

The Blue Jay Bookshelf

HOST RELATIONS OF THE PARASITIC COWBIRDS. By Herbert Friedmann. 1963. United States National Museum Bulletin 233. Washington, D.C. 276 p. \$1.25.

Herbert Friedmann, now Director of the Los Angeles County Museum, has made a life-long study of the cowbirds. His first book on the subject — *The Cowbirds* — was published in 1929; the present volume brings up to date our knowledge of host relationships, incorporating thousands of additional instances of cowbird parasitism, gleaned from a careful check of almost all available publications. Since 1929, the Brown-headed Cowbird has extended its range considerably, allowing it to parasitize new species. Friedmann lists 206 species of birds in whose nests eggs of the Brown-headed Cowbird have been laid and 101 species known to have reared cowbird young successfully. The provinces and states for which such observations are available are listed for each species.

In addition to the Yellow Warbler, 28 other species have been known on occasion to build new nest linings over the cowbird eggs (including the Eastern Phoebe and Yellowthroat, contradicting his previous paragraph on page 36). Only eight species are known to evict cowbird eggs.

Shrikes have never been known to be victimized. Friedmann quotes the experiment of the late Laurence B. Potter of Eastend, Saskatchewan, who found that a partly incubated cowbird egg introduced into a Loggerhead Shrike nest was hatched and the young cowbird fed, while the shrikes stopped incubating their own eggs! This suggests that the shrikes are not victimized only because they drive away every cowbird that approaches.

Saskatchewan records for five species are not specifically mentioned by Friedmann: Least Flycatcher, Western Wood Pewee, Catbird, Hermit Thrush, and Swainson's Thrush. With these, a total of 46 Saskatchewan species have been recorded as parasitized by the Brown-headed Cowbird. Maurice Street has contributed records for 29 of these species from Nipawin alone.

As a stimulus to Saskatchewan bird-watchers to "fill in the gaps", it may be useful to give the list of Saskatchewan species known to be parasitized by the Brown-headed Cowbird to date:

Eastern Kingbird; Eastern Phoebe; Traill's Flycatcher (Street seldom finds an unparasitized nest); Least Flycatcher; Western Wood Pewee; Horned Lark (the only record for *E. a. enthymia*, by S. J. Darcus); Red-breasted Nuthatch (the only record for the continent, by Street); Catbird; Brown Thrasher; Hermit Thrush; Swainson's Thrush; Veery; Sprague's Pipit (the only record for the continent—by Albert C. Lloyd at Last Mountain Lake, May 29, 1932); Red-eyed Vireo; Tennessee Warbler; Yellow Warbler; Magnolia Warbler; Myrtle Warbler; Chestnut-sided Warbler; Ovenbird; Yellowthroat; Yellow-breasted Chat; Canada Warbler (the only western record; American Redstart; Western Meadowlark; Red-winged Blackbird; Baltimore Oriole; Brewer's Blackbird; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; Purple Finch; American Goldfinch; Rufous-sided Towhee; Savannah Sparrow; Baird's Sparrow; LeConte's Sparrow; Vesper Sparrow; Slate-colored Junco; Chipping Sparrow; Clay-colored Sparrow; White-throated Sparrow; Fox Sparrow; Lincoln's Sparrow; Swamp Sparrow; Song Sparrow; McCown's Longspur; Chestnut-collared Longspur.—C. Stuart Houston, Saskatoon.