

GENERAL NOTES

Eastern Phoebe nesting in Louisiana.—In writing of the Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) in Louisiana during the summer, Oberholser (1938. "The Bird Life of Louisiana," p. 394) states: "The only summer records for Louisiana are two birds seen northeast of Tallulah, between June 13 and July 13, 1924, by E. R. Kalmbach; and one seen at Logansport, by A. H. Howell, between August 25 and 27, 1906." No additional summer records in Louisiana since those cited by Oberholser have been reported. Alvin R. Cahn (1921. *Wilson Bull.*, 33:174) considered the Eastern Phoebe to be a "common breeding species about Marshall," Harrison County, Texas, in 1920. W. J. Baerg (1951. "The Birds of Arkansas," p. 97) states: "In the southern half of Arkansas it is a common resident species;" however, he gives no details. Ben B. Coffey, Jr. (1952. Personal communication) considers the Eastern Phoebe a rare summer resident at Memphis, Tennessee; he has found it nesting also in northern Mississippi (Newman, 1956. *Audubon Field Notes*, 10(5):389).

On April 18, 1954, James R. Stewart, Jr., and I observed an Eastern Phoebe in song near a small culvert at Metcalf, Caddo Parish, Louisiana. It disappeared shortly thereafter. Since we had been unable to locate a nest, the bird was considered to be a late migrant. The possibility that the species might occur as a breeding bird in the area was not entirely dismissed, however, for on the following weekend Stewart discovered a mud structure, which had the shape of a nest, beneath a bridge located 0.6 miles northeast of the point where we had observed the singing bird. Several visits to this bridge established that the nest, if such it was, was not in use, for no phoebes were seen or heard in the vicinity.

On May 28, 1955, I observed an Eastern Phoebe at a point about 7.5 miles north of Shreveport, Caddo Parish, Louisiana. I had been visiting this area regularly earlier in the month without having seen this species; I returned on May 29, but the phoebe could not be found. This individual was silent during my visit to the area on May 28; it had obscure brownish wingbars. The bird was believed to be a very late migrant, and was so recorded by Newman (1955. *Audubon Field Notes*, 9(4):337). The possibility is now presented that this may have been a wandering bird of the year. However, an extensive investigation of bridges and culverts in the northern half of Caddo Parish had been made on May 7; although the search was primarily for Barn Swallows, no phoebes were observed in that area.

On June 10, 1956, I observed two Eastern Phoebes perched together on a fence by a small bridge 1.1 miles west of Four Forks, in extreme southwestern Caddo Parish. Investigating, I found a nest on a beam on the underside of the bridge, over a small creek. After I had returned from underneath the bridge, I saw one of the phoebes fly under the bridge and not reappear. I went back and looked at the nest; the bird was settled on the nest but flew when it saw me. The site of these observations is only 2.5 miles east of the Texas state line; it is 14 miles southwest of Metcalf, and about 17 miles north of Logansport, DeSoto Parish. On June 23 this nest held three nestlings which were several days old. Both adults were watched as they carried food to the young. G. Dale Hamilton obtained color photographs of the adults with food at the nest. The adults were usually silent but would call when Hamilton or I was near the nest. The presumed male sang briefly on one occasion while holding food. Two other phoebes were seen on June 23, about 120 yards south of the nest site; at least one had brownish wingbars. Whether these individuals were another breeding pair or were young of an earlier nesting is unknown; there was no sign of an old nest under the bridge. I paid a brief visit to the area on July 2.

The nest was empty; an adult and a fledged juvenile were observed feeding about 25 yards north of the bridge. My next visit to the area was made on August 4 with Stewart; we were unable to locate any phoebes.

There were several other small bridges in the southwestern part of Caddo Parish, all within about six miles of this nest site, which were visited after the discovery of this breeding pair. No phoebes were observed at any of these bridges. A possible explanation is that the bridge which was used differed from the other bridges in that access to the underside was not partially obstructed by nearby grass or shrubbery.—HORACE H. JETER, 4534 Fairfield Avenue, Shreveport, Louisiana, December 27, 1956.

Comments on wing-flashing and its occurrence in Mimidae with uniformly colored wings.—At least two species of mockingbirds without wing patches are known to flash their wings in the manner characteristic of the Common Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*). Halle (1948. *Wilson Bull.*, 60: 243) noted the behavior in the Calandria Mockingbird (*M. saturninus*) in Argentina, and Haverschmidt (1953. *Wilson Bull.*, 65: 52) in the Graceful Mockingbird (*M. gilvus*) in Surinam.

My own observation on this last species on July 24, 1956, near San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, where the resident race is *M. gilvus gracilis*, parallels Haverschmidt's. While studying birds with Mrs. Edna W. Miner along the Rio Amarillo in the vicinity of the Sumidero, I saw one of several Graceful Mockingbirds repeatedly flash its wings with the same jerky movements used by *polyglottos* in my yard in Oklahoma. This individual, foraging over an area of heavily grazed pasture grass, stopped now and then to flash its wings. It seemed to me that movements of its blackish wings against the light gray body were only a little less arresting than the flickering of white wing patches in the Common Mockingbird.

Halle suggested that the performance by mockingbirds with uniformly colored wings would seem to deal a blow to the theory of wing-patch display. The same might be said of wing-flashing in the Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*).

Mrs. Amelia Laskey's brief comment on an adult Brown Thrasher "opening and closing its wings while investigating something in a dark spot at the base of a yucca plant where it had been feeding" has already been reported by Sutton (1946. *Wilson Bull.*, 58: 206-209). The fuller accounts for this species given by Ruth Thomas (1952. "Crip, Come Home." pp. 55, 140-141) also bear further mention.

Mrs. Thomas watched four young Brown Thrashers, about 30 days out of the nest, attack a mouse. One of them "pecked at it, at the same time lifting and spreading his wings." Of an adult female attacking a dead snake, Mrs. Thomas wrote: "First walking up and down beside its sprawled length, she raised and spread her wings, and every few steps jumped in for a quick peck. She grew bolder and for a few seconds stabbed in fury, then resumed the wary walk and the deliberate wing-lifting . . ." When another adult female "flew down and spread her wings at the snake," it was driven off by the first thrasher.

The inference is strong that all these Brown Thrashers were performing in the same way as Common Mockingbirds, although the observers have not expressly termed it wing-flashing. Tomkins (1950. *Wilson Bull.*, 62: 41-42), however, definitely ascribes wing-flashing to this species but without fully describing the action. The foregoing items, together with others in the *Wilson Bulletin* (Gander, 43, 1931: 146; Allen, 59, 1947: 71-73; Wampole, 61, 1949: 113; Brackbill, 63, 1951: 204-206), furnish considerable discussion of function, motivation and the age-sex factors in wing-flashing. More-