

Unusual Death of a Common Egret.—On 28 August 1957 at 09:00 I photographed, at close range, a Common Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) standing in 50 cm of water in a mangrove swamp bordering the west edge of the Indian River at Vero Beach, Florida. The bird made no attempt to fly. At 14:30 the egret was found in the same position. It stood motionless even when approached to within a meter. The next morning it was dead. Examination of the macerated skeleton revealed a seven-cm forked twig protruding from the foramen magnum and right optic foramen of the skull. The twig had evidently pierced the brain when the bird thrust its bill into the dark swamp water while feeding. Although killing wounded birds by inserting a knife through the palate often requires considerable brain destruction, it seems remarkable that the egret lived at least five and one-half hours although paralyzed by a damaged brain.—ROBERT D. WEIGEL, *Department of Biological Sciences, Illinois State Normal University, Normal, Illinois.*

Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Stomach of Tiger Shark.—On 20 May 1961 an immature female tiger shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*), 2.3 meters in length and weighing 52 kg, was caught in the Gulf of Mexico several miles offshore from Sarasota, Florida, by personnel of the Cape Haze Marine Laboratory. The contents of its stomach included a leg and some feathers of a land bird. The leg was sent to the Bird and Mammal Laboratories, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Washington, D.C., where it was identified by Mrs. R. C. Laybourne as that of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*). In addition to this bird, the stomach contained a blue crab, several sea catfishes (*Galeichthys felis*), and part of a black nose shark (*Carcharhinus acronotus*).

Evidently this migrant fell into the Gulf and was eaten by the tiger shark or possibly by the black nose shark or another fish that was then eaten by one of the sharks.—GEORGE B. SAUNDERS, *Biologist, Bureau of Sport Fisheries & Wildlife, U.S. Department of the Interior, Gainesville, Florida,* and EUGENIE CLARK, *Director, Cape Haze Marine Laboratory, Sarasota, Florida.*

Predation on Red-bellied Woodpecker Nestlings by a Black Rat Snake.—On 1 June 1961, while observing the nest of a pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers (*Centurus carolinus*), south of Carbondale, Illinois, the effects of predation by a Black Rat Snake (*Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta*) were observed and are reported here.

The nest hole was located about nine meters above ground in a living elm tree that is situated in a woodland patch about one and one-half km long and one-half km wide. The nest hole itself had been dug in a dead branch of the elm. Incubation had been proceeding for some time, and it was eventually determined that some of the young birds had already hatched.

The nest hole had been under observation from 12 meters for about 15 minutes when a dark-colored snake was observed leaving it. Upon the approach of the observer to the base of the elm tree, the snake returned into the hole where it remained while arrangements were being made to climb the tree. During this period, the adult birds were seen and frequently were heard calling in the neighborhood. The snake was removed from the hole along with the shell of one egg and portions of another. The snake was identified as a female Black Rat Snake, and it measured 100 cm in length. It was promptly killed and frozen in order to preserve the stomach contents for later examination. Upon examination of its stomach, the remains of three nestlings, one unhatched egg, and the skull of a Pine Vole (*Pitymys pinetorum*) were identified.

Although it is purely circumstantial evidence of predation on a Red-bellied Woodpecker nest by a snake, the behavior of another nesting pair of these birds is worth