flight procedure described below was observed once during October 1960, and on several occasions from 5 to 14 October 1961. In all there were 15 individual instances.

After sunset, increasing excitement was evident, with constant call notes and occasional snatches of song, as these sparrows worked progressively higher up the trees from ground level, gathering at the top of larger trees (approximately 25-meter elms). When it was almost dark, individuals would fly straight upwards from an exposed branch, with an almost explosive energy and to an estimated height of 10–20 meters above the trees and surrounding houses, circle round two or three times, and then fly off in a southerly direction.

This sudden perpendicular flight has so far been observed only in fall. It seems to be a totally different procedure to that followed during the spring migration of this species, when, on many occasions, the general excitement and foregathering in high trees, both from ground level and from all directions in the neighborhood, has been observed after sunset. The subsequent evening flight in a northerly direction has always been observed to start with many individuals simultaneously and continued by a steady stream of other sparrows, rather than by the flock as a whole, and always in normal flight.

I have also watched the same sudden upward flight on two occasions in October 1961 with Myrtle Warblers, *Dendroica coronata*.—ROSEMARY GAYMER, *88 Kendal Avenue, Toronto 4, Ontario.*

A Mandibular Abnormality in the Wood Duck.—An unusual condition in the mandibular structure of a nesting wood duck (*Aix sponsa*) was observed during the 1961 survey of nesting boxes at Dead Creek Waterfowl Management Area, Addison, Vermont. The membranous tissue of the hen's lower mandible had been completely pierced. The opening, a narrow and elongated ellipse, allowed the tongue to pass through and protrude beneath the mandible. Exposure had sufficiently calloused and enlarged the tongue tip to prevent its withdrawal back into the oral cavity. Plant debris had accumulated under the loop formed by the immobile tongue. The bird otherwise appeared healthy and in good condition. A wooden matchstick was used to remove the debris and to relocate the tongue. The enlargement of the tongue tip, however, was of such magnitude to prevent the proper alignment of the mandibles following its relocation. The bird was then banded and returned to the nesting box. Ten days later the tongue had softened and was again functional. Also, the mandibles now closed in their normal fashion. Despite these handlings, the hen continued incubation and later successfully hatched her brood. I am unable to explain the origin of the deformity.—ERIC G. BOLEN, *Vermont Fish and Game Service.*

Aggressive Behavior of a Bald Eagle.—Reputable accounts of deliberate attacks by Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) against humans are infrequently encountered in the literature; for this reason, the following incident seems worthy of record. During the summer of 1960 the writer and colleagues were engaged in ecological investigations in the wilderness areas of the southern arms of Yellowstone Lake, in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming. On 15 June Park Ranger Naturalist Paul D. Sebesta attempted to photograph a Bald Eagle nest located at the extreme southern end of South Arm. The nesting tree, an Engelmann Spruce approximately 25 meters tall, was about 10 meters from the shoreline, with the nest partly concealed among dense branches near the top. While peering through the telephoto lens, Sebesta was suddenly aware of a hissing sound, followed by a brush against the right side of his

forehead. Although a superficial laceration was inflicted (evidently a grazing scratch by a talon), the eagle did not strike with any appreciable force.

The attack could probably be interpreted as an act of territorial defense, since Sebesta was standing near the base of the nest tree. However, field investigators who have spent considerable time in the vicinity of Bald Eagle nests (*e.g.*, Broley, Herrick) report few incidents of these birds actually pressing an attack. Bent (1937, *Life History of North American Birds of Prey*, Pt. I, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 167) characterizes the Bald Eagle as an "arrant coward" and states that he had "never had one even come within gunshot range when . . . near the nest." Bendire (1892, *Life History of North American Birds*, U. S. Natl. Mus. Spec. Bull. 1) cites three instances of eagles swooping at men attempting to rob nests, but no actual contact was made on any of these occasions.

It is perhaps significant that the eagles at this particular Yellowstone nest always appeared more agitated and remained closer to the nest when intrusion occurred than in the case of any other nesting pair under surveillance.—Joseph R. Murphy, *Department of Zoology and Entomology, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.*

Aggressive Behavior by a Wintering Myrtle Warbler.—The abnormally cold weather of 1957–1958 accounted for the death of many passerine birds wintering in southeastern United States (*Audubon Field Notes*, 12: 269–276, 342–348). Insectivorous birds seemed to suffer from lack of food in Gainesville, Florida, as the following observations indicate. On 2 February 1958 a weakened Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*), taken from a main street in Gainesville, quickly recovered when fed fruit and dog food. On 21 February an emaciated but seemingly uninjured Myrtle Warbler (*D. coronata*) was found dead near my house. Throughout much of the winter a larger than usual number of emaciated birds were brought to the biology department at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

The behavior of a Myrtle Warbler, described in the following account, seems to have been affected by the abnormal temperature fluctuations. For 15 days, beginning with 8 February 1958, temperatures remained below 21° C (70° F) with nightly decreases to below 4° C (39° F). The warbler took up residence in an area of approximately 25 × 80 meters encompassing my backyard and portions of those on either side on 9 February. For the next 14 days the bird could be seen during any daylight hour searching the lawn for food, particularly in an area of green grass caused by warm drain water from a washing machine, or sitting on an exposed perch from which it would fly for passing insects. No other Myrtle Warblers were seen in the area, although a few infrequently visited the tall pines of the flatwoods behind the yards. When Palm Warblers (*Dendroica palmarum*) or Ruby-crowned Kinglets (*Regulus calendula*) attempted to forage in the area, the Myrtle Warbler attacked them and usually succeeded in driving them away. On the contrary, Robins (*Turdus migratorius*), Cardinals (*Richmondena cardinalis*), and White-throated Sparrows (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), attracted to the yard by bread and seed, a food source not utilized by the warbler, were not attacked. The Myrtle Warbler is known to drive off birds larger than itself, including Robins and Cardinals, when they are competitors for food (Kilham, *Auk*, 78: 261, 1961); therefore it seems these three species were tolerated because they were not competing. On 23 February the cold weather subsided; a low of 4° C (40° F) and a high of 23° C (73°F) was recorded for this date. The next day the warbler was in the yard in the early morning, but when a flock