

Wing-flashing in the Galápagos Mockingbird.—On 28 May 1962, in a visit to the Galápagos Islands, which lie approximately 1,000 miles (1,600 km) south of Panama, I walked along a narrow, grassy road several miles above the town of El Progreso on Chatham (San Cristobal) Island. Galápagos Mockingbirds of the Chatham Island form, *Nesomimus* [*? trifasciatus*] *melanotis*, had been numerous and tame, often coming within a few feet of me. This species has a tail that is proportionately shorter than that of the North American *Mimus polyglottos* and conspicuously white-edged, but white patches are lacking in the wings. Suddenly, one of the mockingbirds, which was running ahead of me a short distance down the road, stopped and flashed its wings in a manner very similar to the wing-flashing of *M. polyglottos*. It did this several times after short consecutive runs of about a yard and a half (one meter plus). The motion lacked somewhat the “one-two-three,” drill-like precision of our northern species. The wings flashed out with a very brief hesitation at about two-thirds final extension and then extended full length to a position just slightly above the horizontal. After being held stiffly in this position for a few seconds, the wings returned smoothly and rapidly to the closed position.

This form of *Nesomimus* is thus added to the list of mimids that display wing-flashing compiled by J. P. Hailman (*Wilson Bull.*, 72: 354–355, 1960).—MARGARET H. HUNDLEX, *Florida Audubon Society, Maitland, Florida.*

Notes on methods of feeding and the use of tools in the Geospizinae.—In May and June, 1962, I travelled to the Galápagos Islands on the schooner Westward. While in the archipelago, I had many opportunities to observe closely the behavior of several species of Darwin's finches. In early June, while ashore at James Bay on James (Santiago) Island, I followed one individual Woodpecker Finch (*Camarhynchus pallidus*) for nearly an hour, from tree to tree through a grove of trees. Unlike the other species of Darwin's finches observed, it continued its activity without pause during the entire period, hopping on trunks and along decayed branches, drilling energetically. Small pieces of bark were ripped off and tossed to the ground, insects and grubs beneath being taken. Often when a piece of bark was too large to rip off with the beak, the finch would perch with both feet on the broken edge, pull backward with the feet, meanwhile inserting its head beneath the bark and prying. When the bark had been loosened about an inch, the bird would take a new position on the edge. The head was then pushed from the new angle beneath the loosened bark, and rapidly forced it the remainder of the way from the limb. Often some drilling in a woodpeckerlike fashion was necessary to obtain grubs. When this failed the finch would rip off a short twig, and probe into the hole which might already have been widened by drilling. Once a twig was broken off and carried during the searching of the branches.

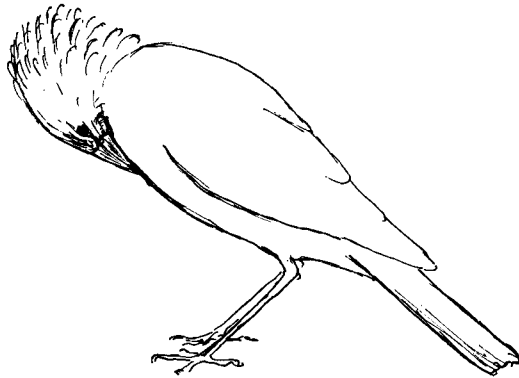
While at Bahia Academia on Indefatigable (Santa Cruz) Island, I was told, by a man interested in the bird life of the area, that two of his friends had seen small black finches (*Geospiza fuliginosa*, or possibly *G. fortis*) make use of a twig as a tool.

This information, whether or not accurate, was interesting in connection with an observation that I made on 6 June, at Conway Bay on another side of this same island. I had been sitting for some time watching several finches (*Geospiza magnirostris*) scratch on the ground with both feet in the manner of a North American towhee or Fox Sparrow. When I glanced at a nearby tree, my attention was caught by a finch hopping along a branch carrying, in the same way as the Woodpecker

Finch, what appeared to be a twig. Due to the lack of fear of humans in Galápagos birds, I was able to approach within five feet of the bird, which proved to be a Warbler Finch (*Certhidea olivacea*). At close range the "twig" proved to be either a three-inch leaf petiole or a flower stem. The bird used the "petiole" about four times in an attempt to probe into a crevice in the bark. Unfortunately, the "petiole" merely bent without being effective. Finally, the finch paused a moment, and then, with a decisive jerk of the head, tossed the "stem" to the ground. It then went on searching for food in typical *Certhidea* fashion. Possibly increased observation of the behavior of the Galápagos finches may show that the use of a tool, while less developed in the other species of Darwin's finches than in *Camarhynchus pallidus*, is fairly widespread in the group.—MARGARET H. HUNDLEY, *Florida Audubon Society, Maitland, Florida.*

Interspecific preening display by the Rice Grackle, *Psomocolax oryzivorus*.

—Selander and La Rue (*Auk*, 78: 473-504, 1961) have described the interspecific preening display of the Brown-headed Cowbird, *Molothrus ater*, and the Red-eyed Cowbird, *Tangavius aeneus*. On 11 August 1962, a similar display was witnessed from a solitary male of the tropical American Rice Grackle, *Psomocolax oryzivorus*, in the gardens of the Zoological Society of London. When the bird was first seen it appeared to be soliciting preening from a pair of small African Blackhead Plovers, *Sarcioophorus tectus*, which paid no obvious attention to it at any time in the period



of observation. The plovers were indulging in sporadic preening while resting. The grackle stood a few inches from one of the plovers, in front of it and to one side, maintaining a rigid posture with the body and tail slanted at about 45° and all the contour feathers sleeked close to the body, giving it a very slender appearance (see sketch, from one made on the spot, the plover being a little taller). The bill was tucked in until it touched the breast, the head being bent sharply downwards while all the feathers of the nape region were erected and fluffed-out. In this position these feathers seemed to form a distinct squarish ruff. Several times when the plover was preening the grackle relaxed its position, took a few shuffling steps forwards and resumed the intense, rigid posture again. When the plover ceased preening and moved a little farther away, the grackle relaxed and assumed its normal slender-headed appearance.