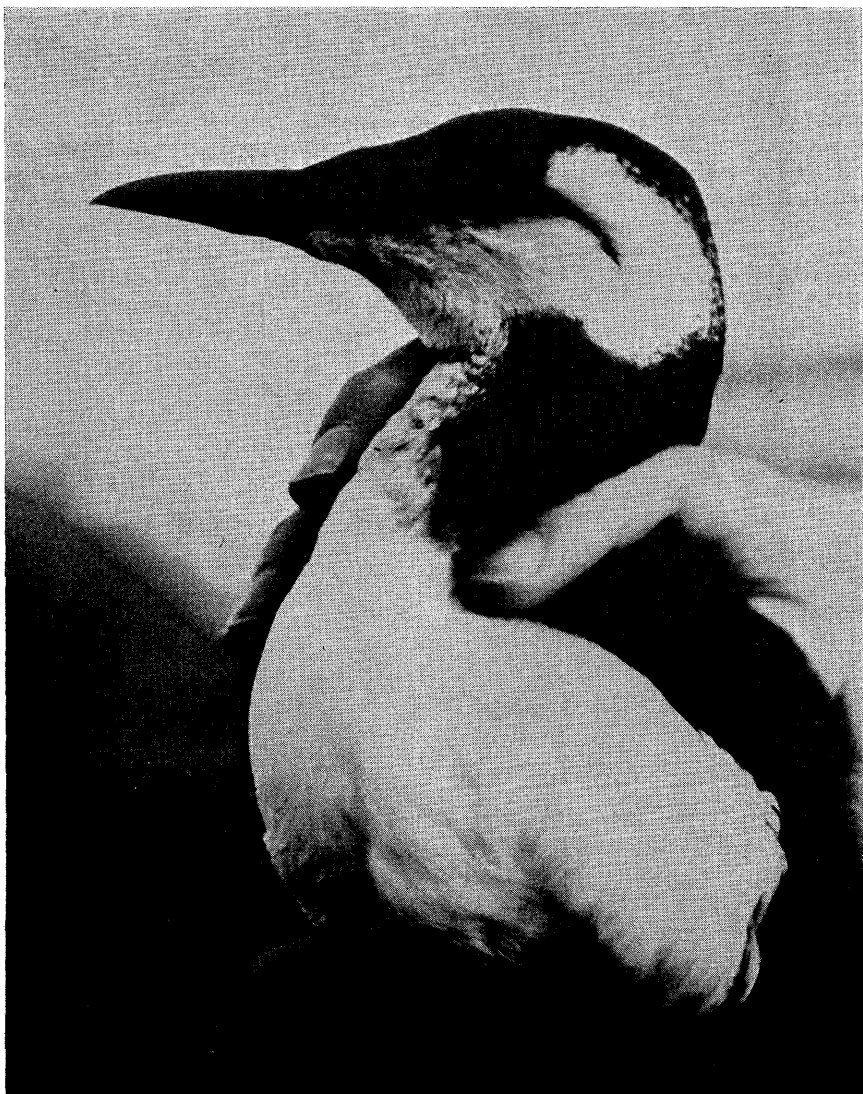




Common Murre at Montauk Point, February 8, 1970. Photograph by P. A. Buckley.

Winter Roosting of Cedar Waxwings: Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) are found in flocks, large to small, in winter in Central New York State, living on berries and other lingering fruits. Little has been noted about their roosting habits; nothing is given in Bent's *Life Histories* or in L. S. Putnam's life history study of the species as reported in *The Wilson Bulletin* in 1949.

On 3 February, 1970, my husband called my attention to an arbor-vitae tree (*Thuja occidentalis*) which is about 20 feet high, six feet across and located about 40 feet from our dining-room window. Although not visible to the naked eye, our binoculars revealed Cedar Waxwings perched deep inside the cedar, and we counted eight of them, in groups of three, three and two. There could have been more on the other side of the dense shrub. (It was of interest that one of them had the occasionally-seen orange tail tip instead of yellow.) This was at 3:30 P.M. and the birds remained there, without changing position, until it was too dark to see them. (Sunset that day was at 5:23 P.M.) In the evening, when we put a spot-light on the shrub, they were still there. At 7:05 the next morning they were gone.

It was snowing steadily that afternoon, and several of the birds had taken positions which shielded them completely from falling snow, but others had snow on their backs and heads. At no time did we see them put their heads under the scapulars.

We speculate whether this species normally goes to roost so early, or whether the inclement weather influenced them this time. The temperature was 15°F when we first noted them, and dropped below zero in late evening.

Sally Hoyt Spofford, Aviana, Etna, New York 13062

Magnolia Warbler caught in burrs: On September 20, 1969, on the Syracuse University campus, my attention was attracted by the racket of squawking Blue Jays. Investigating the confusion, I discovered a Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) in handsome fall plumage, entangled in the seed pods of a common burdock (*Arctium minus*). By its struggling the bird was only becoming more helplessly ensnared. With some difficulty I was able to free the bird and it flew off.

Later I began to wonder if this was just an isolated case or a common occurrence. After a little research I found an article in the April 1953 issue of *Nature magazine* (vol. 46, no.4) by Dr. Leroy C. Stegeman of the Syracuse University College of Forestry, documenting two similar cases, one involving a chickadee and the other a warbler, both on the S. U. campus. It would be most interesting to have records of other such instances.

Could it be that since burdock is an alien species, the behavior of native song birds has not evolved a pattern of avoidance for this treacherous plant?

Christopher Burnett, Southfield, Mass. 01259

Editor's Note: A similar incident involving an American Goldfinch is described in *The Conservationist* for April-May, 1970.

Additional Comment on Evening Grosbeak in Unusual Plumage: In *The Kingbird*, Vol. XIX (2): 96, I described the occurrence of a pale plumaged Evening Grosbeak and gave the date of its last appearance as February 21, 1969. The bird reappeared, as reported in *The Kingbird* Vol. XIX (No. 3): 155 and was seen at our feeder April 21 and 29. It is now interesting to note that a bird of very similar description was seen by Peter B. Smith of the Department of Zoology, University of Vermont on May 10 near Belmont, Vermont. That was the only sighting in that area.

The two observations were noted by Dr. James Tate of the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology, who suggested that Mr. Smith and I might correspond concerning this bird. One can only conjecture upon the route followed by the Hornell bird when it departed from here on April 29 or later.

W. M. Groesbeck, 376 Seneca Road, Hornell, N.Y. 14843.

Ed. Note: In *The Passenger Pigeon* Spring Issue in 1960, Mary S. Shaub published an article entitled "Unusual Plumage Variations of the Eastern Evening Grosbeak" and Mrs. Shaub tells me that she is still receiving reports of other variations, to which Mr. Groesbeck's note will be added.