Gila Woodpecker in San Diego County, California.—During midday on October 17, 1952, I was driving on a seldom used side road in the mountains near Jacumba, 70 miles east of San Diego, California, at an altitude of 2800 feet, when I heard a whining squeal which I recognized as the voice of a Gila Woodpecker (*Centurus uropygialis*). Somewhat surprised to hear that familiar high-pitched nasal call in such Upper Sonoran surroundings I stopped the car and located the bird a short distance ahead on a 20-foot pole. The woodpecker sidled around the pole, appearing on both sides and on top, ducking and bowing its head and noisily calling in habitual fashion as I advanced afoot. After close and detailed observation I flushed the woodpecker from the pole and clearly saw the characteristic white wing patches.

Some years later in a casual conversation with Mr. Laurence Huey and Mr. James Sams of the San Diego Museum of Natural History, I mentioned this observation of which I had made written notation and was much surprised to learn that no specimen of a Gila Woodpecker had ever been collected in San Diego County nor was there on record any sight identification. That a Gila Woodpecker should never before have been sighted in the mountains along the extreme eastern boundary of San Diego County seems strange.

Gila Woodpeckers frequent regions on two sides of Jacumba: to the east in Imperial Valley scarcely 50 air miles distant, and to the south not more than 60 air miles away in the rugged, isolated palm canyons that cut the precipitous east face of the Sierra Juárez of Baja California. I have found them common there at altitudes up to 2000 feet. The mountain chain on which Jacumba is situated is nothing more than a northward extension of the Sierra Juárez. It would be no great aerial feat for Gila Woodpeckers to wander northward to Jacumba or beyond following this cordillera. The altitude of Jacumba would be no bar to the Gila Woodpecker. Bent (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus. No. 174:250–256) states that it ranges up to 4000 or even 4500 feet in the canyons and foothills of its normal habitat, adding that this woodpecker seems somewhat given to wandering in fall and spring, reaching to such higher altitudes.—LEON L. GARDNER, *Department of Public Health, San Diego, California, March 20, 1959.*

Black-throated Sparrows in Northwestern Oregon.—On May 16, 1959, Fred Crenshaw informed me that he had taken a Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*) at his banding station near Beaverton, Oregon. Mr. Crenshaw's description of the bird in hand left no doubt that his identification was correct.

A little later, on May 28, Mrs. John Dobak reported that two Black-throated Sparrows were in her yard near Milwaukie, Oregon. Arriving there a few minutes later, I was able to observe one of the birds at a distance of about twenty-five feet and confirm her identification. I am familiar with the species, having observed them often in Arizona and Texas.

On June 4 I was advised that Mrs. Ernest H. Baker, of Depoe Bay, on the Oregon coast, had had one of these sparrows at her home for two days. Her description was definite.

The only previous records of the species in Oregon are from the desert in Harney County, in the southeastern part of the state. Two specimens were taken on Wright's Point, June 24 and 25, 1908, by William L. Finley and Herman T. Bohlman, and one was taken by Stanley G. Jewett on July 15, 1912, at Silver Lake.

It is of interest that these desert birds appeared almost simultaneously in three separate regions in the humid section of northwestern Oregon.—H. M. DU BOIS, *Clackamas, Oregon, June 6, 1959.*

A Third Head-scratching Method of Emberizine Sparrows.—Heinroth (Aus dem Leben der Vogel, 1938) and Nice (Trans. Linn. Soc. N. Y., 6, 1943:1–328) made early observations on differences in the way that birds scratch their heads. Recently, Simmons (Ibis, 1957:178–181) reviewed this behavior trait and concluded that two methods are used: "direct" in which the leg is brought directly to the head, and "indirect" in which the leg is brought over the drooped wing. He also concluded that only one of these two methods is used by all the species of a given family. Thus it appeared that this behavior trait would be quite useful as a taxonomic character on the family level, and it has been so used (Simmons, *op. cit.*; Brown, Condor, 61, 1959:53).

Observations of wild and captive birds do not completely bear out Simmons' second conclusion. Nice (*op. cit.*:45) found one species of the Parulidae that scratched directly, and Ficken and Ficken (Ibis, 1958:277–278) found two more members of the same genus which scratched directly as young

but later switched to the indirect method. The Fickens also noted several other species which scratch directly in the nest but later change. Finally, different adults of the same species were reported to scratch in different ways (Nice and Schantz, Ibis, 1959:250–251, Auk, in press) and one fledged individual was seen to scratch both ways (Hailman, Ibis, 1959, in press). In addition, Conway (Anim. Kingdom, 60, 1957:182–186) may have observed direct scratching in a Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), which usually scratches indirectly (Ficken and Ficken, *op. cit.*), and I once thought one of my captive Fox Sparrows (*Passerella iliaca*) scratched directly, although the same bird repeatedly scratched indirectly. In addition, recent experiments on head-scratching behavior (Nice and Schantz, *op. cit.*) show an even greater variability between individuals of the same species and in individual birds. The method of scratching is, therefore, not really specific to a family or genus, and even a species or an individual in some cases may show variation.

Exceptions to Simmons' first conclusion have also been noted. For instance, Dilger saw a young Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) scratch with its right wrist (Ficken and Ficken, *op. cit.*), and Andrew (Brit. Jour. Anim. Behav., 4, 1956:85–91) relates that captive European buntings (*Emberiza* sp.) sometimes rub their heads against their perches.

In the winter and spring of 1958 I made extensive observations on maintenance activities such as preening and head-scratching in several North American emberizine sparrows. With the exception of the Fox Sparrow mentioned earlier, all the species I observed scratched exclusively by the indirect method when the leg was used. Since observations of others bear this out, it is now fairly well established that the normal emberizine method is indirect. Several of my emberizines also employed perch-scratching movements apparently similar to those described by Andrew. The motions, described below, now appear to be widespread enough, at least in the Emberizinae, to justify considering them a "third" method of head-scratching, to be added to the direct and indirect methods.

Emberizine perch-scratching behavior appears to be directed to the side of the head and does not seem to be given in response to any evident external stimuli. The motions resemble those of bill-wiping in that the head is lowered to the perch, but perch-scratching is a slower, rolling movement of the head against the limb, as opposed to the rapid stropping motions of bill-wiping. Perch-scratching motions are variable in form, and possibly are primarily the result of individual experience, in contrast to the more rigid direct and indirect scratching motions. Since emberizines sometimes performed perch-scratching closely following indirect scratching, it seems likely that indirect and perch-scratching behavior may be similarly motivated in sparrows. The species which I observed perch-scratching are: Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis*), Tree Sparrow (*Spizella arborea*), Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*), and Fox Sparrow.

I have since observed an apparently similar action in the Mockingbird. During the fall and winter of 1959 I observed a color-banded individual in Norfolk, Virginia. At the time of banding, the bird had several cyst-like growths, perhaps sucking parasites, on either side of its face. For the two months I watched this bird on winter territory, it attempted repeatedly to scratch these growths from its head. In doing so, it used neither the direct nor indirect methods, but instead rubbed the side of its head against the tree limb on which it was perched. In general form the motion was somewhat similar to the emberizine perch-scratching behavior, except that the Mockingbird's movements were much less stereotyped and were directed at the parasites rather than the side of the head. The bird would lower its head so that the area of the parasites was against the limb and then attempt to scratch them off with both lateral and vertical movements. As far as I know, the behavior was ineffective in removing the growths.

During the same study period, I observed the Mockingbird scratch its head indirectly several times, and I never saw the feet touch the facial growths. Rather, the indirect scratching seemed to be concentrated on an area behind and slightly below the eye, a region never touched during the rubbing.

The perch-scratching and indirect-scratching of emberizines seem to be performed together and directed to the same general areas of the head, suggesting that the former is elicited and directed by the same stimuli and has the same biological function as the latter. In contrast are the similar rubbing movements of the color-banded Mockingbird. It is somewhat puzzling that the bird did not try to scratch the growths by the normal indirect method. Perhaps the "scratch-reflex" is just too rigid to be adaptable to removing the growths. At any rate, since the indirect scratching and the rubbing motions involved different areas of the bird's head, and were not performed in close sequence, it seems likely

that different releasing and directing stimuli are controlling these motions and that they therefore differ in biological function.

The observations of perch-scratching in emberizines further complicates our understanding of the distribution of head-scratching methods among birds, for now three, instead of two, variables must be investigated. Perhaps perch-scratching does not occur outside the Emberizinae, in which case it becomes a special instead of a general problem. Are these three scratching methods exactly equivalent, or does a different complex of stimuli release and direct each type? It is not within the scope of this paper to consider fully the biological function and motivation of head-scratching motions, but I suggest that this will need to be done before a complete understanding of the distribution of motions can be gained.

Because perch-scratching has added new problems and because a much higher variability than first expected (Simmons, *op. cit.*) has been found in the method of head-scratching used, taxonomic conclusions based on the type of scratching utilized should be considered tentative until all such behavior is better understood.

My sincere thanks go to Mrs. Margaret Nice for her many suggestions concerning the manuscript of this article and about the subject of head-scratching.—JACK P. HAILMAN, *Bethesda, Maryland, June 23, 1959.*

Some Additional Records of the Skua from California.—Prior to 1944 there were but four specimens and a single sight observation of the Skua (*Catharacta skua*) for California (Grinnell and Miller, Pac. Coast Avif. No. 27, 1944:160). Between 1944 and 1959 there have been more observations of this species off California than the total to 1944. In view of the comparative rarity of this bird and the vagaries of its appearances here, it might be well to outline some of the known records since the publication of Avifauna No. 27. Increased interest by amateur and professional ornithologists in searching for and observing pelagic birds has probably accounted in part for some of the following records. However, some years (1945, 1947–50, 1952–53, 1955) passed without any observations of this species although numerous pelagic trips were made in the late summer and early fall of these years. Notable flight years were 1956 and 1957, the latter being nothing short of remarkable. Some explanation might be found in examination of oceanographic conditions in late 1956 and in 1957. The year of 1957 was known as the year of warm water and southern fish, during which ocean temperatures were raised 2°F. to 5.5°F. along the Pacific coast from Crescent City, California, to Baja California and some tropical species of fish were taken off the coast of Washington.

A single Skua was observed at Santa Monica Beach on February 10 and 20, 1946, by Alma Stultz, Alan Morgan, and others (Pyle, Annotated Field List of the Birds of Southern California, 1953:23); another was seen at almost the identical place on April 4, 1951, by Lasky (Condor, 54, 1952:175); one specimen was collected (the fifth from California waters) on October 3, 1954, by Howard Cogswell several miles northeast of southeast Farallon Island (Audubon Field Notes, 9, 1955:52); a single bird was seen in the San Pedro Channel on March 21, 1955, by Vivian Ross and Ruth P. Emery (Audubon Field Notes, 9, 1955:284); two were seen on September 29, 1956, by Dean B. Fisher, 27 miles southwest of Point Conception (MS); at least eight were seen (some within 20 feet) on September 30, 1956, by Dean B. Fisher in the area from 5 miles northwest to 3 miles south of southeast Farallon Island (Audubon Field Notes, 11, 1957:55); one was seen 6 miles southeast of Pyramid Cove, southeast end of San Clemente Island on August 13, 1957, by me and one was seen on August 29, 1957, by John Bishop south of the southeast end of San Clemente Island (Audubon Field Notes, 11, 1957:428); one was seen on September 22, 1957, by some members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society southwest of Santa Cruz Island (Audubon Field Notes, 11, 1957:429); at least six (with a total of ten separate sightings, including three in view at once and photographed sitting on the water) were seen on October 5, 1957, by me at points from 7 to 12 miles west of Monterey; and one bird was seen on October 4, 1958, northeast of Catalina Island by G. S. Suffel (MS).—ARNOLD SMALL, *Los Angeles, California, February 11, 1959.*

Another Record of the Orchard Oriole in California.—Several times in the month of March, 1958, a black and chestnut-colored oriole was seen in a large rattlebox shrub (*Crotalaria capensis*) which is in my yard in San Diego, California. The bird was taking nectar from the canary-colored