

GENERAL NOTES

Incubating American Robin repels female Brown-headed Cowbird.—At my home in New Castle, Lawrence County, Pennsylvania, the House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) have half a dozen nests every year and Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) parasitize several of these nests regularly. There is also a Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) which regularly places her nests in the "S"-shaped offset of the conductor pipe draining the metal gutter at the front of the house. Thus, the nest is sheltered by the roof. By early July of 1954 she had raised one brood, made some repairs to the nest, completed her second clutch of three eggs, and begun to incubate them. The time of day had arrived one morning when she would normally leave her nest briefly for food, drink, and perhaps even a bath. I noticed she was turning her head in a peculiar way, and looking intently for a moment at something at a distance; then she would utter a barely audible "churrup."

Following the line of her gaze, I noticed a female cowbird stalking in the grass at the edge of the street about 30 yards away. I thought the latter was trying to stay out of sight behind a maple tree, but it was plain that it was watching the robin by slight turns of the head every few seconds. This continued for perhaps five minutes and may have been going on for some time before I noticed it.

Suddenly the robin took off across the street toward a small swamp. No sooner was she out of sight than the cowbird flew directly to the robin's nest, perched on the rim for an instant, and then settled down on the nest. At almost the same instant, I saw the robin returning at full speed, with beak outstretched and, when within ten feet or so, scolding vociferously. The cowbird started awkwardly from the nest and had barely taken to flight when the robin hit her with feet, breast, and beak. The cowbird lost altitude rapidly. The robin made a circle and attacked with such force that both birds fell to the ground. Then the robin with wing and beak beat the interloper ferociously while the cowbird seemed to have no notion of defense except for flight. Every time the cowbird tried to rise, the robin pummelled her back to earth. The scuffle continued as they moved further up the street until, after much running and jumping, the cowbird made her escape. The robin did not follow further, but continued to scream and scold before returning to her nest.

I traced the route of the battle and noticed numerous specks of blood on the green grass, and, to my surprise, a cowbird egg. This was warm when I touched it. I left it until the next day to see if the robin would break it, but nothing happened. I then carried it ostentatiously to a point under the nest. The robin watched the performance but did not disturb it and the egg remained there for three days and then disappeared from causes unknown.—CARL L. LEATHERS, 1004 North Jefferson Street, New Castle, Pennsylvania, May 3, 1955.

Goose-behavior by a White Leghorn chick.—Six hours after leaving the shell, an African gosling (a domestic breed of the Swan Goose, *Anser cygnoides*) was placed in a brooder with half a dozen White Leghorn (*Gallus gallus*) chicks, all of which were between the ages of 18 and 24 hours. One week later, the gosling, together with one of the chicks, was removed from the group and the two were placed in a separate room where a large pen had been prepared for them. Originally, the chick had been kept with the gosling only to provide company, for this gosling gave vent to loud distress cries whenever left alone. The animals were visited by the observer several times each day.