country, and from all appearances settled far out in that area. I have been unable to find another record of the occurrence of the Sooty Tern in the Rio Grande valley.—ALLAN D. CRUICKSHANK, Rye, New York.

SUMMER TANAGER IN MICHIGAN

On November 6, 1948, George M. Sutton and I collected a Summer Tanager (*Piranga r. rubra*) about a mile south of Pinckney, Livingston County, Michigan.

The specimen, an immature female, weighed 28.2 gms. The wing measured 91.5 mm, the tail, 69. The ovary was small and the skull was incompletely ossified. The stomach was full of fruit remains (grape?), with traces of insects. The specimen, number 116078, is now in the Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan.

This bird is the first record of the Summer Tanager for Michigan. However, its occurrence in Michigan is scarcely as remarkable as the date of its occurrence. Even the Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) leaves Michigan long before November, usually by the middle or end of September, although Magee banded a female and noted a male nearby at Sault Ste. Marie on October 21, 1923 (Magee, 1926, *Wilson Bull.* **38** (3): 163). In central Ohio, *Piranga rubra* breeds north to Licking County; in eastern Ohio it ranges farther north; in western Ohio, it breeds only to the general region of Dayton (Hicks, 1935, *Ohio State Univ. Studies* **40** (5): 175).

Although it may be useless to speculate on the reason for the bird's visit, it seems worthwhile to record the fact that the weather during the early part of the month was stormy, and on November 5 and 6 a rather strong south wind prevailed.—HARRISON B. TORDOFF, Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

TEXAS HABITAT OF BOTTERI'S SPARROW AND GULF COAST RECORDS OF WINTERING SPARROWS

It is perhaps worth recording that the habitat of Botteri's Sparrow (*Aimophila botterii*) in the Brownsville, Texas, area has changed materially since the publication of Harper's article on that species (1930, Auk, 47, 177–185.). Harper gives a careful description of the terrain between Brownsville and Port Isabel on the coast. Overgrazing, which he specifies as not existing in the area at the time of his visit, is now all too apparent. Once the citrus groves and the richer tableland growth ends and the salt prairie to the east begins, there is no vegetation but a stubbly grass with patches, along the road, of cedars, agarita and mesquite. The typical salt grass association, which appears to be the strict habitat preference of this species and which is well illustrated in his photographs, now occurs only on the very borders of the sea itself or the neighboring lagoons, both near Port Isabel and farther south at Boca Chica. It was here only that I found Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassinii*) singing from March 11, 1946 on, and later on March 22 farther north above Corpus Christi at Rockport in similar environment. From the above evidence it seems that the summer range of Botteri's Sparrow has been seriously reduced in the Brownsville area of Texas.

The following species were collected and positively identified during this period:

Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis oblitus*), a common wintering species along the sea edge from Rockport to Boca Chica, taken between March 4 and March 23.

Nevada Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis nevadensis*), found at Port Isabel in tufts of grass along the beach, March 11.

Western Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum perpallidus*), taken at Brownsville and at Austwell, Mar. 3–11. The upper mandible seems to become darker with the approach of the nesting season, starting with the ridge of the culmen and working downwards on each side.

Cassin's Sparrow (*Aimophila cassinii*), was in breeding condition and also in very worn

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 BITTERNS

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