**The Evening Grosbeak in Eastern Texas.**—The Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperiphona vespertina*), usually described as an irregular migrant, has never been reported for Nacogdoches County, Texas or for most of east Texas. This species was present in large numbers in east Texas and western Lousiana during the winter and spring of 1968-69. The first Evening Grosbeaks in Nacogdoches County were reported on 20 November, 1968. The numbers gradually increased until an estimated 850-1100 were present in the City of Nacogdoches. This estimate was based on volunteer observations, all made the same morning at feeding stations, and from a "road-side" census through the city. Numbers remained at this level through January, February and March and then rapidly declined. The last birds were reported on May 23. During their visit to Nacogdoches 132 grosbeaks were banded, 40 males and 92 females. This proportion of male to female is representative of the sex ratio of flocks which were observed.

The food habits of the Evening Grosbeaks underwent a prominent change during the latter part of their stay in Nacogdoches. During January and February they fed almost entirely at feeding stations, where sunflower seeds seemed to be preferred. This characteristic feeding habit changed rather abruptly during the latter part of March when they began feeding on native foods and ignored for the most part the window feeders. This may have been due in part to the failure of feeder owners to provide sunflower seeds but I do not feel this was the main reason.

Grosbeaks began feeding primarily on the ground where they consumed seeds of cherry laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*), privet (*Ligustrum* spp.), and hackberry (*Celtis* spp.). They did not eat those seeds having a fleshy coat but only those from which the fleshy coat had been removed previously by other birds; Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*), primarily. During the time when grosbeaks were observed feeding on native seeds they also spent considerable time in trees. Most of this time was spent preening and loafing but they were observed eating seeds which they removed from the trees. The only tree species for which this was recorded were hackberry and elm (*Ulmus* spp.).—Edwin D. Michael, Biology Department, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

**Traill's Flycatcher, a Transient in Peninsular Florida.**—The Traill's Flycatcher (*Empidonx traillii*) has been considered to be absent as a transient in peninuslar Florida (Sprunt, 1954; Florida Bird Life p. 297; Phillips, Howe & Lanyon, 1966, *Bird-Banding* **37**: 163). However, during recent years an October mist-netting program, and selective collecting carried out near Homestead, Dade County, Florida, have revealed that *E. traillii* occur regularly as uncommon fall transients, at least in extreme southern Florida. Two specimens, one by Fisk at Homestead, 21 October 1967, and the other by Ogden 13 miles southwest of Homestead, in Everglades National Park, 11 September 1968, are deposited in the Everglades Park reference collection. A. R. Phillips examined the October 1967 specimen and strongly suspected that it represented the northern ("fee-bee-o") form. Three other *traillii*, two adult, one HY, have been netted, banded and released by Fisk at Homestead on 1 October (2), and 2 October (1), 1969. Measurements taken include wing and wingtip, Formula B, tarsus, length and width of culmen. There have also been field sight records in Everglades National Park by Ogden of birds considered to be *traillii*, on 28 and 30 September, 1965, and 4 September 1967 (2).

The records of *E. traillii* presented here apparently represent the first fall observations for peninsular Florida. We presume *traillii* has been previously overlooked due to the similarity to *E. minimus*, the latter a fairly common fall transient in south Florida.—John C. Ogden, Box 279, Everglades National Park, Homestead, and Erma J. Fisk, 17101 S. W. 284th Street, Homestead.

**The Turning Down of Marked Eggs by Great Tits.**—Holcomb (1969, *Bird-Banding* **40**: 105-113) marked the eggs of 28 species of North American land birds with a bold orange or red number and reported that at least 9 of 12 species tended to turn the number downwards by the following day. In 1948, in England, I marked 143 eggs in 24 incomplete clutches of the Great Tit, *Parus major*, with a small, lightly-written number in black ink. Each egg was marked the day after it was laid and each was replaced in the nest regardless of the position of the number. On one morning when the positions of the numbers were specially recorded (because I had previously noticed that they were often turned down),

I found that 104 of the 143 eggs ($P < 0.001$) had the numbered side down.

This observation adds to those of Holcomb in that: (i) the behavior occurred before the start of incubation, and in incomplete clutches which Great Tits keep covered with nest material; (ii) the offending number was black, not orange or red; and (iii) the nests were in totally enclosed nest-boxes with entrance holes of only 1 1/4 inches diameter. Thus, as usual in this species, the pale spotted eggs could not be seen from outside the nest by potential predators, so the concealing of a foreign mark could hardly render them less vulnerable. The explanation may be simply that any aberrant marking on an egg attracts the parent's attention to it, and so that eggs with such markings uppermost are more likely to be turned (perhaps randomly) than are undistinguished eggs.

One word of warning, however. My colleagues have just demonstrated to me how difficult it is to judge *without bias* whether a mark on an egg is up or down, and this difficulty is increased the bigger the mark relative to the size of the egg. Some of Holcomb's marks on small eggs were relatively very big indeed. —J. A. Gibb, Animal Ecology Division, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, P. O. Box 30466, Lower Hutt, New Zealand.

**Missing foot of Red-winged Blackbird and Blue Jay.**—On 28 April 1968 I trapped, banded (#709-89060) and released a female adult Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) whose right foot was missing. The stub was an old wound, cleanly healed with only slight enlargements remaining where the digits had been severed. The bird appeared healthy in all aspects and when released perched easily on a branch using one foot. Its measurements were: weight - 42.3 grams, wing chord - 9.9 mm, and fat class 1 (scale 0-3).

On 2 May 1969, I was surprised to capture another footless bird which I banded (# 963-82084) and released, an adult Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*). It, too, was apparently healthy although the right foot was completely missing and had healed cleanly. Its measurements were: weight - 91.3 grams; wing chord - 131.0 mm, and fat class 0 (scale 0-3). It was one of twelve Blue Jays (all adults) trapped that day. A comparison of its measurements with the other eleven may be of interest. The wing chords varied from 126.5 to 140.0 mm with the median 135.0 and average 133.8 mm; the weights from 77.4 grams to 102.2 grams, with the median 91.6 and the average 90.2 grams. Seven were designated fat class # 0, four # 1, and one fat class # 2.

To date, 20 October 1969, neither has returned.—Kenneth W. Prescott, New Jersey State Museum, Cultural Center, Trenton, New Jersey, 08625.

**Food Passing By Nesting Marsh Hawks** (*Circus cyaneus*). —R. R. Sutton (1967. *Notornis*, **14**(3): 161) reported an instance of food passing by a pair of nesting Harriers (*Circus approximans*) in Southland, New Zealand. I was prompted to obtain and read Sutton's note because it was reviewed by J. P. Hailman (1969. *Bird-Banding*, **40**(1): 59). Because this behavior seemed worthy of a review I am further prompted to report a very similar event for a pair of nesting Marsh Hawks (*C. cyaneus*) which occurred at 18:00 on 13 May 1966 at Mack Lake in Oscoda County, Michigan.

The female, while flying over a small swamp, emitted a series of calls ("screams"). When she reached the edge of the swamp a male came from the same direction as had the female, but at a higher altitude. The male dropped a mammal about the size and shape of a thirteen-lined ground squirrel (*Citellus tridecemlineatus*). The object dropped through a distance I was unable to estimate (but not as far as the 150 feet reported by Sutton). The female rolled on her side and seized the mammal with one foot. She then flew back over the swamp holding her catch with both feet.

On 14 May at 20:45 we flushed a female Marsh Hawk from a nest containing four eggs. This nest was located on a *Sphagnum* hummock in the aforementioned swamp. Sutton's report involved a pair of hawks feeding ". . . two well-grown Harriers."

At the Mack Lake nest there were five eggs on 27 May and again on 3 June. There were only four eggs on 10 June. There were four nestlings on 19 June and these four were banded on 26 June. One of these young birds was recovered on 20 November 1966 eight miles west of Canton, Mississippi.—Bruce E. Radabaugh, Drayton Plains Nature Center, 2125 Denby Drive, Drayton Plains, Michigan 48020.