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House Sparrows feeding at night in New York.—Broun (Auk, 88: 924, 1971) regards House Sparrows, *Passer domesticus*, foraging for insects at night as unusual, and I believe it is. While holding a Frank M. Chapman Memorial Grant to study material in American museums I observed numbers of House Sparrows foraging for insects at ca. 23:30 one night in August 1968 in the floodlights around the observation floor of the Empire State Building in Manhattan, New York. The floor is some eighty stories up. For those who regard the House Sparrow as an interesting bird, Manhattan is not an ornithological desert.—R. K. BROOKE, *P. O. Box 1690, Salisbury, Rhodesia. Accepted 31 Jan. 72.*

An aberrantly colored Savannah Sparrow from Maine.—On 22 April 1970 I collected a Savannah Sparrow (*Ammodramus sandwichensis*) in Gardiner, Maine that was marked and colored in an unusual fashion (Figure 1). The pattern and extent of the coloration of the head and underparts are similar to those of a normally-plumaged Savannah Sparrow except that the usually buffy feathers are blackish-brown. This black color on the head extends to the submalar region and is broken only by a narrow, whitish malar stripe. Continuous with the dark facial pattern and extending down the sides of the neck and across the chest are black-centered feathers edged with rich brown. The chin and throat are white with a few feathers showing blackish-brown tips. The bill is somewhat aberrant also in that the maxilla is blackish and the mandible has a well-defined whitish patch that includes the tip and borders of the cutting edges.

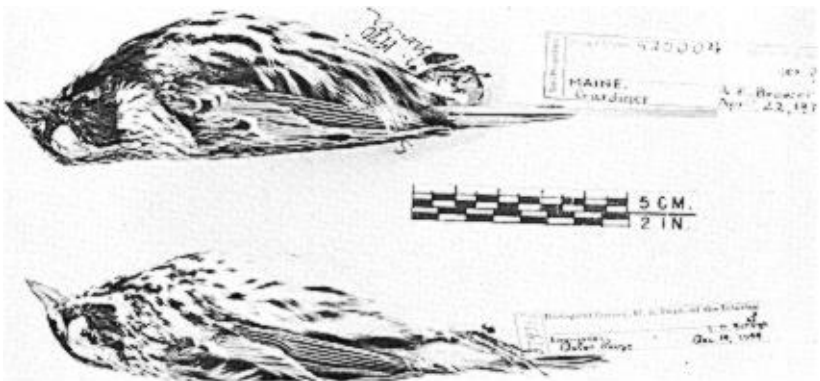


Figure 1. Aberrant (top) and normal Savannah Sparrows.

There appears to be no reference in the literature to a Savannah Sparrow having been taken with similar color aberrations of plumage and bill. I would like to thank Mrs. Fern Bennett for calling my attention to this unusual bird, and Gorman Bond for checking this specimen against the literature and those in the collection of the U. S. National Museum, and for providing the photograph. The specimen has been deposited in that institution and bears the catalog number 520004.—A. E. BROWER, 8 Hospital Street, Augusta, Maine 04330. Accepted 10 Feb. 72.

Starling raises Brown-headed Cowbird.—There appear to be only two reported instances of the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) as a Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) host, and neither of these actually raised the cowbirds, which Friedmann (U. S. Natl. Mus., Bull. 233, 1963) suggests is because of the Starling's habit of nesting in holes and its "pugnacious disposition."

At noon on 10 May 1969 I watched a large immature cowbird pursue and beg food of a Starling on a lawn in Berkeley, California. The Starling fed the cowbird four times as they ran about the recently heavily watered grass. The repetitive feeding suggests a true parent-offspring relationship, not a casual response to a begging fledgling, and places the Starling in the category of a true host that actually raised a cowbird, rather than just a passive victim.

Whereas Starlings usually nest in holes, they do not always do so. Kalmbach and Gabrielson (U. S. Dept. Agr., Bull. 868, 1921) state that "nests have been found on fire escapes, hay stacks, and barn doors, behind window shutters, and even in open boxes erected for pigeons." Correspondents reported nests to Bent (U. S. Natl. Mus., Bull. 197: 190, 1950) "in the branches of a tree" and "on the ground in a grassy meadow." Such nests would be more vulnerable to cowbird parasitism.

Baptista (Auk, 89: 879, 1972) found that in the San Francisco Bay Area the White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), formerly regarded as a rare cowbird victim, is now parasitized in some numbers. He suggests that this may reflect a continued increase in cowbird numbers in this region since Miller's (Condor, 37: 217, 1935) paper and that in time field naturalists may be accumulating more records of formerly rare hosts being victimized more commonly by the Brown-headed Cowbird.

I thank Luis Baptista, who read the original manuscript and made helpful suggestions.—HARRIET P. THOMAS, 32 Stoddard Way, Berkeley, California 94708. Accepted 10 Feb. 72.

White-ringed Flycatcher nest-building in old nest of the Yellow-rumped Cacique.—The White-ringed Flycatcher (*Conopias parva*) is widely distributed from Costa Rica through northern South America. In Surinam it is a common bird living in the tops of dead and tall trees in forest clearings on sandy ground (Haverschmidt, Birds of Surinam, Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1968, pp. 308-309). I have established previously that it nests in old woodpecker holes, within which it makes a cup-shaped nest of grasses (Auk, 74: 241, 1957). Recently I observed that it also breeds within disused baglike nests made by an icterid. In early August 1971 I watched for some time a couple of these flycatchers frequenting a fully leaved tree in a forest clearing near Zanderij, Surinam. At the end of one of the branches was a cluster of pendent nests of the Yellow-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus cela*), which had been used in January 1971 but were now deserted. This