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Nest-searching behavior in the Brown-headed Cowbird.—This note describes three distinct types of nest-searching behavior that we noted during field studies of Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) at Kingston, Ontario, from 1970 to 1973.

Successful brood parasitism initially requires that parasites be able to locate numerous host nests. Freidmann (1929, The cowbirds, Springfield, Illinois, C. C. Thomas, p. 187) described one technique that the cowbird uses to find host nests: "The cowbird ordinarily finds the nests it victimizes by watching the birds build. Frequently I have noted cowbirds perched almost motionless for an hour or so watching vireos, warblers, and sparrows carrying nesting material." Hann (1941, Wilson Bull. 53: 211) and Payne (1973, Condor 75: 80) also described silent watching of nest-building activities as a commonly used nest-searching behavior. We witnessed silent observation of nest building in our study on several occasions in open grassland-juniper scrub (*Juniperus communis*). A female cowbird was seen watching a Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) building its nest on 15 May 1971; another watched while a Field Sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*) was lining its nest on 18 May 1971; and on four separate occasions, we saw cowbirds watching Chipping Sparrows (*S. passerina*) build nests. The female cowbird watched its prospective hosts from the tops of shrubs and trees 15 to 25 feet from the nests, for periods of time ranging from 9 to 21 min, and then silently left the nest vicinity. In every case the hosts were later parasitized.

On three occasions in June 1973, female cowbirds were noted using a variation of the silent observation technique to search for nests in forested habitats. The lone females walked silently over the forest floor and looked about. They were not feeding, and they progressed slowly but steadily in a definite direction, sometimes stopping to watch the movements of birds in the forest canopy.

A very unusual type of cowbird behavior occurred on the afternoon of 3 June

1970 that we interpret as an active nest-searching technique. This searching behavior consisted of the female making a series of short flights a few feet above the shrubbery and then landing abruptly in the leaves with considerable wing flapping. The female repeated these actions while working her way along the thick shrub edge of a woodlot. She seemed to be making noise intentionally, as if trying to flush a bird from hiding.

On 17 June a female cowbird was performing the sequence along a dense deciduous hedge in an urban habitat where we had found a Chipping Sparrow nest. When the noisy cowbird approached the nest site closely the incubating sparrow flushed from the nest. Immediately the cowbird flew to where the sparrow had flushed and remained out of view for several minutes. After the cowbird reappeared and flew away, we investigated the nest and found no cowbird egg in it, but the next morning the nest contained one cowbird egg.

Although all of the nest locating techniques described above involve visual cues presented by the host species in the vicinity of the nest, it should be noted that sighting or location of a completed nest *per se* is sufficient stimulus to induce cowbirds to lay eggs. Andrew P. King (pers. comm.) found that cowbirds in an aviary at Cornell University would lay eggs when suddenly presented with a completed nest containing 2 host eggs, but they would not lay in an empty nest or in one that contained 4 eggs.

In summary the Brown-headed Cowbird was noted to use three habitat specific nest searching strategies: (1) cryptic, silent watching of nest-building hosts in semiopen habitats; (2) secretive searching by walking on the ground in dense woods; and (3) active, intentionally noisy searching in dense shrubbery along forest edges and garden hedges.

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Loon predation on a Canada Goose gosling.—Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) predation on waterfowl broods has seldom been documented. Meinertzhagen (1941, *Ibis* 5: 110) described an instance in Scotland where loons preyed on eider ducklings coincidentally with predation by skuas. Other authors describe harassment of broods without observing any predation. Forbush (1912, *The history of game birds, wild-fowl, and shore-birds of Massachusetts and adjacent states*, Massachusetts State Board of Agr., p. 55) reports loons chasing merganser ducklings in New England, and Anderson (1970, *Passenger Pigeon* 34: 123) describes a loon harassing a Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) brood in Wisconsin. Munro (1939, *J. Wildl. Mgmt.* 3: 344) suggested from indirect evidence that some casual or sporadic mortality to ducklings from attacks by loons does occur. Olson and Marshall (1952, *The Common Loon in Minnesota*, Minneapolis, Univ. Minnesota Press, p. 33) suggested Mallard and Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) broods avoid loons in Minnesota.

On 8 July 1973 about 1030 at the Crex Meadows Wildlife Management Area near Grantsburg, Wisconsin I watched a loon catch a Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) gosling. Visibility was excellent with clear weather and a light breeze. A pair of geese with three goslings 3 or 4 days old had been loafing and feeding along one of the gravel-surfaced dikes in the area. As my car approached, the family moved from the dike to the open water. I stopped the car to watch the