

ing from behind, whereas the flight from the nest was toward the clearer space in front. The sitting posture was not one of absolute rest at any time, as the head was constantly in motion, so that no approach could be made without her knowledge. The flight from the nest seemed to be directly out of it, without any preliminaries. The weather was warm, yet she would remain on the nest from fifteen to twenty minutes, and in no instance was away more than two minutes, while I had her under observation. The male frequently appeared in the vicinity, but neither offered food or even deigned to alight on the same tree, yet birds which had a good claim in the neighborhood dared not approach very close, as the combined attack of these active birds always proved so distasteful that they invariably beat a hasty retreat.—EDWIN H. EAMES, *Bridgeport, Conn.*

Snake Skins in the Nests of *Myiarchus crinitus*.—The habit of the Great Crested Flycatcher of putting scraps of discarded snake skin in its nest is—so far as the nests which I have found—invariable. Nevertheless, in one instance, at Tamworth, New Hampshire, I found a nest with one egg in it but with no snake skin visible. I found it about 7 A.M. one beautiful day in early July, 1888. I touched the egg and handled the nest slightly. Shortly before sunset I looked a second time into the hollow limb where the nest was placed, and was much surprised, in fact somewhat startled, by what I saw. Forming a complete circle about the egg, resting, in fact, like a wreath upon the circumference of the nest cavity, was a piece of snake skin six or seven inches long. The part which had encased the head of the snake was at the front of the nest and was slightly raised. It may not be wise to found a theory upon a single fact, but from the moment I saw that newly acquired snake skin, placed as it was, I made up my mind that the Great Crested Flycatcher uses the skin to scare away intruders. When the full set of eggs was laid, I took them and the nest. Only remnants of snake skin remained in the rubbish of the nest. The large skin had been removed or torn to bits.

The following year the same hollow was again occupied by Great Crested Flycatchers. I found the nest on July 7. It contained four eggs, and some scraps of snake skin were in sight. All the eggs hatched on the morning of the 12th. On the intermediate days my visits to the nest were regular. During those days a number of larger scraps of skin were placed on the outer edge of the nest. Their position was changed almost daily. Once some were set up like a fence, and so was a hen's feather. The birds knew of my visits, and scolded me while I remained in sight. These facts tended to confirm my theory in my own mind.—FRANK BOLLES, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Wintering of the Red-winged Blackbird near Cambridge, Mass.—On the 29th of December, 1889, while passing along the edge of a small swamp grown up with cat-tails, low bushes, birches, and maples, not far from Fresh Pond, I heard repeatedly the note of a Blackbird. I was un-

able to follow up the sound owing to the thinness of the ice with which the swamp was coated, and failed to see the bird, although it answered my 'squeaking' several times. January 12, 1890, I visited the same swamp in company with Mr. Frank Bolles, and, finding the ice strong enough to bear, went towards some low bushes where I had heard the bird upon the previous date, and soon started a male Red-winged Blackbird in clear bright plumage. After alighting for a few moments in a small birch not forty yards away, the bird flew off across the swamp.

My friend Mr. Walter Faxon informs me that he found a Red-winged Blackbird in the same swamp on January 6, and 27, and on February 1, and 23, 1890, which was doubtless the same bird. The presence of this bird through January, a month which may be regarded as a test month for birds which are spending the winter with us, and on into February until within a few days of the arrival of the spring migrants, is thus established, and affords, I believe, the first record of the wintering of the Red-winged Blackbird in Massachusetts.—HENRY M. SPELMAN, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Coccothraustes vespertina in Taunton, Massachusetts.—On March 8, 1890, as I was walking out of my door I heard the notes of a bird strange to me but which at first I took to be those of the Pine Grosbeak. Getting my gun and coming out into the yard I found three Evening Grosbeaks feeding on the buds of a maple tree. In the course of a few minutes I had two fine males and a female laid out on my skinning table. This is I think the first record for Bristol County.—A. C. BENT, *Taunton, Mass.*

The Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertina*) near Springfield, Mass. — Mr. Edwin U. Leonard captured at Agawam a bird of this species from a flock of about twenty, March 21, 1890. A week or two later a bird of the the same kind was seen near there by Mr. Leonard.—ROBERT O. MORRIS, *Springfield, Mass.*

Junco hyemalis shufeldti in Maryland.—On the 28th of April, 1890, my son, A. W. Ridgway, shot a female of this subspecies near Laurel, Md. The specimen is a very typical one, having the distinctly cinnamon-pinkish sides abruptly contrasted anteriorly against the gray of the chest; in fact, so sharply defined and distinct is this pinkish color that it was supposed to be a *J. annectens*, until careful comparison with specimens showed otherwise. It was shot out of a small flock, in which my son thinks were others of the same kind, but he may have been mistaken.—ROBERT RIDGWAY, *Washington, D. C.*

Seaside Sparrows at Monomoy Island, Cape Cod.—Although I have kept a sharp lookout for the Seaside Sparrow (*Ammodramus maritimus*) at Monomoy every season, the first to my knowledge was taken by Dr. L. B. Bishop on the salt marshes, April 14, 1890. This bird, which was



1890. "Wintering of the Red-Winged Blackbird near Cambridge, Mass." *The Auk* 7, 288–289. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4068011>.

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