

GENERAL NOTES

A technique for trapping cowbirds.—In April, 1955, an experiment with Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) at my country banding station proved interesting. An old Red-eyed Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) nest, containing three eggs of the English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), was placed inside one section of a two-compartment banding trap, which measured 24 × 12 × 9 inches. No grain or other bait was placed inside or near the trap. The drop-type entrance doors (6½ × 4½ inches) were at opposite ends of the trap, which was placed on the bank of a drainage ditch.

On April 12, between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., a female Cowbird entered the section of the trap containing the nest. When the door dropped down behind her, her alarm notes immediately attracted her mate into the opposite section of the trap. On the mornings of April 13 and April 14, before 9:00 a.m., two other pairs entered the trap in the same manner, and a fourth pair was banded on April 20. On April 17, one male entered the trap at approximately 8:00 a.m., and another male an hour later. No females were observed nearby in either instance. One of the banded males was reported shot by a student in DeFuniak Springs, Florida, in December, 1955.—BETTE J. JOHNSTON, 191 North Rose Street, Mount Clemens, Michigan, February 8, 1957.

Sparrow Hawks prey on newly hatched Killdeer.—While studying heron behavior during the spring of 1955 on Rulers Bar Hassock, an island in Jamaica Bay, western Long Island, New York, I had several opportunities to observe the feeding habits of a pair of Sparrow Hawks (*Falco sparverius*) which nested near one of the heron colonies. A pair of Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) was observed incubating a clutch of four eggs during the last week in April, 1955. On the morning of May 3, 1955, it was noted that all of the eggs had hatched, and during the afternoon of the same day, I made the following observation: as I approached the Killdeer nest, a male Sparrow Hawk flew low over the sandy area where the Killdeer nest was located, swerved when it saw the two adult and four young Killdeer, landed near the young and seized one of them. The Sparrow Hawk pecked once at the young bird in its talons, and then flew to the top of a nearby telephone pole and proceeded to devour the young bird. On the morning of May 4, I saw a female Sparrow Hawk perched on the same pole. Both Killdeer adults were calling vigorously. The Sparrow Hawk swooped to the ground and attempted to seize one of the young birds; this bird ran under the raised end of a log. The Sparrow Hawk flew to the log, jumped to the ground, reached under the raised end of the log with one foot and seized the young Killdeer. The hawk flew to its former perch and ate the young bird. On the afternoon of the same day, the female Sparrow Hawk captured and ate a third young Killdeer from the same nest. The fate of the fourth young Killdeer at this nest was not determined. On May 11, four newly hatched Killdeer were noted at a nest about 200 yards south of the one just described. On the afternoon of May 11, a male Sparrow Hawk captured and ate one of the young from this nest. Of the eight young hatched from the two nests, four were positively taken by the two Sparrow Hawks. A very cursory review of the literature on the feeding habits of Sparrow Hawks revealed no mention of charadriids in their diet.

The two Killdeer nests discussed above were located in unfavorable sites; both nests were placed within 25 yards of a busy thoroughfare, Cross Bay Boulevard, and the adults at both nests were continually disturbed by passing pedestrians and motor vehicles. Both nests were placed on light-colored sand, and when the eggs hatched, the young were very conspicuous. The placement of the nests in unfavorable sites, and the continued