

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Specimens of Torreornis i. inexpectata examined. USNM 307991, 26 April 1927, Santo Tomás, adult male; ANSP 108217, 18 May 1933, Santo Tomás, adult male; ANSP 85819, 20 February 1927, Santo Tomás, adult female; ANSP 111907, 5 January 1931, Santo Tomás, adult female; USNM 454883, no date, Santo Tomás, sex (?).

Specimens of Torreornis inexpectata sigmani examined. RPM 20394, 20 August 1959, Baitiquiri, adult male; Klinikowski private coll., on deposit in USNM, 20 August 1959, Baitiquiri, adult female.—MATTHEW J. SPENCE and BARTON L. SMITH, *Reading Public Museum and Art Gallery, Reading, Pennsylvania.*

Unusual Feeding Habit of Boat-tailed Grackle.—Much has been recorded about the feeding of the Boat-tailed Grackle (*Cassidix mexicanus*) on fresh-water snails and fresh-water mussels.

Howell's *Florida Bird Life* describes these birds as "sometimes completely immersing their heads in their search for food."

On 27 December 1959 in the Vero marsh, I noticed a male grackle in the top of a small cypress tree feeding on a snail. I stopped to watch, and in a few minutes a second male boat-tail flew nearly up to the boat, hovered for a few seconds about two meters above the water, then dived head first, like a kingfisher, into the clear water, which was about 40 cm. deep. It remained under water for a brief moment, with only the very tip of its tail showing. Then it came to the surface, shook itself to dry, and flew to a nearby tuft of cane and began to eat the meaty contents of a snail.—CHARLES E. CARTER, 1339 30th Street, Orlando, Florida.

First Blue Grosbeak Collected in Ontario.—On Monday, 23 May 1960 at Long Point, Norfolk County, Ontario (42° 34', 80° 15') a Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*) was captured in a Heligoland trap. The bird was an immature male and is now No. 90869 in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum. It is the first specimen taken in Ontario.

Since 1918, when a male was seen in August in Toronto by L. L. Snyder, there have been a number of reports of this species from southern Ontario and one report from western Ontario. A number of these have been published, either in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*, or *Audubon Field Notes*. Some are probably valid records. The recent *A.O.U. Check-list of North America birds* (fifth edition, 1957) describes the Blue Grosbeak as casual in Southern Ontario but Snyder (1950, *A Classification of Ontario Birds*, Misc. Pub. No. 3, R.O.M.Z.) makes no mention of this species even hypothetically.—JAMES WOODFORD and D. H. BALDWIN, *Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto 5, Ontario.*

Duetting by Paired Brown-headed Cowbirds.—In 1957 I became aware that duetting was being done by apparent pairs among the color-banded Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) coming to my window feeding shelf, and in each year

since then I have confirmed the observation. I have also once noticed duetting by two birds on an electric wire. Through 1960 a total of 11 pairs have duetted; all of the birds were color-banded ones except the male of one pair and the female of another. A male and female were judged to be paired when they associated regularly, often being found at the feeder and elsewhere unaccompanied by others, and often coming to the feeder together and leaving together.

Typically, in the duetting, the female gives her rattly utterance during the *glug-glug-gleeee* song that a male gives with his bowing display. Sometimes the rattle begins with the male's second *glug*, but generally it accompanies the *gleeee* note, and when—as often happens—the male omits the *gleeee*, the combined utterances of the duetting birds sound like *glug-glug-rattle* given without a break. The female will duet not only when the male is directing his song and display to her, but when he is directing them at another male, at his reflection in the window pane, at some other species of bird, or at nothing.

Exceptionally, I have seen duetting by birds not regular associates. Two females besides his mate duetted with one male. One female duetted with three extra males, at times when all of the three were travelling regularly with other females, and once a female duetted when a male who was such an atypical duetting partner gave a *peee* note. All of these birds were color-banded ones. Possibly instances like these were the result of especially high sexual tension, for I have sometimes seen females give their rattle in response to silent acts of their mates; for instance, one did so when her mate ran silently toward her, and again when in a bow with wings spread he ran silently between her and another male.

Occasionally, also, I have seen a female begin a rattle and her mate then join in with a song and display; I have not been able to decide whether to regard this as an inversion of the usual duet or as a coincidence.

The frequency of the duetting has varied considerably. I saw one pair do so on 23 days in the period 21 March–20 May; another pair on 17 days 26 May–11 July; another pair on 5 days 18 May–10 July. Twice I have had pairs that I never saw duet. The rate has also varied; during some visits to the feeder a pair has given no duets; on other visits there have been as many as five in two minutes and eight in three minutes.

My dates for the duetting have been 21 March to 11 July 1957; 16 April to 19 July 1958; 19 April to 14 July 1959; 9 April to 16 July 1960. Extreme known egg dates for Maryland are 24 April and 28 July, with the nesting peak “early May to early July” (Stewart and Robbins, *Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia*, North American Fauna No. 62: 329, 1958).—HERVEY BRACKBILL, 2620 Poplar Drive, Baltimore 7, Maryland.

Shadow Boxing by Brown-headed Cowbirds.—In four of the five years that I have operated a window-sill feeding shelf at my present location, one or more of the color-banded male Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) coming to it have given the bowing display to their reflection in the pane, and the most persistent displayer also repeatedly attacked it. Less commonly, the vertical bill-pointing display has been given to the reflection. On a single occasion a female has been seen to display and attack. Almost all of the males have been paired birds, judging by the regularity with which each associated with a particular color-banded female.

In 1956 one male (out of eight patronizing the feeder) gave bowing displays to the pane, with the *glug-glug-gleeee* song, from 11 May to 19 July. In addition, from 12 to 30 May, and again 22 to 28 June, he sometimes pecked the pane or flew