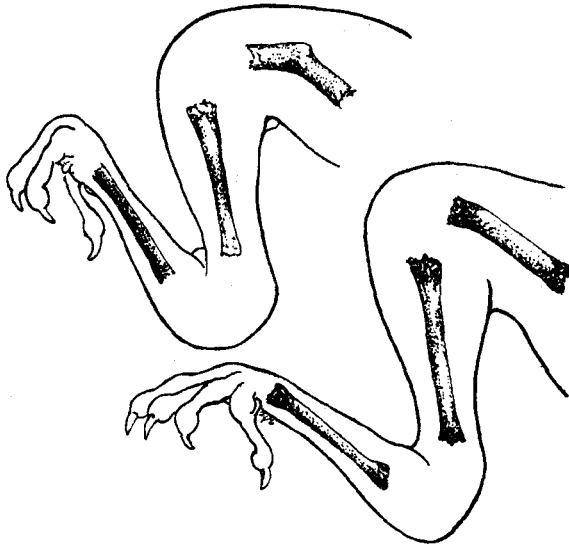


as *Amazilia verticalis clliotti*, a form heretofore considered accidental in the United States.—DALE A. ZIMMERMAN, *Department of Biology, New Mexico Western College, Silver City, New Mexico*, and SEYMOUR H. LEVY, *Route 9, Box 960, Tucson, Arizona*.

**A Skeltal Teratism in Neonatal Red-winged Blackbirds.**—Two similar teratological specimens of the Red-winged Blackbird, *Agelaius phoeniceus*, from different geographical areas were found in the course of artificially incubating eggs of this species. The defect was observable in the neonates only by corrosion-staining-clearing techniques; therefore the ultimate fates of individuals so affected in life is unknown as is also the incidence of occurrence. The defect was not observed in any of more than 500 specimens of about 100 species of passerines similarly (mostly concurrently) incubated, hatched, and prepared (Wetherbee, *Artificial Incubation of Wild Birds' Eggs and Developmental Condition of Neonates*, pp. 1-153, University Microfilms, 1959). The first of these specimens was taken at Storrs, Connecticut, the second at New Salem, Massachusetts.



**Figure 1. Skeltal teratism (upper) in neonatal Red-winged Blackbird.**

Following is a description of the anomalous condition (Figure 1, upper) compared with the normal (Figure 1, lower). The femora and humeri were crooked (the most striking character); the ilia and ischia were much shortened; there was delayed ossification at the distal ends of tibiae, tarsometatarsi, ulnae, and radii. Dr. Walter Landauer (University of Connecticut, 14 April 1958, personal communication) did not remember having seen a similar condition in his extensive experience with teratological embryos of fowl. That there seems to be an over-all retardation in ossification could suggest that the abnormal birds, although neonatal, are merely physiologically younger than the normal neonates. However, the

absence of significant intraspecific variation in ossification in just-hatched young of other passerines (Wetherbee, Comparative Phylembryogenetic Dimensionality of Neonatal Birds, pp. 1-260, University Microfilms, 1958) and the decided crook observed in the femur and humerus argue against causation by premature hatching.

It is almost impossible from such isolated cases to speculate about the mechanism(s) of origin. However, it seems appropriate to record that the first specimen came from a population sympatric with a population of Common Grackles, *Quiscalus quiscula* (probably exposed to intensive agricultural chemical applications), from which a microphthalmic individual was described (Wetherbee, Auk, 75: 101-103, 1958). The second specimen was the only bird hatched in a breeding wild colony of blackbirds experimentally exposed to tetramethyl thiuram disulfide (thiram).

If this teratological condition described in the Red-winged Blackbird is either a sporadically occurring, natural genetic expression or an exogenously, chemically induced one, the condition has potential significance in the population dynamics of the species.—DAVID KENNETH WETHERBEE, *Department of Poultry Science and Massachusetts Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit supported by the University of Massachusetts, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Game and the Wildlife Management Institute, Amherst, Massachusetts.*

**Red-eyed Cowbird Parasitizes Song Sparrow and Mexican Cacique.**—The Red-eyed Cowbird (*Tangavius aeneus*), previously unrecorded as a breeding bird from the Valley of Mexico (Miller *et al.*, Pac. Coast Avifauna, 33, 1957), is a frequent parasite of Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*) in Chapultepec Park, in the heart of Mexico City. This is the first record of the Song Sparrow as a host of this cowbird species.

The nesting area studied (the southern half of the horticultural gardens) covered approximately an average city block. Within this area I found seven active or abandoned Song Sparrow nests in August 1956; six in June 1957; and six or seven in April 1958. Not all of these could be examined, so the proportion of active to abandoned nests could not be accurately determined; however, these numbers indicate a high and concentrated local breeding population of Song Sparrows. I believe no other area in the park contained such a concentration of sparrows or any other suitable host for the Red-eyed Cowbird. In the gardens the vegetation is rigorously clipped and all lower branches removed, thus forcing the sparrows to nest higher than normal. Nests were found from two to 10 feet above the ground. The presence of a population of rats (*cf. Rattus norvegicus*) probably also has an effect on the choice of nesting site. The nests are less well concealed than in more natural areas.

Thirteen Song Sparrow nests examined from the park contained 14 eggs and six nestlings of the sparrow, and 13 eggs and two juveniles of the parasite. Three active nests with two or three sparrow eggs each contained also a single cowbird egg. Two nests contained a single sparrow egg and a juvenile cowbird. A cowbird egg in an active nest with two Song Sparrow eggs was slightly more advanced in development than were those of the sparrow.

Song Sparrows in Chapultepec Park apparently will abandon a nest when two or more Red-eyed Cowbird eggs are deposited in it. Six of the 13 sparrow nests examined had been abandoned; five of these contained one to three cowbird eggs. One of the two nests with three cowbird eggs also contained two sparrow eggs; the other contained none of the host species. In the latter nest the cowbird eggs