

ance. On 22 June, all the eggs were in the water and had small holes in them, perhaps tooth marks, were putrid, and broke when handled. One pair of adults was in the vicinity as well as the two immatures, but none was seen in the marsh after this date. I think muskrats or mink destroyed the nests.

On 8 June 1963 another nest, containing three eggs, was found in the same locality. It could not be adequately followed up, but a check on 14 July suggests that this nest also failed.—GEORGE A. SCOTT, 282 Bloor Street West, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada.

**Skimmer-like behavior in the Royal and Caspian terns.**—The feeding method of the Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra*), wherein the bird drags the lower mandible just beneath the surface of shallow, quiet water, is well known and often mentioned. I had thought this maneuver to be unique with the Rynchopidae, like the specialized morphology of the family, and was, therefore, surprised when I saw a Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*) drop close to the water surface, shorten and quicken the wing beat, and push the lower mandible just below the water surface, precisely as a skimmer does.

After first noticing this behavior, in the summer of 1961, I paid more careful attention to the activities of the nonbreeding flock, often numbering a thousand or more, of various terns that spend much time feeding young and "loafing" on the north beach of Tybee Island, Chatham County, Georgia. The Caspian Tern was seen skimming twice, and the Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*) was seen skimming numerous times. The latter species outnumbered the former by about 100 to 1 in the summer and fall of 1962, although the Caspian Tern is quite numerous a few miles away. I have not noted skimming in several other species of terns in the same locality.

In the maximum performance, the lower mandible may leave a track on the water for 30 or 40 feet. Skimming usually occurs a little distance off shore, and not in the shallow water close to shore. It has been watched from various angles and in excellent light. There is no evidence that the terns have obtained food by skimming.

The fact that the morphology of these birds allows this behavior seems interesting (here see the extensive work of R. Zusi, *Nuttall Orn. Cl.*, Publ. 3, 101 pp., 1962), and the behavior is an additional suggestion of phylogenetic relationship between the Sterninae and the Rynchopidae.—IVAN R. TOMKINS, 1231 East 50th Street, Savannah, Georgia.

**Yellow-headed Blackbirds at sea in the Atlantic Ocean.**—On 30 August 1962, while on board the Queen Elizabeth bound for Europe I saw many migrating birds.

We had sailed the evening before and the following morning were about 350 miles northeast of New York (approximately 43° N 68° W). The wind was moderate from the southeast, the weather overcast and rather foggy.

Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) were numerous. A single Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*), a number of small dark finches (not identifiable), and several Orchard Orioles (*Icterus spurius*) were observed on the rigging. Also, very much to my surprise, about 30 Yellow-headed Blackbirds (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) were present. They flew very close to the ship, not more than 30 feet away (10 meters), and I was able to see them clearly through 7 power field glasses. They remained with us for about an hour. There are few records for this species from eastern North America, much less at sea in the Atlantic.—R. M. DE SCHAUNSEE, *Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, Philadelphia 3, Pennsylvania.*