COWBIRDS AS HOME WRECKERS
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The Cowbird may in some ways be beneficial, but my past
and present observations stamp this bird as a menace to
many of our better birds. Of these, the Savannah and Chipp-
ing Sparrow are perhaps picked on more than any. Others
that become foster parents to the Cowbird include the
Oriole, Meadowlark and Bobolink.

I have observed Savannah Sparrow's nests containing only
one of their own eggs to two or three Cowbird eggs. Also,
it is common to see a Savannah Sparrow feeding two or three
young Cowbirds, but not one of its kind. These have been
common observations for the last four years.

The friendly and trusting little Chipping Sparrow that
builds in our fence hedges, vines and ornamental shrubs is
perhaps picked on by the Cowbird more frequently than the
Savannah Sparrow. Seldom does a Chipping Sparrow bring up
more than one young bird without human interference. Whe-
ther this is a correct balance by Nature I will not attempt
to say, but it appears to be one-sided. This very morning
I witnessed a female Cowbird carrying off the last Chipp-
ing Sparrow egg from a nest in a neighbor's ornamental
evergreen shrub. Whether these Chipping Sparrows will stay
and continue housekeeping is hard to say, but they show no
outward signs of being disturbed.

Baltimore Orioles have been observed to be fostering two
Cowbirds to one Oriole. This may be a shock to many bird
students who have studied the domestic habits of Orioles,
for the Oriole as a rule pursues and persecutes Cowbirds
almost as much as a Kingbird likes to chase a Crow.

I have seen a Meadowlark's nest with five of its own and
two Cowbird's eggs in it. The larks abandoned the nest,
but I am not able to say that it was definitely because
the Cowbirds deposited their eggs in it.

It would be easy to go on indefinitely with various cases
of the depredations of the Cowbird. It is every bit as
much a predator as the Blue Jay and others. This bird is
cunning and deposits its "Fifth Column" to be brought up
and supported by the enemy in preparation for ultimate con-
truction. She will wait her chance to strike, watching from
behind a roof ridge on a garage.