Thyroid activity of Vesper Sparrows appears highest in the period of most rapid post-hatching growth and of feather development. This activity should contribute to these processes in this species, for thyroid deficiency is known to result in plumage abnormalities and arrest of growth in young birds (Hohn, Ibis, 92, 1950:464–473). It is clear that the establishment of homeothermy in the Vesper Sparrow is not limited by the functional state of the thyroid glands. Indeed, the condition of these endocrine organs through most of the nestling period may be regarded as permissive to the development of temperature regulation, not only through the overall influence of their secretory products on growth and feather development, but also through the immediate action of these products in elevating heat production through stimulation of oxidative metabolism. The fact that thyroid activity in newly hatched Vesper Sparrows appears relatively high suggests that the anterior pituitary synthesizes and releases thyrotrophic hormone in effective amounts while the birds are still in the egg. —WILLIAM R. DAWSON and JOHN M. ALLEN, *Department of Zoology, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, April 5, 1960.*

Black Rail in San Joaquin Valley of California.—On August 26, 1959, an adult male Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*) was found dead near Fourteen Mile Slough, approximately four miles northwest of Stockton, San Joaquin County, California, by Mr. Paul Jorgensen. The bird was given to Dr. Kenneth Stocking of the College of the Pacific and the specimen was prepared as a skin by me (J. R. Arnold no. 881). Mr. Jorgensen reported to Dr. Stocking that a fence and other wires were present near where the bird was found. A broken wing was found at the time the skin was prepared. The only other record in this area known to me is that of Belding (Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus., 1, 1879:443).—JOHN R. ARNOLD, *Stockton College, Stockton, California, February 4, 1960.*

Insects Available for a Mockingbird Wing-flashing in February.—One of the prevalent theories concerning the enigmatic "wing-flashing" behavior of the Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) is that the wing motions flush insects to feed upon (see Hailman, Auk, 76, 1959:236–238 and references therein). It is known that wing-flashing occurs commonly in southern states but rarely in northern states during the winter (Sutton, Wilson Bull., 48, 1946:206–209; Tomkins, Wilson Bull., 62, 1950:41–42; Brackbill, Wilson Bull., 63, 1951:204–205; and Hailman, MS). It could be postulated that this is due to the unavailability of insects in the north during winter.

On February 28, 1960, my wife and I watched a Mockingbird wing-flashing on a grass roadway ten miles southeast of Norfolk, Virginia. Usually, wing-flashing is not seen in the Norfolk area until June. Many times after wing-flashing this bird pecked into the grass. It is of considerable interest to know whether or not moving insects were present where the bird was foraging and wing-flashing. A cursory search of a small area (six inches square) produced a small flea-like insect, an unidentified larva, a small burrowing insect, and a beetle. Thus, the association of wing-flashing with availability of potential prey is upheld.—JACK P. HAILMAN, *Bethesda, Maryland, February 29, 1960.*

Additional Data on the Establishment of the Chestnut-backed Chickadee at Berkeley, California.—A matter of interest concerned with the extension of geographic range of any species is the pattern of establishment after the initial invasion. The colonization of the Berkeley Hills of Alameda County, California, by the Chestnut-backed Chickadee (*Parus rufescens*) provides some information bearing on this point. In an earlier report (Condor, 56, 1954:113–124) I brought together available records outlining the progress of the colonization from 1938 through 1952. It appears that vegetational discontinuity in the area southeast of San Francisco Bay, acting as a barrier to the dispersal of an arboreal species, was bridged by the planting of orchards and shade trees, and, presumably following population build-up, the chickadees spread to occupy an area of favorable climate opposite the Golden Gate in the early 1940's. A number of reports indicate that the area occupied by this chickadee in the East Bay region has continued to expand: for example, Cogswell (Gull, 37, 1955:22) reported nesting at Mills College in Oakland in April, 1955, and Stallcup (Gull, 39, 1957: 10–13) listed the species from Alameda in December, 1956.

In the spring of 1959 I took advantage of limited opportunities to assess the current population levels of this chickadee along Strawberry Creek on the campus of the University of California in Berkeley, a locality at which this species was not known to nest prior to 1950. An equally important