

The birds were identified as the Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus auritus*) by Prof. John P. Bird, of La Crosse, Wisconsin. I quote from his letter:

"The flight in question was moving northward and consisted of very many thousands, reaching for miles along the valley. I have never seen so large a flight of cormorants as this seems to have been."

At this date, September 7, I have seen no mention of this flight in our bird journals, therefore this account may be of interest.—FRANK GRASSET, *Glencoe, Ill.*

The Fishing Habit of the Bronzed Grackle.—The only reference that I remember having seen concerning the fact that grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula* subsp.) may be fishermen is the statement that fish were found in the stomachs of birds, made in the bulletin on food of the grackles. Yet my observations during the present season indicate that grackles living near the water may depend upon fish for their food to a considerable extent.

One morning while on a field trip in company with Dr. C. E. Ehinger, we were attracted to what we supposed to be a bathing party of Bronzed Grackles (*Q. q. aeneus*). On closer watch we found that they were fishing for minnows below the dam. The Mississippi River Power dam is approximately a mile in length, and at normal level the water is thirty-six feet higher above the dam than below. At points where the gates are open the pressure is sufficient to make a tremendous disturbance from the falling water, the spray rising as high as the dam itself and the water below being rough enough to capsize a good-sized boat. Where the gates are closed there is a constant dripping of water over the sloping aprons below the gates. Some gates which do not fit as tight as others permit a considerable amount of water to pass through. Where the birds were alighting on the cement the water was running in a stream about to their knees. Their long tails seemed to bother the birds by getting in the water and often throwing them off their balance.

We were able to approach within fifty to one hundred feet of the birds, and through our glasses to observe them closely. They would alight in the shallow water and watch until they were able to catch a passing minnow. Then they would fly to a nearby rock, or to the top of the dam, and hammer the little fish to death, after which they would fly away, probably to their nests. We did not see them feeding the fish to the young but from the fact that nearly all flew away with fish in their beaks we supposed that to be their object.

Having once noticed the fishing proclivities of these birds we went several different times to observe them, and took other persons to see them. Whenever we went we found the birds coming and going in considerable numbers, and seldom found any delay necessary in order to see them catching the minnows. It soon became evident that the Bronzed Grackle, in this neighborhood, at least, depends to a considerable extent upon fish for food. We are now wondering whether this trait has been generally overlooked, or whether we had not noticed the references to it in our literature.—FRANK C. PELLET, *Hamilton, Ill.*

The Mockingbird in Mahoning County, Ohio.—Very few definite records of the presence of the Mockingbird in Mahoning County, Ohio, have been made. Our home in Canfield Township has been favored twice. In the spring of 1923 a Mockingbird settled in our driveway, apparently looking for food. Again, a

Mockingbird, which may have been the one observed in the spring, came to our yard on November 23, 1923, attracted by the fruits of the shrubbery—the Sweet Viburnum (*Viburnum lentago*) especially. The bird was seen eating these berries often, and on several occasions the regurgitation of the seeds was observed.

We tied some suet to a branch of one of the Viburnums, and when sure the Mockingbird was feeding on it, we substituted a four mesh woven wire basket of suet, such as we had near the house for other birds. A week or so later, the Mockingbird came to the basket near the house, and soon took such complete possession of it that we had to put up some baskets at a distance for the other birds, which she was driving away relentlessly. She would perch near the basket and pitch at every bird approaching. Having observed her habit of dropping to the ground below the basket to pick up the bits of suet which fell there, Mr. George L. Fordyce placed a woven wire drop trap on this spot, caught the Mockingbird on April 22, 1924, and banded her. The incident did not seem to disturb the bird in the least, and she remained all winter.

The latest we saw the Mockingbird in the spring of 1924 was on April 26. She was next seen August 20, perched on a beanpole in the garden. Her familiarity should have assured us that she was the bird which left us in the spring, but the sight of the band on the leg was a satisfaction. She remained with us continuously until the following summer.

In the spring of 1925, thinking the mocker might go away again, as she did the previous year, we looked for her daily, in order to make a last record of her presence. Sometimes we would hunt all over the yard for her, for her visits to the suet basket were not at all regular when food became abundant. About the middle of April we heard her give a rather harsh and prolonged scolding note. Therefore the only note heard was a sharp smack. On May 1 we heard her in the orchard giving the scolding note repeatedly while chasing a Robin. We had become accustomed to looking for her in the orchard, but this was the first observation of her chasing another bird, except from the suet basket. Still our suspicions were not aroused until May 3, after seeing her chase a Robin for the third successive day. We then made inspection of the bordering Norway spruces, in one of which, about three feet from the ground, we found the Mockingbird's partly built nest. In an adjoining spruce was a Robin's nest. Here, then, was the cause of the trouble in the orchard.

The nest was completed in a few days, and the first egg was laid on May 7. When the fourth egg was laid, on May 10, the Mockingbird began her experiment of incubating infertile eggs. She abandoned this nest on June 1. On June 8, we found a new nest, at a height of eight feet, in a pear tree about fifty feet from the first nest. Four eggs were laid and incubation began June 12. One egg was punctured June 21, apparently the work of a House Wren. This second nest was deserted on July 1.

The Mockingbird was not seen between July 3 and September 14. We wonder if she went away to try once more to raise a fatherless family—and where or how far she went. Returning on the latter date, she remained, eating berries and suet. Undoubtedly she had settled down to spend another winter with us. The last record we made of her welcome appearance in our yard was on October 15, 1925.

On the morning of October 19 we found on our barn floor, immediately below a Screech Owl's favorite perch, feathers which looked like those of our Mocking-

bird. With them were numerous blue feathers. We collected them, and Mr. Fordyce sent them to Dr. J. T. Nichols, of the American Museum of Natural History, who returned them in two envelopes: one marked "Bluebird" and the other "Mockingbird." He wrote: "Dr. Dwight has compared these feathers with me and agrees that the identification is definite for both species."

We recall that the Mockingbird and some migrating Bluebirds were accustomed to roost in the Virginia Creeper growing on the barn. Just above this vine is an open hay-mow where the Screech Owl was in the habit of perching before starting out for the night. It is quite probable that it was from this point that he observed and caught his prey.—WILLIS H. WARNER, *Canfield, Ohio*.

Some Random Bird Observations from Texas.—Mr. J. A. McLaughlin's use of the word "pour" in connection with the going to roost of Chimney Swifts (WILSON BULLETIN, XXXVIII, p. 36) is a good one. I have watched them do the same in far-western Texas, only it was into the vertical entrance of a deep cave. As the Swifts poured into the seventy-five foot, or so, opening of one cave, at twilight, the bats, which were their fellow residents of the great subterranean chamber, streamed silently up out of the dark hole. Between dawn and sunrise it was the Swifts which streamed forth, and the bats which poured themselves back into Nature's jar of the genii. Of course, we threw rocks down into the underground stream that we could not see, and were rewarded by hearing an almost deafening chorus of squeaks and twitterings, and rushing wings, as parts of the cave's population whirred upward in a cloud of worried little bodies. I have some very fair photographs of this and other big caves, and intend eventually to write more about them and their queerly assorted feathered and furred populations, not to mention the snakes that having, presumably, somehow gotten in cannot get out and so have adapted themselves to their circumstances and bred to an extent that makes exploration hazardous for any but the most constantly alert.

Mr. Frank L. Burns speaks of Cowbirds riding the gale (WILSON BULLETIN, XXXVIII, p. 39). We of the coast know how the ominous figure of the Man-o'-war bird is borne inland from his lonely haunts in the outer reefs and barrier islands just ahead of a hurricane. Fishers and trappers of the coastal plains, who live with and by the wild things of the land-locked bays, the bayous, reefs, barrier islands and marshes, have theories of their own about migration. That birds they know to be given only to short flights, before tiring, can come and go across the waste of salt water between Texas and Mexico requires an explanation. One explanation that they have figured out is that the big birds involuntarily give the smaller ones a lift. I, for one, would admit the possibility of this, were it not altogether unnecessary. For more than thirty years I have seen little birds hop on the backs of big ones. Where the selected steed is sitting or standing, a threatening backward flirt of its head is sufficient to repel the small bird. But when it is a-wing, it is absolutely helpless. To rid itself of its unwelcome guest it must stop and alight, before it can reach around after the annoyer. All of which takes time enough for the little fellow to be gone before he can be punished. Chickadees, nuthatches, titmice and warblers are all prime offenders this way. I have had Mockingbirds, Catbirds, Robins, thrashers and thrushes and other nervous species reduced to hysteria by the particularly sinful eight little chickadees that all came from the same nest, between a spruce tree's trunk and a loosened section of its bark.