

**WING-FLASHING IN A PARTIALLY LEUCISTIC BAHAMA MOCKINGBIRD  
(*Mimus gundlachii*) ON ALLEN CAY, EXUMA ISLANDS, BAHAMAS**

DANIEL U. GREENE<sup>1</sup>, DAVID P. YOUNG, JR.<sup>2</sup>, AND JOHN B. IVERSON<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida, 110 Newins-Ziegler Hall,  
Gainesville, Florida 32611*

<sup>2</sup>*WEST Inc. 415 W. 17th St., Suite 200, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001*

<sup>3</sup>*Department of Biology, Earlham College, 801 National Road West,  
Richmond, Indiana 47374*

The Bahama Mockingbird (*Mimus gundlachii*) is native to the Bahamas, Cuba, and Jamaica (Aldridge 1984). It is a common resident in the Bahamas, and is found throughout the Exuma Islands, including sparsely vegetated small islets (Burden 1992). The Allen Cays lie in the northern Exuma Islands, approximately 55 km southeast of Nassau, New Providence, in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas (Iverson et al. 2004). The island group consists of three main islands, as well as a number of small rocky islets, and the vegetation height ranges 1-3 m.

Periodically between 6 and 11 May 2012, we observed a partially leucistic Bahama Mockingbird (Fig. 1a) across the southern half of Allen Cay (7 ha), but most frequently it remained near the island's landing beach (UTM 18R 313960.67 m E, 2738320.76 m N). The bird was most commonly observed vocalizing from prominent perches throughout most of the day.

Although leucism is perhaps one of the most common color aberrations in birds (van Grouw 2006), it is rarely observed in natural populations because it is often selected against (Ellegren et al. 2000, Slagsvold et al. 1988). This individual, possessing both partially and completely white feathers throughout its body, represents the first reported instance of leucism in Bahama Mockingbirds.

On 6 May 2012 at 1203 EST, we observed the mockingbird fly within 1 m of us onto an area of open limestone, where it leaned forward, spread its wings above its back, and began wing-flashing (Fig. 1b) at a Bahamian racer (*Cubophis vudii*). The mockingbird then chased the snake for approximately 3 m until the snake retreated into a crevice in the limestone (Fig. 1c). Wing-flashing has been described in several mimid species while foraging and in the presence of potential predators (e.g., Sutton 1946, Tomkins 1950, Haverschmidt 1953, Hicks 1955, Whitaker 1957, Selander and Hunter 1960, Burt et al. 1994). This behavior, most frequently observed in Northern Mockingbirds (*M. polyglottos*), is rarely observed in Bahama Mockingbirds (Aldridge 1984). The occurrence of both these unrelated and rare phenomena in one individual makes our observation even more unusual.

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**Figure 1. a) Partially leucistic Bahama Mockingbird (*Minus gundlachii*) on Allen Cay, Exuma Islands, Bahamas. b) Wing-flashing behavior of mockingbird as a Bahamian racer (*Cubophis vudii*) approaches. 3) Bahama Mockingbird wing-flashing at a Bahamian racer.**

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