There appears to be no reference in the literature to a Savannah Sparrow having been taken with similar color aberrations of plumage and bill. I would like to thank Mrs. Fern Bennett for calling my attention to this unusual bird, and Gorman Bond for checking this specimen against the literature and those in the collection of the U. S. National Museum, and for providing the photograph. The specimen has been deposited in that institution and bears the catalog number 520004.—A. E. BROWER, *8 Hospital Street, Augusta, Maine 04330.* Accepted 10 Feb. 72.

Starling raises Brown-headed Cowbird.—There appear to be only two reported instances of the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) as a Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) host, and neither of these actually raised the cowbirds, which Friedmann (U. S. Natl. Mus., Bull. 233, 1963) suggests is because of the Starling's habit of nesting in holes and its "pugnacious disposition."

At noon on 10 May 1969 I watched a large immature cowbird pursue and beg food of a Starling on a lawn in Berkeley, California. The Starling fed the cowbird four times as they ran about the recently heavily watered grass. The repetitive feeding suggests a true parent-offspring relationship, not a casual response to a begging fledgling, and places the Starling in the category of a true host that actually raised a cowbird, rather than just a passive victim.

Whereas Starlings usually nest in holes, they do not always do so. Kalmbach and Gabrielson (U. S. Dept. Agr., Bull. 868, 1921) state that "nests have been found on fire escapes, hay stacks, and barn doors, behind window shutters, and even in open boxes erected for pigeons." Correspondents reported nests to Bent (U. S. Natl. Mus., Bull. 197: 190, 1950) "in the branches of a tree" and "on the ground in a grassy meadow." Such nests would be more vulnerable to cowbird parasitism.

Baptista (Auk, 89: 879, 1972) found that in the San Francisco Bay Area the White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), formerly regarded as a rare cowbird victim, is now parasitized in some numbers. He suggests that this may reflect a continued increase in cowbird numbers in this region since Miller's (Condor, 37: 217, 1935) paper and that in time field naturalists may be accumulating more records of formerly rare hosts being victimized more commonly by the Brown-headed Cowbird.

I thank Luis Baptista, who read the original manuscript and made helpful suggestions.—HARRIET P. THOMAS, *32 Stoddard Way, Berkeley, California 94708.* Accepted 10 Feb. 72.

White-ringed Flycatcher nest-building in old nest of the Yellow-rumped Cacique.—The White-ringed Flycatcher (*Conopias parva*) is widely distributed from Costa Rica through northern South America. In Surinam it is a common bird living in the tops of dead and tall trees in forest clearings on sandy ground (Haverschmidt, Birds of Surinam, Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1968, pp. 308-309). I have established previously that it nests in old woodpecker holes, within which it makes a cup-shaped nest of grasses (Auk, 74: 241, 1957). Recently I observed that it also breeds within disused baglike nests made by an icterid. In early August 1971 I watched for some time a couple of these flycatchers frequenting a fully leaved tree in a forest clearing near Zanderij, Surinam. At the end of one of the branches was a cluster of pendent nests of the Yellow-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus cela*), which had been used in January 1971 but were now deserted. This

cacique makes elongated, basket-shaped, baglike nests of plant fibers, with the entrance at the top. On 12 August I saw one of these flycatchers repeatedly arrive with nest material in its bill and disappear with the material in one of the cacique nests, to reappear empty-beaked after some time. This activity took place during a large part of the morning. The same bird always brought the material but it was accompanied by its presumed mate, which alighted nearby when the other disappeared into the nest. Clearly the flycatcher was building a nest in the old cacique nest. I collected the nonbuilding bird (weight 20.2 g), which proved to be the male.—F. HAVERSCHMIDT, *16 Wolfskuilstraat, Ommen, Holland.* Accepted 18 Feb. 72.

Notes on nectar feeding by orioles.—The orioles or troupials of the family Icteridae have a diversity of feeding habits. Members of this family have invaded virtually every food niche exploited by passerine birds (Beecher, 1951). Their diet includes both plant and animal matter, undoubtedly varying with the individual and to some extent with the season. Most early writers such as Bendire (1895) and Judd (1900) stated that orioles were principally insectivorous. In describing the feeding habits of hooded orioles near Los Angeles, Illingworth (1901) wrote that their chief food consisted of insects and injurious caterpillars. Not until recently have several authors (Beecher, 1951 and Blake, *in* Thomson, 1964) mentioned the icterids' nectarivorous habits. Recent observations support Blake's statement that some orioles are essentially frugivorous and nectarivorous, supplementing their diet with insects and other small terrestrial arthropods.

Nectar has not previously been listed as comprising a considerable part of the diet of orioles principally because it cannot be detected in stomach contents by the customary visual analysis. Thus although it was recognized that many orioles made frequent visits to blossoms, it was argued that the birds were in search of insects or were feeding directly on flower parts such as the petals. The recent widespread use of hummingbird feeders provides an answer to this question. Either many orioles have changed their feeding habits fairly rapidly to capitalize on this new food source of man-made nectar, or else we are now observing directly what could previously only be suspected. I believe the latter to be true.

While experimenting with color preference in hummingbirds at Loma Linda, California during the spring and summer of 1971 I had three California Hooded Orioles, *Icterus cucullatus californicus* (Lesson), that routinely patronized the feeders. Although their visits were somewhat irregular on some days, during continuous observation on 4 July the three birds made a total of 43 visits; 12 for an adult male, 11 for a female, and 20 for an immature male. Visits were made roughly every half hour with greater frequency in the morning and again near dusk, much like the hummingbirds. The first visit, by the adult male, was shortly before dawn at 05:43 and the last, by the immature male, at 20:06. These figures suggest that nectar formed an important part of these birds' daily diet.

At each feeding the orioles inserted their sharp, slender beak into the narrow delivery tube and gaped. Watching closely I was able to glimpse the tongue running in and out lapping up the sugar solution by a sort of capillary action as in hummingbirds. Periodically the birds lifted their head to allow the liquid to flow down their throat, just as most birds do when drinking water.

Peterson et al. (1963) point out that nearly one-fifth (1,600 species) of all the world's birds feed *mainly* on nectar. My observations, together with communication from others who have observed additional species with similar habits, lead me to