

plumage, from March 11 on. Two specimens show pronounced head moult. Their faint distinctive song carries for well over a hundred yards. A spelling made in the field was: "Tse, Tse, Tseee (prolonged), (interval), uh-tsee, uh-tsee."

Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata bilineata*), was singing and in breeding condition at Port Isabel as early as March 11.—S. DILLON RIPLEY, Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

#### CLOSE PROXIMITY OF TWO NESTS OF AMERICAN BITTERN

On May 12, 1948, in a marshy pasture 1.5 miles east of Warren, Macomb County, Michigan, I flushed an American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) from a nest containing 5 eggs. An examination of the area nearby revealed another Bittern nest 58 feet away which also contained 5 eggs. Both nests were matted platforms of marsh grass built up to a height of about 8 inches above the water, which was ankle deep in the surrounding area. The locality where these nests were found is not a typical marsh habitat but rather a wet meadow with scattered clumps of cat-tails. Bent (1926. *U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull.* 135: 75) found 5 nests of this species in Saskatchewan in an area 0.25 mile square, but does not indicate the distance between them.—DOUGLAS S. MIDDLETON, 7443 Buhr Avenue, Detroit 12, Michigan.

#### TWO OBSERVATIONS OF WING-FLASHING BY MOCKINGBIRDS

Twice during the summer of 1947, in Jefferson County, Nebraska, I watched the wing-flashing of Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*). On July 1, a Mockingbird on the top of a schoolhouse was making 4-foot vertical flights. As the bird paused on the roof between flights it frequently raised and extended the wings in the manner illustrated by Sutton (1946 *Wils. Bull.* 58: 206-209) and Allen (1947 *Wils. Bull.* 59: 69-128). This observation is contrary to Sutton's conclusion that wing-flashing is done only when the bird is on the ground. Fear, suspicion, illumination of dark areas, or procurement of food do not appear to have been factors in this instance.

In Perkins County on August 7 a Mockingbird was apparently picking up insects in a fallowed wheat field. This bird flashed the wings outward in a horizontal position, not upward as described by Sutton and Allen. The wings when extended appeared to form an angle of 180 degrees. After appearing to catch and eat several insects, the bird flew to the shoulder of a gravel road, alighting in sparse weedy cover where there were 3 other birds which apparently made up a brood. They seemed to search for food for themselves, and at least 2 birds accompanied their movements with wing-flashes, which amounted to the partial opening of the wings horizontally. Wing-flashing and "begging" calls were noticeable when the adult bird appeared on the ground nearby. Twice the adult alighted near the young birds and flashed its wings as though to attract their attention. Then it moved over to a bird and fed it. Once the adult, after a series of quick dashes and wing-flashes caught what appeared to be a grasshopper.

The adult may have instinctively flashed the wings while searching for food, as Sutton suggests. Since the movements after food were made in an easterly direction, perhaps the wings did serve to take advantage of the early morning light in illuminating crevices in the rather level terrain, as Allen suggests. Wing-flashes on the part of adult and young birds as they approached each other appeared to be signals, although perhaps unintentional and unnecessary.—JOHN H. WAMPOLE, Grant, Nebraska.

#### CATBIRD ATTACKS SNAKE

On July 3, 1948 about 2 P.M., at Kelly Bridge, 3 miles south of the village of Slippery Rock, Butler County, Pennsylvania, in company with the late Mr. Edmund W. Arthur, and