

Wing-flashing of the Graceful Mockingbird, *Mimus gilvus*.—During the last several years notes on the wing-flashing of Mockingbirds, *Mimus polyglottos*, have appeared in this journal (1946, 58:206–209; 1947, 59:71–73; 1950, 62:41–42; 1951, 63:204–206). I am now able to add an observation from which it is clear that this peculiar habit is found also in *Mimus gilvus*, the Graceful Mockingbird. The race *M. g. gilvus* is found in Surinam. It resembles the Northern Mockingbird, *Mimus polyglottos*, but is of a more uniform grayish color; it almost completely lacks the white on the wings and has much less white on the tail feathers. On December 9, 1951, I observed a Graceful Mockingbird on a burned over area on the savanna near Zanderij, Surinam. The bird was foraging on the ground. While pausing between foraging runs, it repeatedly lifted and spread its wings “archangel-fashion,” in the same way as described and pictured by Sutton (1946. *Wilson Bulletin*, 58:206–209). Its behavior was like that of its northern relative, *polyglottos*, but the observer receives a different impression. Since *gilvus* lacks the white wing patches of *polyglottos* and the underside of the wing is of a uniform dull grayish white, when the bird flashes its wings there is no sudden exhibition of a striking wing pattern. In fact, there is no “flashing” at all. Indeed, the most striking thing to me was the peculiar movement of the wings when they were spread and lifted. It was this movement that first attracted my attention to the bird.

Halle (1948. *Wils. Bull.*, 60:243) has also reported wing-flashing in the dark-winged, South American Calandria Mockingbird (*Mimus saturninus*).—FR. HAVERSCHMIDT, *P. O. Box 644, Paramaribo, Surinam, February 6, 1952.*

Aerial feeding of the Rusty Blackbird on mosquitoes.—On May 6, 1950, I observed a pair of Rusty Blackbirds (*Euphagus carolinus*), among the first to return that spring, on Blaine’s Lake in the vicinity of College, Alaska. They were first seen perched on the floating ice, which still largely covered the lake on that date. As I approached, I saw the two birds repeatedly make nearly vertical flights into the air for about 15 feet and then glide down easily on extended wings. At the peak of their ascents I could hear a distinct “snap” of the mandibles, much like that made by a flycatcher when hawking insects. I watched these birds carefully for several minutes through a pair of 7×50 binoculars at a distance of about 20 yards and was shortly convinced that they were, in fact, catching large mosquitoes in the air. The mosquitoes, which had just begun to swarm over the lakes in rather large numbers, were plainly visible through the binoculars.

It has been known for some time that the Rusty Blackbird is a highly insectivorous icterid (see Beal, 1900, *U. S. Dept. Agric., Bio. Surv. Bull.*, 13:45–49). Recently Beecher (1951. *Auk*, 68:411–440) has described the anatomical adaptations for food-getting in the Icteridae, discussing the principal anatomical correlates of insect-eating in *Euphagus*. It seems likely that the increased kinetics of the upper mandible in this species is a distinct advantage in capturing insects on the wing.

It is not surprising to me to discover that the Rusty Blackbird has the ability to capture insects in the air, although Beal (*loc. cit.*) apparently considered it entirely a ground-feeding species and does not list flying insects among the principal kinds eaten by this bird. His data, however, did not include records for the months of June and July when flying insects are most abundant, and his material apparently did not include samples from far northern latitudes, where, among macroscopic forms, dipterous insects far outnumber other kinds and, therefore, assume greater importance in the diets of insectivorous birds than they do in more southerly latitudes.