



Male Yellow-shafted Flicker with bill held shut by pierced seed. Photo taken November 30, 1950, by William Williams.

Virginia. The bird was a male, with a wing measurement of 155 mm. It had driven its bill into a hole in a small seed, probably that of a dogwood (*Cornus* sp.), and could not extricate itself. The mandibles were much scored by the bird's efforts to dislodge the seed.—J. J. MURRAY, 6 White Street, Lexington, Virginia.

**Red-headed Woodpecker with malformed bill.**—On August 23, 1950, two miles northwest of Beltrami, Polk County, Minnesota, we observed a fully adult Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) which appeared to be entirely normal except that its bill was about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long and strongly decurved. We could not be certain that both mandibles were of equal length. The bird visited only the tops of telephone poles and used its bill solely in probing cavities there. At no time during the 20-minute period of our observation (with two pairs of 6X binoculars at distances of 30 to 200 feet) did it pound, gouge, or rap with its bill, nor did it alight, in usual woodpecker-fashion, on the side of a pole. Its habitat in general was a hundred-acre poplar tract and a thinly wooded pasture, surrounded by grain fields. We visited this area frequently earlier in the summer and once in September but saw the odd woodpecker only on August 23. Flickers (*Colaptes auratus*) were common in the region, but Red-headed Woodpeckers were rare.

The above-reported observation is of interest as an indication of the degree of adaptability of the species. Apparently this particular individual's bill, though too fragile or too much curved for wood-chopping, served admirably for reaching into deep cracks and crevices. The bird was active and in good feather. Its head was wholly red, so it must have been more than one year old (cf. Roberts, 1932. "The Birds of Minnesota," Vol. 2, p. 674). We have no idea, of course, how long its bill had been malformed, but surmise that once injury made vigorous pecking and pounding impossible, wear stopped and abnormal growth started. The abnormally long lower mandible of a reared-in-captivity Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra*) has been reported by Beebe (1906. "The Bird," pp. 232 and 248).—SCOTT SEARLES AND EMMA U. SEARLES, Chemistry Department, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

**Vermilion Flycatcher in Arkansas rice district.**—In the heart of the rice district near Stuttgart, Arkansas, I saw three Vermilion Flycatchers (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) in the fall of 1950. Two of these were adult males which I saw in a haw tree (*Crataegus*) along a rice field irrigation ditch on November 6. I collected one of them that day. The third, an immature male, I collected along a farm road near a large reservoir, November 28. The two specimens are in the U. S. National Museum.