

GENERAL NOTES

Flicker with Orange-red Shafts in Wing and Tail Feathers.—A juvenile flicker of more than usual interest was banded at the Wharton Station, Groton, Massachusetts, on September 24, 1939, with band 38-360652. The bird was acquiring its first winter plumage, the tail being composed entirely of new feathers, the two central ones, however, being only about one inch out of the sheaths. The wings also were in process of being renewed, both old and new feathers being present. The old feathers in the wings had the normal yellow shafts. The new feathers present, though, were distinctly extraordinary, being described as having orange-red shafts. All the tail feathers had orange-red shafts.

This bird probably just missed being a collector's item. Feathers in the left wing had on them the almost unmistakable markings caused by shot. One shot had apparently also gone completely through a tail feather. Perhaps some collector will remember attempting to bag an atypical specimen of *Colaptes auratus luteus*.—EDWIN A. MASON, Wharton Bird Banding Station, Groton, Massachusetts.

Migrant Shrike Returns on Anniversary of Its Banding.—Looking from a window just after noon on January 20, 1940, I saw a Tree Sparrow (*Spizella a. arborea*) enter a Government sparrow trap in my back yard. I got into my wraps and rubbers at once and went out to release it. Certainly less than three minutes elapsed after I left the window until I stepped out of the door into the light snow which covered the ground. Within that short time, however, a Migrant Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus migrans*), previously unseen, had entered the trap. As I left the house he could be seen trying to escape from the trap with the dead sparrow dangling from his beak. The shrike's beak held the sparrow by the nape of its neck.

When I approached very close to the trap the shrike dropped its prey in one corner. The sparrow's body did not even quiver, its life had been so completely erased during those few seconds. Although the shrike remained in the trap for almost an hour while I observed him from a distance, not once again did he pay the least attention to the dead sparrow, much less touch it.

The shrike, by the way, wore a band on its right leg. Upon examination I found it to be 39-214051, which I had placed upon the leg of a Migrant Shrike exactly one year previous (January 20, 1939). Upon that occasion the bird was captured in a crab net while it was attempting to reach two Tree Sparrows in the same Government sparrow trap. (See *Bird-Banding*, April, 1939, page 90.)—G. HAPGOOD PARKS, 99 Warrenton Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut.

Robins and Cowbird Eggs.—Herbert Friedmann was fortunate enough to see a Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) lay in a Robin's (*Turdus migratorius*) nest and describes the manner in which the owner promptly ejected the egg (The Cowbirds, 1929: 259). He found, however, that a Chipping Sparrow egg (*Spizella passerina*) of similar color as the Robin's eggs, but much smaller, was tolerated.

I have experimented with four Cowbird eggs and three English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) eggs; two were rejected and five accepted. One female Robin in Columbus, Ohio, and another in Augusta, Michigan, each removed the Cowbird egg at once. Two English Sparrow eggs hatched one day after one young Robin; a few hours later the whole brood had been taken by some enemy. The third English Sparrow egg hatched five days before the Robin eggs; the nestling lived only one day. One Cowbird egg failed to hatch, apparently having been added before it was given to the Robins. The other hatched on the same day as two of its nest-mates, the third Robin hatching the following day. Although dwarfed by its companions, the Cowbird survived for three days.

Friedmann mentions "Half a dozen or more records," from five states of Cowbird eggs in Robin nests. Trautman (*Birds of Buckeye Lake*, 1940: 393) reports one similar case and also three instances in which Robins were feeding Cowbirds out of the nest; this is not proof that the latter were raised by the former, as young