

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Common Egret Preys on Meadowlark.—In the afternoon of February 14, 1959, near Bay-side, Humboldt County, California, I observed a Common Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) with a Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) struggling in its beak. This brief encounter took place in a wet bottomland pasture where egrets frequently are seen in winter months near Humboldt Bay. The egret held the meadowlark in its bill, alternately by the neck, wings, and feet in the ensuing struggle. The meadowlark ceased struggling within a few minutes, but its captor persisted in efforts to swallow it for another quarter of an hour. At the end of this time the egret was startled by a passing automobile and flew off with its lifeless victim held firmly between its mandibles.

Other members of the family Ardeidae quite commonly kill and consume the young of marsh birds (Bent, U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull., 135, 1927). Indeed F. A. Low (The Heron, 1955:51, Collins, London) cites an instance of a captive Gray Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) seizing and swallowing a Persian kitten. Although I was unable to find published reports of similar acts of predation by the Common Egret, it seems probable that unwary small birds might fall victims of this bird whenever chance and hunger created favorable conditions.—R. E. GENELLY, *Division of Natural Resources, Humboldt State College, Arcata, California, October 23, 1963.*

Interspecific Relations of Crows and Red-shouldered Hawks in Mobbing Behavior.—Field observations given here suggest that Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) distinguish between Red-shouldered (*Buteo lineatus*) and Red-tailed (*B. jamaicensis*) hawks and may associate at times with Red-shouldered Hawks in the mobbing of Barred (*Strix varia*) and Great Horned (*Bubo virginianus*) owls. The observations, which were made in a swamp near Seneca, Maryland, between 1951 and 1960, and in Lyme, New Hampshire, in 1963, fall into the four following categories:

(1) *Crows and Red-shouldered Hawks.*—Red-shouldered Hawks were relatively common in Seneca Swamp as indicated by the discovery of four occupied nests in a single morning on March 21, 1953. There was also a sizeable population of Crows in the swamp and adjacent farm lands. The two species were in each other's proximity not infrequently, but I never observed Crows attacking the hawks except in the vicinity of their own nests. On March 13 and again on April 27, 1953, I saw a pair of Crows attack a Red-shouldered Hawk as it flew over a corner of woodland where they nested. The same Crows attacked a Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) on April 8 and 25 under similar circumstances. The Turkey Vulture, like the Red-shouldered Hawk, was not attacked by Crows at other times of year. The usual indifference of Crows to Red-shouldered Hawks was illustrated in the following incidents: on December 18, 1953, a Red-shouldered Hawk alighted within 10 feet of a Crow, which continued to preen itself as calmly as before, and on December 25, 1951, I watched a Red-shouldered Hawk alight among several hundred Crows without causing any appreciable disturbance.

(2) *Crows and Red-tailed Hawks.*—The Red-tailed Hawk was less common in the swamp than the Red-shouldered Hawk, but it flew across from the neighboring hills occasionally. Red-tailed Hawks were regularly attacked by Crows in all months of the year.

(3) *Relations of Red-shouldered to Red-tailed Hawks.*—Attacks of Red-tailed Hawks by Red-shouldered Hawks were noted only in the nesting season. On February 14, 1954, for example, a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks dove repeatedly on a Red-tailed Hawk perched on a limb. Each time the latter raised one wing as if to protect itself. On April 10 of the same year, unusually loud screaming from a Red-shouldered Hawk flying above its nest attracted my attention to attacks it was making on a Red-tailed Hawk circling in the vicinity.

(4) *Joint mobbing of owls by Crows and Red-Shouldered Hawks.*—An association of Crows and Red-shouldered Hawks took place under somewhat similar circumstances on three successive weekends between April 10 and 24, 1954. Thus, I watched Crows flying in from all directions to mob a Barred Owl. The Crows sometimes came within three to four feet of the owl, while I was standing below in thick undergrowth. Two Red-shouldered Hawks were screaming at the periphery of the group, where most of the Crows were congregated. Neither Crows nor hawks paid any obvious attention to each other. That their excitement was directed at the owl was more apparent when the owl flew farther into the swamp, only to be followed closely by both the hawks and Crows. Joint mobbings of this type also took place at other times of the year. On October 14, 1956, for example, I witnessed an almost identical series of events in Seneca Swamp. Although I came to realize that the

intermingling of angry caws from the Crows and the screams of the hawks was not an infrequent occurrence, actual determination of the object of the mobbing was not always attempted. In the spring of 1963, in Lyme, New Hampshire, these vocalizations came nearly every morning from a grove of hemlocks. When I finally worked my way under these trees on May 19, I found myself below twenty or more Crows, in association with a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks, mobbing a Great Horned Owl. The owl took three rather long flights. On each occasion it was followed by the retinue of hawks and Crows.

Mobbing has been defined by Hartley (Symp. Soc. Exp. Biol. No. 4, 1950:315) as "a demonstration made by a bird against a potential or supposed enemy belonging to another and more powerful species; it is initiated by the member of the weaker species, and is not a reaction to an attack upon the person, mate, nest, eggs or young." Observations given here suggest that Crows distinguish between two species of *Buteo* of similar size and do not regard *B. lineatus* as a potential enemy except when it is in the immediate vicinity of their nests. Data presented by the Craigheads (Hawks, Owls and Wildlife, Wildlife Mgt. Inst., 1956:399-400) indicate that *B. jamaicensis* preys on large-sized birds, including pheasants and Crows, whereas *B. lineatus* restricts itself to small and medium-sized birds. This difference between the two predators may explain why Crows distinguish between and react differently to them.

Crows and Red-shouldered Hawks are similar in their antagonism to large owls. It seemed in several of the incidents mentioned here that the Crows initiated the mobbing and that Red-shouldered Hawks were attracted in what Altman (Condor, 58, 1956:241-253) has called a "secondary reaction" through "contagion." I never saw any smaller species participate in these mobbings, although Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) were observed mobbing Barred Owls on two occasions in Seneca Swamp.—LAWRENCE KILHAM, *Lyme, New Hampshire, October 6, 1963.*

Ruffed Grouse Nesting in Utah.—Although the Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus incana*) is a native bird to northern Utah, there are no known records of nests. On June 18, 1963, a nest of a Ruffed Grouse containing four eggs was found in the Wellsville Mountains, 15 miles south of Logan. The nest was located in a small, cup-shaped depression of leaves beneath a deformed aspen sapling at 6000 feet elevation. The female jumped off the nest as I approached within four feet and moved out about 10 yards where she kept hissing and whining while acting as though she had a broken wing.

The next day when I returned at 7:00 a.m. the female hopped off the nest, exposing four downy chicks in the depression. One chick was still wet and had part of the shell attached to it. The female again acted as though she had a broken wing until I left the area.

Because of the small clutch size and late hatching date this nest may have been a second nest of the season.—ROBERT L. PHILLIPS, *Utah Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, August 31, 1963.*

A Peruvian Race of *Spinus crassirostris*.—The Thick-billed Siskin, *Spinus crassirostris*, is a high Andean species that until recently was known only from Argentina and central Chile (Hellmayr, Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Zool. Ser., pt. 11, 1938:277-278) and southern Bolivia (Bond and de Schauensee, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 94, 1942:385). The first recorded Peruvian specimens were three collected in December, 1960, at Checayani near Azangaro, Department of Puno, by Dorst (Bull. Mus. Natl. D'Hist. Nat., Paris, 34, 1962:433); this locality lies about 600 kilometers northwest of the known northern and easternmost distributional limits of the species in Bolivia (departments of Potosí and Cochabamba) and about 2000 kilometers north of the northernmost limit of its known range in Chile. In Perú in 1962-63, I secured nine specimens, one of which, an adult male, was taken on October 19, 1962, above Lampa, a locality very near Checayani. The others, consisting of five adult males (one was prepared in spirits) and three adult females, were taken on January 6 and March 29-30, 1963, at a point some 200 kilometers southwest of Checayani along the Tarata-to-Chilliculco section of the Tacna-Puno road at an altitude of approximately 12,000 feet, Department of Tacna.

I have had only limited comparative material at my disposal, as given beyond. Nevertheless it is evident that the Peruvian birds represent an undescribed and extremely distinctive race. Those taken by Dorst I have not seen but they surely belong to this subspecies, which is named in honor of Dr. Dean Amadon, Lamont Curator of Birds and Chairman of the Department of Ornithology of the American Museum of Natural History.