

GENERAL NOTES

A Swallow-tailed Kite in New Jersey.—On May 19, 1940, Gilbert Cant, Dave Fables, and I saw a Swallow-tailed Kite, *Elanoides forficatus*, at Edgar's Dock, on the north side of the Raritan River near Nixon, New Jersey. When the bird was first seen it was flying approximately northeast toward us. Several times it soared in circles of about an eighth of a mile radius, once passing within 150 feet of us. We could then distinguish the white underparts and the bluish-black colorings of its wings and tail.

According to Witmer Stone ("Bird Studies at Old Cape May," p. 269), there are six records of this species for New Jersey, the last record having been made in southern Cumberland County on June 4, 1893.—WILLIAM F. RAPP, JR., 130 Washington Avenue, Chatham, New Jersey.

Bald Eagle Nesting in Kentucky.—For many years no occupied nest of the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) has been known in Kentucky. One of the few published references to breeding eagles in the state is found in an article on the birds of Fulton County by Leon O. Pindar (*Wilson Bulletin*, 37, 1925:85.) in which he mentions several pairs that were nesting during the 1890's on Island No. 8 in the Mississippi River near Hickman, Kentucky. Consequently we heard with keen enthusiasm rumors of Bald Eagles nesting in Ballard County, Kentucky, near Wickliff. We are indebted to Captain R. C. Soaper, federal warden stationed at Henderson, for reports as to the actual location of the nest.

On June 28, 1941, the junior author visited the area of Swan Pond, four miles west of Wickliff in Ballard County, and directly across the Mississippi River from Cairo, Illinois. After considerable search in the heavy cypress growth at the west end of the 500-acre pond he was able to locate the nest, which at that late date was unoccupied. However two immature Bald Eagles and an adult bird were seen in the immediate vicinity, and local residents were unanimous in asserting that young had been reared in the last two seasons. Unfortunately the situation of the nest, high in a very large cypress, and well screened from below, was unsuited to photography.—BURT L. MONROE and ROBERT M. MENGEL, Louisville, Kentucky.

The Dance of the Sandhill Crane.—On May 2, 1939, at Portage Lake, Jackson County, Michigan, the following observations were made by Leonard Allison and the writer. The observations were made while lying in the sedge flats approximately 300 feet from a couple of Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis tabida*).

When first seen the two cranes were quietly feeding along the moist banks of a shallow pond. Presently they ceased their feeding and retired a few feet to drier ground. One of the birds picked up a stick and dropped it quickly. The other bird became quite erect and slowly walked across the marsh with its neck very straight, but with the entire rigid neck and head swinging forward and backward. It gave the appearance of a crane moving forward with its head fastened by some invisible force which suddenly relaxed and let the stiff neck swing forward from its junction with the body, only to be temporarily held back again.

In the next stage of the dance the birds began bowing to each other and slowly flapped their wings. This presently developed into a drunken weaving motion with the birds reeling from side to side and also rocking to and fro. Finally they began jumping backwards, leaping into the air 2 or 3 feet, with their wings flapping and their legs dangling forward. The frenzy of this stage gradually subsided until the birds began bowing again, and both birds picked up sticks only to let them fall to the ground. The entire dance took about 3 to 4

minutes and was repeated again after 4 or 5 minutes of less active bowing or walking, and took place in a rather small area of perhaps 25 feet in diameter. After five dances, all of which were of the type described, the birds resumed feeding.—JOHN L. GEORGE, *Department of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan*.

The Starling in Jackson, Wyoming.—On the morning of April 5, 1941, at my home at Jackson, Wyoming, I saw a bird fly off in a characteristic fluttering manner that instantly marked it as a Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). It was snowing lightly at the time. The bird alighted for a moment on a neighbor's lawn, then went into a row of willows. With field glasses I pursued it for a time but finally lost it among a lot of English Sparrows in the thick brush. A Sharp-shinned Hawk had dashed through the neighborhood and all the birds about me had taken to cover. Upon my return to my own yard, there was the Starling, and this time I had an opportunity to observe it closely, to note the yellow beak and characteristic plumage before it flew away.

McCreary ("Wyoming Bird Life") records the Starling in southern Wyoming in 1937 and 1938. This is apparently the first occurrence in Jackson Hole.—OLAUS J. MURIE, *Fish and Wildlife Service, Jackson, Wyoming*.

The Strange Death of a Young Grackle.—In a small swamp just south of Ithaca, New York, on the morning of May 18, 1941, we found a dead fledgling Bronzed Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula aeneus*) dangling by a string from a willow twig. Instead of the usual string mortality caused by entanglement of the head, wings, or feet, this bird died through *swallowing* the string. Death occurred after a loop of the string hanging from the mouth caught around a leaf. Death must have occurred, at the very earliest, during the prior evening, since the bird was quite fresh.

Dissection of the digestive tract revealed the following: One corner of the mouth was grossly irritated, probably as a result of rubbing of the string during the bird's struggles. A double length of string passed through the esophagus terminating in a tightly packed wad of string in the proventriculus and ventriculus, thus making an exit through the pylorus impossible. The wad of originally white cotton string was sticky and stained yellow from the action of gastric juices. The total length of the string, including some three or four inches which protruded from the mouth, was eleven feet, ten inches, although the bird had probably swallowed a much shorter tangled mass rather than the entire length of string inch by inch. The condition of the bird was otherwise apparently normal.

How this young grackle, perhaps two weeks old, and still dependent upon the parents for food, happened to get this unusual item in its digestive tract is purely conjectural.—KARL W. KENYON and LEONARD J. UTTAL, *Cornell University, Ithaca, New York*.

Unusual Behavior of a Banded Cardinal.—On April 24, 1941, three small boys in my neighborhood brought me, alive, an adult male Cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*), which I had previously banded. They stated that they had found this bird flopping about the grass, his beak tightly clamped about his band. When handed to me he was still grasping his band. His tail feathers were gone and he was quite thin but otherwise appeared in good health. The history and behavior of this bird is so unusual that I would like to relate it chronologically.

On December 27, 1939, this bird was banded No. 39-223571. At that time he was a fully matured male and there was nothing unusual about his behavior,