

tentative. On 4 March, with the help of Charles Trost, we collected a male and female of the suspect species, and another bird was taken on 10 March (Florida State Museum Collection: Nos. 8233, 8234, and 8305). Until mid-April, individuals and groups numbering up to 150 birds were seen regularly in an area less than two km in diameter. We could not determine the total abundance of the species because we did not examine similar habitat in some of the 5,000 hectares (20 square miles) of surrounding prairie. The behavior of the birds indicated they may have been residing in the area. Morning flocks moved onto and across the prairie from the west, and evening flights moved in the opposite direction. Both were along a path used by known icterid residents. Brewer's Blackbird has been considered as accidental in Florida (Sprunt, *Florida Bird Life*, 442, 1954), but the change in status suggested by our observations would be in accordance with range extensions recently reported by Walkinshaw and Zimmerman (*Condor*, 63: 162-177).—DALE E. BIRKENHOLZ and TED T. ALLEN, *Department of Biology, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida*.

**Baltimore Oriole Kills Hummingbird.**—My wife and I were watching a male Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) on a *Caragana* shrub in our garden on 4 June 1961. Two male orioles had been feeding on the blossoms all day without apparent friction, and two pairs of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) were also working over the flowers. A male hummingbird was seen to hover in front of a blossom within about one-third meter of one of the male orioles. The oriole turned and pounced and caught the hummingbird in its beak. It then flew to a nearby branch and held the hummingbird down with its feet and pecked it violently until feathers flew from it. When I approached to observe more closely, the oriole flew away and dropped the hummingbird to the ground. The hummingbird was dead when I picked it up.—BRUCE S. WRIGHT, *Director, Northeastern Wildlife Station, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B., Canada*.

**Wing-Flashing Motions in a Catbird.**—Wing-flashing motions of the Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) have been mentioned by Vaurie (*Wils. Bull.*, 69: 309-310, 1957), as being associated with courtship behavior, and commented upon by Hailman (*Wils. Bull.*, 72: 355, 1960), but apparently no description of these motions has been published. In Kalamazoo, Michigan, at 14:00 on 24 July 1961, I watched an adult Catbird look at, run three times around, and repeatedly wing-flash over two light-brown puff balls (2 cm and 2.5 cm in diameter) growing together in five-cm-high lawn grass. Three two-cm slugs were eating the puff balls. There were two different types of wing motions: (1) almost completely opening the wings horizontally in one movement, and (2) fanning downward suddenly the forward edges of the open wings in one to three movements. The bird circled the mushrooms, opening and closing its wings in the first type of motion, occasionally interrupting this action with the second type in a definite sequence as follows: run, open wings, stop, fan downward one to three times, stab at slug with bill, jump backward suddenly. If slug is caught during stab—close wings, eat slug, run, open wings, etc.; if slug is missed during stab—run two or three steps with open wings, fan downward one to three times, stab, etc.

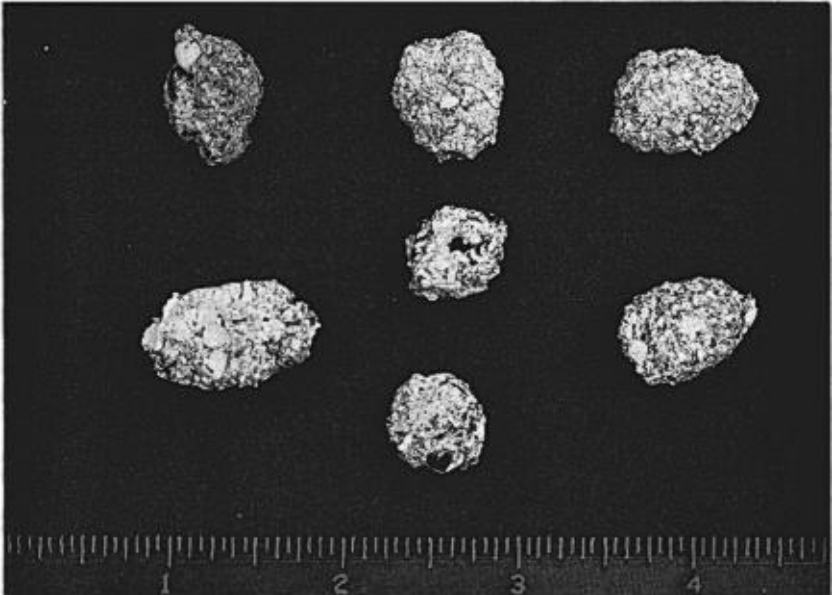
Two of the three slugs picked off during stab motions were eaten; the other was shaken off the Catbird's bill when the bird shook off a large piece of dead leaf adhering to the slug. The Catbird moved a few meters away from the puff balls with its wings closed after it lost the third and last slug. The bird hunted and pecked in the grass without flashing its wings again.

The day was overcast, so no shadow was spread over the slugs, and there are no light-colored areas in the Catbird's wing that might reflect more light on prey.

Furthermore, slugs can not be startled into jumping, running, or flying. The wing-flashing motions of the Catbird may have been released when it saw objects (the slugs) not clearly identifiable as food.—H. LEWIS BATTS, JR., *Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan*.

**Pellet Casting by King and Clapper Rails.**—The King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) and Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris*), whose major food is crustaceans, reject the exoskeletal fragments of these animals through the regurgitation of pellets. Seven King Rail pellets collected in Dorchester County, Maryland, averaged 2.0 cm long by 1.5 cm wide.

King Rail pellets examined in Arkansas and Maryland were composed of crayfish (*Cambarus* sp.) and aquatic insect fragments. Many pellets examined contained the hard, cylindrical, convex-shaped gastrolith of the crayfish. These gastroliths can be seen in the accompanying photograph. In brackish marshes near Woodland Beach,



**Figure 1. Regurgitated King Rail Pellets, Dorchester County, Maryland, June 1958. (Photograph by Frederick C. Schmid.)**

Delaware, where King and Clapper rails occur together, pellets contained exoskeletal fragments of the red-jointed fiddler crab (*Uca minax*) and shell fragments of a clam (*Macoma balthica*).

Pellets usually are deposited in some concealed location where rails prefer to hide while consuming their prey. Characteristic deposition sites are along grassy runways, in a clump of bushes, or behind a clump of grass. However, in Delaware tidal marshes, a favorite deposition site is on a muskrat house or some other high spot in the marsh. As many as 14 pellets were found on a single muskrat house.

I know of no reference in the literature relative to pellet casting by King and Clapper rails except brief mention by the author of pellets found in Arkansas King Rail nests (*Auk*, 73: 253–254, 1956).—BROOKE MEANLEY, *Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland*.