precedented winter of 1958 will go down in history as a disaster of major proportions for bluebirds and other insectivorous species that winter in the southern states. Many people suspect insecticides, but the evidence for this rests largely in the disappearance of the species from modern orchards, croplands, and roadsides in settled areas. Some bluebirds are showing up among the many victims of the ill-conceived fire-ant control program in the southeast; completion of the projected program, which comprises a large part of the Eastern Bluebird's winter range, might well write the finish of this once familiar and much beloved bird. Perhaps the key to the whole problem lies in the widespread loss of favorable habitat, from all causes. In Michigan, at least, the bluebird now seems to be largely restricted to the jack-pine areas of northern counties and the more remote, abandoned or uncultivated farmlands.—GEORGE J. WALLACE, *Department of Zoology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, January 17, 1959.*

The poisoning of meadowlarks with insecticides.—On March 6, 1958, Everett Woods, graduate student in the Department of Entomology, informed Dr. F. M. Baumgartner and me that meadowlarks were digging and eating freshly planted oat and barley seeds on a test plot at the Small Grains Laboratory. We thought it a good opportunity to test some candidate chemical bird repellents, so I went immediately to observe the plots. Twenty meadowlarks were feeding on the plots at that time. Closer observation on that date and on subsequent days revealed that the birds started by picking up scattered grain on top of the ground, digging up large pockets of grain where the planter had stopped at the end of the rows, and then starting down the rows digging up the seeds as they went. We made plans to spray the area with repellents, but adverse weather conditions all during March prevented us from doing it.

The following day, seven dead Eastern and Western Meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna* and *S. neglecta*) and a very sick one were found near the plots. A quick check revealed that the seed of each of two plots, four rows 10 feet long, had been treated with ¼ lb. to ½ lb. of Di-Syston and ¼ lb. to ½ lb. of Thimet per 100 lb. of seed, respectively. These two insecticides have an accumulative effect and are highly toxic to vertebrates. The sick bird appeared to recover fully and gain weight while being kept caged in my office. Its reactions seemed to have become normal as it soon became a pet and learned many tricks very quickly. About two months later, it suddenly quit eating and drinking and within a few days died.

Observations were continued on the plots until March 30, 1958. The meadowlarks continued to dig seed in some of the plots, and although large feeding areas and roosts were thoroughly searched, no other dead birds were found. These observations further point out the serious effects that some insecticides have on birds (Dewitt, 1957. *So. Car. Wildlife*, Fall). Indications are that unless extreme care is used when applying these chemicals very high bird mortality can be expected.—DAUDE N. GRIFFIN, *Department of Zoology, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, January 7, 1959.*

Blue Jay feeding on termites.—One day during the last week of June, 1957, a Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) flew down directly from its perch in a tree near by to feed on a mass of winged termites concentrated on the top of an old stump in the front lawn of our house at Greenbelt, Prince George's County, Maryland. It pecked avidly at these insects for about two minutes, leaving the site only when someone went to the stump to apply insecticide. The insects were identified as *Reticulitermes virginicus* by Dr. Thomas E. Snyder of the U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.

The relatively few sight observations of birds eating termites, summarized by Blake (1941. *Auk*, 58:104) and Cowan (1942. *Auk*, 59:451), do not include the Blue Jay.—DONALD H. LAMORE, *Department of Biology, Cottey College, Nevada, Missouri, August 13, 1958.*