

is fairly complete, but only part of the sphenoidal rostrum remains. The basal part of the occipital condyle is present, but the sides and the top area of the foramen magnum are missing, as is the entire palatal area.

Details of sculpture throughout agree closely with those in a series of modern skulls of the White-winged Scoter, *Melanitta deglandi*, including specimens from eastern and western North America. This constitutes the first record of this duck for the Pleistocene from the Atlantic coastal area. The species has been recorded elsewhere in the Pleistocene of southern California at Newport Bay and San Pedro (Howard 1949, Condor 51: 20) and from the middle Pleistocene of the Fossil Lake formation, Lake County, Oregon (Jehl 1967, Condor 69: 24).—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. 20560*. Accepted 27 Nov. 72.

Starlings eat larvae on corn ears without eating corn.—In fairly extensive examinations of cornfields throughout central and north central North Carolina and south central Virginia during the summer of 1969, I found two fields where all or most of the larvae of corn earworms (*Heliothis zea*) and fall armyworms (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) were removed from the corn with no corn kernels damaged except those eaten by the larvae. The husks were torn in a characteristic manner on ears earlier containing larvae (Figure 1). Each year since 1969 larvae were similarly removed from other fields in the same general area and during 1971 and 1972 from increasing numbers of fields out to 60 km from the original

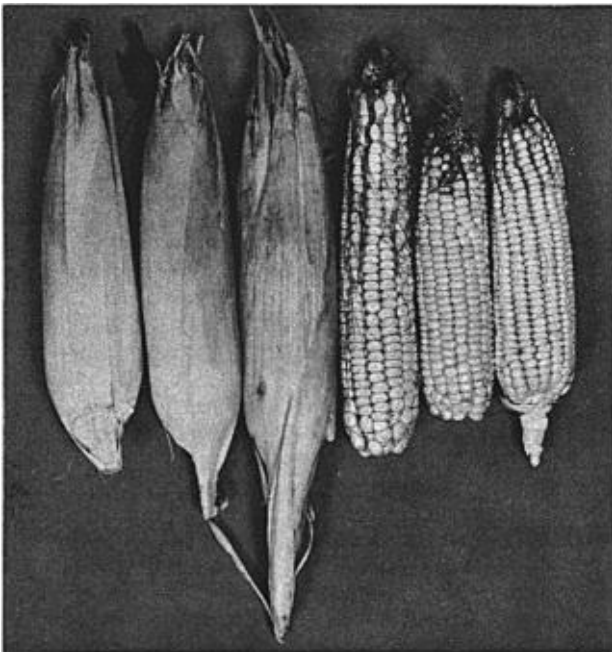


Figure 1. Corn ears from which Starlings removed larvae.

site. On 19 August 1972, after much waiting in and near cornfields, I saw a flock of Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) removing larvae in the characteristic manner. These birds foraged to the edge of the field where I was able to watch them with binoculars at reasonably close range from an automobile. Even when finding larvae they remained only a short time on each ear, and the flock quickly worked over an entire field.

The damage to the corn by the single larva in each ear showed the larvae were in an advanced stage of development when removed. This suggests that the birds may have located them by hearing them move, and the sounds the smaller larvae produced were too weak to betray their presence. The Starlings were remarkably successful in finding larvae, missing no ears containing larvae and opening only such ears. Also the husks normally had only a few tears and sometimes only one (Figure 1). The Starlings' removal of the larvae without eating any corn indicated that the larvae were preferred food, as captive Starlings readily ate corn in the same stage of development.

Because the larvae were removed in an advanced stage of development, little immediate damage to the corn crop was prevented by their removal. Both corn earworms and fall armyworms attack a wide variety of plants, and controlling them on corn may have negligible impact on these insect populations. Nevertheless if every act of wild birds must be measured by human values, this removal of larvae by Starlings can only be charged to their credit.

Despite the fact that large flocks of Starlings occur in the region and season involved in this report, bird damage to corn is commonly negligible. Relatively small numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) occur here, but when I found bird damage to corn I usually saw Red-wings either doing the damage or present in the fields. Starlings may often be blamed for damage not committed merely because of their association with Red-wings.

The local and spreading nature of this behavior suggests that Starlings may be developing a new feeding pattern in this region.—PAUL A. STEWART, *Entomology Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Oxford, North Carolina 27565*. Accepted 3 Jan. 73.

A plumage aberration of *Cariama cristata*.—In the collections of the National Museum of Natural History is a skin of *Cariama cristata* so strikingly different from the normal appearance of the species that at first it would seem to be a totally different form. The specimen (USNM 222521) has regrettably little data, having been a captive in the National Zoological Park (Washington, D. C.). It is labelled "‘Paraguay’—Rec'd from J. N. Ruffin—Died Feb. 25, 1911." The carcass was preserved in alcohol and shows the bird to be a female with a fairly well-developed ovary (follicles ca. 2–3 mm). The specimen had previously been misidentified as *Chunga burmeisteri* but this was later crossed out on the label and *Cariama* substituted. In size and in all the external features save color, the specimen agrees with *Cariama cristata* and it is clearly referable to that species and not to *Chunga burmeisteri*.

The aberrant bird differs in having the finely vermiculated grayish-ochraceous areas of the normal plumage largely replaced by dark clove brown (Figure 1). The crest is very dark blackish-brown with only occasional traces of lighter vermiculations. The entire dorsum is dark brown. The wing coverts are dark brown with lighter vermiculations; a few of the coverts are considerably lighter than