

Western Meadowlark attacks ground squirrel.—While driving along a county road just south of the Cache la Poudre River, three miles west and one mile north of Greeley, Weld County, Colorado, on May 14th, 1951, I saw a Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) fluttering up and down a short distance away. Closer observation revealed that the bird was attacking a thirteen-lined ground squirrel (*Citellus tridecemlineatus*). The bird was hovering over the ground squirrel and repeatedly striking at it as it ran through the grass. The outcome was not learned as the two animals passed from view over a ridge with the meadowlark still in close pursuit.

This seems noteworthy to me since I had not previously seen a meadowlark attack any mammal. I suppose that the ground squirrel had molested or had been near the bird's nest.—CLARENCE A. SOOTER, 5311 West 55th Street, Mission, Kansas, September 27, 1951.

Harrying of herons by gulls—a further note.—Imhof (1950. *Wilson Bulletin*, 62:210) reported the chasing of a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) by a Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*), and in view of his notes I (1951. *Wilson Bulletin*, 63:110) reported the chasing of a European Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) by a European Common Gull (*Larus canus*). Since then I have read a comment by Stacey (circa 1947. "This Wild Company." Edmund Ward, Leicester, England, p. 52) on the chasing of the Grey Heron by the Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*). Since the reference may not be readily accessible to my American readers, I quote:

"Over the Norfolk marshes I have seen how the black-headed gulls will follow and chivy any heron which flies over their breeding-ground, yet the bittern (according to my limited observations on this bird), so very much like the heron in flight, is tolerated and not interfered with at all. Should a heron happen to cross a field where the peewits nest, the plovers will make the air scream with their frantic attacks until the imagined danger has passed. Why birds should so resent this harmless grey creature I do not know, but perhaps, like all big people, he is good-natured and does not mind."

All three authors express surprise at this persecution of the heron. Note also that Stacey twice comments that it happens when the heron flies *over the breeding grounds* of the other species.

Pereyra (1938. *Aves de la zona ribereña nordeste de la provincia de Buenos Aires* [Birds of the northeast riverside zone of the province of Buenos Aires]. *Memoirs Zool. Gardens La Plata*, Govt. Print. Office of La Plata, p. 46) speaking of the Black-headed Teal, *Heteronetta atricapilla* (Merrem) says: "This queer duck never makes a nest but lays its eggs in the nests of various species of aquatic birds of a variety of families and orders, for it not only parasitizes other ducks but also coots or gallinules, herons, ibises, and gulls; . . . The strangest is to see them in the nests of white herons or egrets, and I once had the opportunity of seeing a newly hatched duckling in such a nest. It very promptly withdrew to the water, and swimming vigorously attempted to put some distance between itself and the danger, possibly because it might fall victim to those same herons which might either eat it or feed it to their own young."

Witherby, *et al.* (1945 [reprint of vol. 3, 1939]. "The Handbook of British Birds." H. F. and G. Witherby, Ltd., London) discuss the food of various herons, and note that a variety of small birds and young of larger birds have been eaten. The prey includes domestic chickens, terns, and Great Crested Grebes. There is therefore no reason to doubt that the young of the lapwing and of gulls would be eaten if opportunity occurred. The behavior of the adults of these species may therefore be not entirely irrational. Most

of these frequently nest in places readily accessible to herons.—F. W. PRESTON, *Box 149, Butler, Pennsylvania, July 18, 1951.*

Homing ability of female Cowbirds.—Eastern Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) possess a marked ability to return to their place of banding. Summaries of the homing ability of Cowbirds banded by William I. Lyon appeared in *Inland Bird Banding News*, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 7, and Vol. 9, No. 2, p. 10. Fox (1940. *Bird-Banding*, 11:23) recorded a female Cowbird which returned a distance of 107 miles in less than two days, and, on another occasion, the same bird returned 184 miles in one week.

Females seem to return and to repeat in traps more frequently than do males. Nice (1935. *Inland Bird Banding News*, 7, No. 2: 2) noted that of four males and nine females banded, no males returned but she had "two females for two seasons each, and two other females for three seasons."

My records of banded Cowbirds show the tendency of female Cowbirds to remain in a locality throughout the breeding season, and also shows their ability to return quickly to the banding station after being transported distances. These Cowbirds were trapped in a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch chickenwire trap, with open ground funnels, all painted black. Bread and a pan of water were used as bait. All birds recorded here had their band numbers checked in the hand, although some birds were also color-banded.

An adult female Cowbird, banded No. 39-255053 at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on May 10, 1948, repeated May 11, 18, June 2, 16, 19, 24 (twice), 25, 27, and 28. On the latter day she was taken 6 miles southwest and released at 7:40 a.m. On July 1 she was back in the trap and continued repeating on July 2 (twice), 4, 5, 6, 7, and 12. In 1949, this female and a male entered the trap on April 5. The male was banded No. 39-255078. This pair was taken that same day to the Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, 22 miles northeast, and released at 12:55 p.m. In flight they kept together until out of sight. The male was not seen again. The female entered the same trap at 7:30 a.m. on April 7, two days later. She then repeated April 27 and 30 and was taken that last day 10 miles east and released at 11:40 a.m. Three days later she was back again, repeating May 3, 10, 14, 17, 18, 20, and 24 on which day she was apparently carrying a large egg. I did not weigh any of the Cowbirds, but I could feel a hard lump the size of a marble in the lower abdomen. Since I could not feel this object when I examined the bird again on May 25, I think that she had laid the egg before entering the trap. On May 25, I released the bird 16 miles from my trap and never saw her again.

Another pair of Cowbirds, Nos. 39-255006 and 7, trapped together May 10, 1947, was used experimentally. The male repeated May 16, was taken 3 miles to the State Capitol, released and not seen again until June 18 and 31. He was shot at Leland, North Carolina, the week of January 19, 1948.

The female, No. 39-255006, color-banded but recorded by handling, displayed her homing abilities through two seasons. Banded May 10, 1947, she repeated May 17, 31 (twice), June 17, 18, 24, 28 (twice), July 1, 3, 5, and 11. Returning on April 15, 1948, she repeated April 30, May 2, 8, and 9. On the last date she was carried 56 miles southwest to Chambersburg and released at 6:30 p.m. On May 14 she entered the trap at 5:30 p.m. On her next repeat, May 24, she apparently carried a large egg which was laid before her next visit, May 26. Then she repeated May 28 (twice), 29 (four times), and 30. Then taken 6 miles south through Harrisburg and released at 4:03 p.m., she was back at 6 a.m. the next morning. She repeated on June 1, 3, 5 (four times), 7 (twice), 9, and 10 (again apparently with a large egg which was laid before she entered the trap at 7:00 a.m., June 11). I took her by train to Philadelphia, 100 miles east, and released her