

A COMPARISON OF SOME ADAPTATIONS OF HERRING AND RING-BILLED GULL CHICKS TO THEIR NATAL ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT.—I studied aspects of the behavior of chicks of ground-nesting Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) and Ring-billed Gulls (*L. delawarensis*) in the interlake region of Manitoba in 1981 and 1982 to identify possible adaptations of the chicks to their natal environment. Results obtained from both colony- and laboratory-reared chicks suggest that the characteristic mobility pattern exhibited by chicks of each species represents an important adaptation to the chick's particular natal environment. The tendency for Ring-billed Gull chicks to remain sedentary in a cohesive family group at all locations, except to approach and follow their calling parents during movements away from the territory, may represent a strategy designed for areas with high nest densities. Conversely, the lack of parentally induced wandering and the avoidance of hostile neighboring adults, young, and other rearing areas in Herring Gull chicks may represent an adaptation to low nest densities and high aggression levels characteristic of this species.

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