

E. H. Eaton's **Birds of New York** gives an Oneida County (1893) and an Essex County (1896) record for the Boreal Owl. Kenneth Parkes' unpublished thesis, "The Birds of New York State and Their Taxonomy," lists Franklin County records for 1878 (presumably), 1914, 1916, and 1922; a Plattsburg record (1922); and one for Westchester County (1951). For the last decade **Kingbird** and **Audubon Field Notes** show New York records for Watertown (1958) and Dutchess County (1960). As far as I can determine, the present record is a first for Oswego County and the only record this century for Region 5. — Margaret S. Rusk, 114 Standard St., Syracuse 10

Grackles Nesting on Bridge Girders: The grackle nest site described by Allen Benton (**Kingbird**, 11, 1961:201) is perhaps not as exceptional as Dr. Benton believed. Bent (**U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull.** 211, 1958:400) described grackle nests, reported by several observers, "on the steel beams inside of a large coal briquet plant" (Scranton, South Dakota); "on the girders of a large water tower" (Youngstown, Ohio); "on the girders of a large steel bridge" (Lake Milton, Ohio); and "similar situations." Todd (**Birds of Western Pennsylvania**), 1940:587 wrote "In recent years the Grackle has manifested a tendency, remarked by several observers from various parts of the country, to nest in the steelwork of bridges."

For reasons I do not presently understand, the Common Grackle is anything **but** common in the city of Pittsburgh, just about the only major city of the Northeast in my experience in which grackles are **not** one of the most conspicuous features of the avifauna of the city parks. Immediately behind the Carnegie Museum is a fine, large city park known as Schenley Park, which is traversed by a valley named Panther Hollow. Soaring 150 to 180 feet above the floor of this narrow valley is the Panther Hollow Bridge, part of the roadway system that winds through the park. Somewhere among the girders supporting this bridge, most years if not every year, nest from one to three pairs of grackles and several pairs of domestic pigeons. Although there are certainly other pairs scattered elsewhere around the city, this is the only place I have personally found that I can count on seeing nesting grackles. The height above ground will suggest why I do not know the exact details of nest placement. — Kenneth C. Parkes, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Unusual Nesting Failure in a Purple Martin Colony: In the light of the mention in the October 1961 **Kingbird** of the early departure of Purple Martins in Region 3 this past summer, our observations on our own Martins might be of interest.

For the past 25 years we have had two martin houses and have had exceptionally good luck in having a rather full complement every year. This year was apparently a good one, at least when the season started, as we had, by count, at least 12 pairs. As far as we could tell the season was normal.

However there was a noticeable shortage of young. Normally they leave about August 15, departing for a day or two, then returning and leaving again. This year, however, they left sometime during the last week in July and did not return.

In late September we took down the two houses, to clean out and store them for the winter. Each house has 12 compartments. Often we find two or three dead young, but there were ten this time. In one compartment there was a clutch of 6 eggs that were perfectly clean and apparently had not been incubated at all, and there were six more unhatched eggs in other nests. Along with a few dead birds beneath the house, the nesting failure was great enough to make us wonder if something happened to affect the Martins. — A. H. Barben, 110 Cayuga St., Seneca Falls, New York.
