As the leaves of the balm of Gilead are the first choice of this colony of martins and as these leaves have a balmy, or aromatic odor, support is given to the idea suggested above concerning their use as insect repellents. Most Purple Martin nests that I have seen are made of rather coarse materials, such as stems and straws, and even medium-sized potato stalks; mud is used by some, and it may be that leaves serve also as an insulating lining.—OSCAR MCKINLEY BRYENS, *McMillan, Luce County, Michigan, December 22, 1941.*

Late Breeding Record for the Cassin Kingbird.—A pair of Cassin Kingbirds (*Tyrannus vociferans*) built a nest high up in a eucalyptus tree growing in a yard at Corona del Mar, Orange County, California. They were observed feeding young in the nest on the very late date of August 18, 1941.—WILSON C. HANNA, *Colton, California, September 7, 1941.*

Soaring Snow Geese.—Flocks of Snow Geese usually move through the sky as if intent on keeping an appointment. The black and white of the wings enhance the impression of rapidity of the wing beats, and the incessant high-pitched honks add to the seeming purposefulness of the flights. On October 30, the writer was observing the feeding habits of Canada Geese on the Salicornia mud flats west of Brigham, Utah, when he witnessed a marked deviation from the normal flight habits of Snow Geese (*Chen hyperborea*). A flock of 123 of the birds came *soaring* slowly in from the north, some 500 feet overhead, taking advantage of the air currents. They looked much like a flight of White Pelicans, a species which the writer has observed on countless occasions on their breeding and feeding grounds in Utah, Oregon, and other western states. The small sizes of the body and bill and the forward position of the neck were, however, apparent through field glasses and precluded the possibility of the birds being pelicans. The birds made no effort either to gain or lose altitude, except for an occasional wing beat serving to keep the flock intact. They were unquestionably loitering and evidently were enjoying the activity. And to make the incident even more unusual, not a sound was given off by any of the birds. The flight was watched through field glasses periodically for forty minutes and during that time the ground distance covered by the flock is estimated to have been between 1 and 1½ miles.—C. S. WILLIAMS, *U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Brigham, Utah, December 5, 1941.*

Painted Redstart at Altadena, California.—On January 14, 1942, a Painted Redstart (*Setophaga picta*) several times came to my bird bath in Altadena, California, where I watched it from a window at a distance of fifteen feet. It came once the next day.

On January 19 it returned, and since a pull trap had been set over the bird bath, I was able to catch and band it. Because I had the bird in my hand and compared it with the colored plate in Mrs. Bailey's "Birds of New Mexico," I feel that there can be no mistake as to the identity. There is only one previous record of this bird mentioned in Willett's list of the birds of southwestern California (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 21, 1933:150).—WALTER I. ALLEN, *Altadena, California, January 23, 1942.*

Insect Food of the Sage Thrasher.—The Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) is a highly desirable resident of wheat- and alfalfa-field fence rows, as well as of sagebrush, greasewood and shadscale range land, because of its beneficial, insectivorous food habits. This report on the food of this thrasher is based on an examination of 70 stomachs from birds collected throughout Utah in the years 1932 to 1941, inclusive. The abundance of grasshoppers present during outbreaks in these years apparently has been reflected in the large number of these present in the stomachs.

Recognizable insect food in the stomachs of eight specimens collected from March to the end of June consisted of the following: 10 grasshopper nymphs in five stomachs; 14 Hemiptera, including 1 predacious *Reduviius personatus*, 1 *Zelus socius*, 1 alfalfa bug (*Lygus elisus*), 1 each of the stink-bugs *Chlorochroa sayi* and *Carpocoris remotus*, and 1 *Nysius californicus*; Homoptera consisted of 2 leafhoppers and 1 sage aphid, *Macrosiphum coweni*; 42 beetles, including 2 scarabaeids, 3 click beetles, 1 buprestid, 7 darkling beetles, 1 clover leaf weevil and 1 alfalfa weevil; 2 cutworms, 1 being an army cutworm; 11 dipterous specimens, including 2 blowflies, 1 robberfly and 1 soldierfly; 174 Hymenoptera, of which 165 were ants. Many of the ants are common range and field pests, the harvester ant in particular preventing plant growth over sizable areas around its hills.

Recognizable contents of the stomachs of 62 thrashers of all ages, collected from July through October, consisted of the following: 138 orthopterous specimens, including 105 adult and 23 nymphal grasshoppers (mostly common injurious species), 5 field crickets, 1 snowy tree cricket, 1 coulee cricket, 2 cricket eggs, and 1 Jerusalem cricket; 5 termites; 1 thrips; 142 Hemiptera, including 4 pentatomids (*Euschistus inflatus, Thyanta custator* and *Chlorochroa sayi*), 109 adult and 7 nymphal false chinch

bugs, and 8 mirids of which 4 were the alfalfa bugs (*Lygus elisus* and *L. hesperus*); 229 Homoptera, including 191 aphids in one stomach, of which at least 4 were pea aphids, 30 adult and 3 nymphal beet leafhoppers in 16 stomachs, and 1 tree hopper, *Stictocephala gillettei*; 288 Coleoptera, including 3 larvae, 5 scarabaeids (1 *Phyllophaga decimlineata*), 53 leaf beetles, 5 rove beetles, 17 predacious ground beetles, 28 snout beetles (9 alfalfa weevils in seven stomachs and 2 clover leaf weevils), 1 lady-bird beetle, 2 blister beetles (1 *Epicauta maculata*), 1 dermestid (*Dermestes lardarius*), 2 cerambycids and 4 buprestids; 60 lepidopterous larvae, including 13 sugarbeet webworms in three stomachs and 25 caterpillars which appeared to be cutworms (several army and variegated cutworms); 18 Diptera, including the large horsefly *Tabanus punctifer*, 6 maggots (apparently the common *Sarcophaga kelleyi* digested out of parasitized grasshoppers); 342 *Hymenoptera*, including 287 ants (many harvester and a few carpenter ants), several hornets and wasps, and 1 velvet ant; 5 insect eggs; 6 spiders in four stomachs. Also present were: several plant fragments, 2 weed seeds, and 18 black currants in six stomachs of birds taken during the summer of 1941 near roadside black currant bushes north of Snowville, Utah.—G. F. KNOWLTON and F. C. HARMSTON, *Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, Logan, Utah, December 15, 1941.*

Vesper Sparrow and White Pelican as Late Migrants in Oregon.—On November 28, 1940, while looking for small passerine birds along the center patrol road in the south part of Unit 1 of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon, the writer observed a single Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*) fly from the ground to the low branches of a willow. Thinking the bird had sustained some injury that caused it to stay so long in that vicinity, the writer looked it over closely from a distance of about ten yards. No sign of injury was noticeable and the bird appeared to have normal flight. Gabrielson and Jewett (Birds of Oregon, 1940:562) state that this species migrates south in September, and the latest date recorded by them in Oregon is September 20, in Lake County.

On December 12, 1940, in the vicinity of Boca Lake in Unit 3 of the Malheur Refuge, a lone White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) was noted in the company of 1500 geese. The lake was covered by a solid sheet of ice and the pelican skidded some distance when landing. The geese paid little attention to it as it stood or walked among them. The pelican appeared to be uncomfortable because of the cold. Gabrielson and Jewett's (*op. cit.*: 90) latest record is November 13, in Klamath County.—CLARENCE A. SOOTER, *U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Burns, Oregon, December 17, 1941.*

The Systematic Position of Ortalis wagleri Gray.—In the course of recent field work in Sonora, I was surprised to observe that the chachalaca *Ortalis wagleri*, as compared with other members of the genus, possesses a distinct structural character. In life it bears a very conspicuous, almost cylindrical, tuft of semi-setaceous feathers about 25 millimeters in length, which rises vertically from the extreme anterior forehead or more properly from the base of the culmen. No other member of *Ortalis* seems to have this character, and I therefore propose as a subgeneric name

Peneloides new subgenus

Type.—*Ortalida wagleri* G. R. Gray.

Remarks.—In life the tuft is sharply separated from the short, normal feathers of the forehead. In dried skins it is invariably flattened along the crown and thus has escaped notice. *Ortalis wagleri* is obviously so closely related to a group otherwise represented only in South America that full generic separation seems inadvisable for the present. It may be that the conspicuous tuft of *wagleri* is unique, but field observation may show at least indications of it in related species, in which case the character would be a matter of degree. However, Mr. H. B. Conover and Dr. Alexander Wetmore, who have kindly inspected all the material available to them, have been unable to discover anything beyond a somewhat bristly tendency on the foreheads of some species. Whether the tuft is a sex character or not is a question. The three specimens personally observed and collected were males.

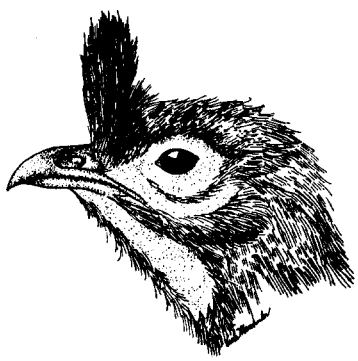

Fig. 22. Head of the chachalaca *Ortalis wagleri*, showing tuft of feathers on forehead.

As an aside, which has no particular bearing on the present case, I cannot subscribe to the placing of *Ortalis leucogastra* as a race of *vetula*. *Leucogastra* is, of course, a geographic representative of the genus but I do not consider this circumstance a valid reason for reducing it to racial status. The plumage, particularly ventrally, is firmer and otherwise different in character from that of *vetula*,