

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Methods of Grasping and Carrying Prey.—The note by Allen (Auk, 56, 1939:476-77) entitled "Left-handedness in the Carolina Paroquet" stimulated the writer to make similar observations on birds in the vicinity of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon. Because of an opportunity to witness the manner in which a number of hawks and owls grasped and carried their prey, I decided to record and tabulate the data to determine whether there was a preference in the manner of holding the victim.

| Species | Right Beak | Left foot | Both foot | Both feet | Remarks |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--|
| <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> | .... | .... | .... | 1 | Carried gadwall (female) short distance. |
| <i>Circus hudsonius</i> | .... | 9 | 6 | .... | One carried portion of rabbit (carrion) in right foot. Other prey were mice. |
| <i>Accipiter velox</i> | .... | 1 | .... | .... | English Sparrow. |
| <i>Buteo borealis</i> | .... | 6 | 5 | 4 | One observed to catch two mice with left foot. One carried bull snake, one a pheasant, one a ground squirrel and one a mouse in both feet. Other prey were mice. |
| <i>Buteo swainsoni</i> | .... | 5 | 8 | 1 | One mouse grasped in both feet after hawk was forced to fly from perch a number of times. One held mouse under left foot when perched and when flying carried it in beak and then grasped in right foot. One had juvenal coot, two a duckling. One duckling grasped in both feet after hawk forced to fly from several perches. One mouse carried in beak a short distance before being grasped by left foot during flight. One carried a duck in both feet. |
| <i>Buteo lagopus s. johannis</i> | .... | .... | 2 | .... | Mice taken. One observed caught in the same foot. |
| <i>Falco sparverius</i> | 1 | 3 | 4 | .... | Insects and mice taken chiefly. One had a beetle, two a mouse and one had portion of recently killed blackbird in left foot. One had a grasshopper in its beak. |
| <i>Bubo virginianus</i> | .... | .... | .... | 1 | Carrying live garter snake. |
| <i>Asio flammeus</i> | 2 | .... | .... | .... | Carrying mouse. |
| TOTALS | 3 | 24 | 25 | 7 | |

Observations were made during the period from April 6, 1940, to November 2, 1943. The data gathered on these birds show that each foot is used by hawks about the same number of times. This would indicate that if individual birds of prey are either right- or left-footed, the percentage is not decidedly in favor of either foot. However, it should not be inferred that the individuals observed were necessarily predominantly right- or left-footed or that there was no preference in foot use by each individual bird. Information on the latter point would necessitate detailed observations on marked or caged individuals.—CLARENCE A. SOOTER, *United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Frenchglen, Oregon, December 16, 1943.*

Aerial Insect Feeding by the California Gull.—For two consecutive years, concentrations of California Gulls (*Larus californicus*) have been noted catching crickets in flight. The first instances were noted between August 15 and August 20, 1942, when several gulls were seen hawking over the Richmond Shipyard at Richmond, Contra Costa County, California, late in the evening. On August 23 about twenty gulls were seen. From their actions it was obvious that they were catching insects in flight but, as they flew fifty to one hundred feet from the ground, the identity of their prey could not be ascertained. On succeeding days the gulls became more numerous, appearing about dusk and remaining until a half hour after dark. On September 9 fully 100 gulls were present and these flew low enough for some to be identified as *Larus californicus*. All appeared to be the same species, though identification was difficult in the darkness. The insects upon which they fed could be seen as black dots, moving swiftly and steadily either horizontally or obliquely. Many came to the bright lights on the ground and were identified as the common black cricket, *Gryllus assimilis*. Seemingly the brilliant lights of the shipyard attracted the crickets while engaged in a nuptial flight from a large surrounding area. The flight, both of gulls and crickets, reached its peak on September 11 when about 400 gulls were seen. The following day dead crickets were abundant where they had been stepped on or run over by vehicles. The cricket swarm had appreciably decreased on September 13; about 50 gulls were seen. For several days following, four to six gulls were seen hawking over the shipyards in the evenings, apparently catching crickets, although no crickets were seen on the ground or in flight.