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## DIFFERENT HEAD-SCRATCHING ATTEMPTS IN A ONE-LEGGED GULL AND PARROT

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Independently, we have observed rather different head-scratching attempts in one-legged individuals of two different species. J. P. H. watched a winter "club" of Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) on 20 March 1960 in a large field in Norfolk, Virginia. One gull was missing its right leg, yet engaged in behavior that appeared strikingly similar to head-scratching. While preening, the bird lowered its head and turned it to the right side, in the exact posture used by gulls scratching with the right foot. It resumed a normal standing posture with head forward and then repeated the head-scratching posture. After returning to normal posture, the gull repeated a third

## PERCH-SITE PREFERENCES OF FOUR DIURNAL RAPTORS IN NORTHEASTERN COLORADO

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Reports on the perch-site preferences of larger diurnal raptors are rare and generally involve only one species or several closely related species. Errington and Breckenridge (1938) stated that, in the north-

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APPENDIX I. Numbers of gulls identified off the southern California coast, 18 January-10 April 1967.

Species	No. between the Channel Islands and the mainland	No. between the Channel Islands and the pelagic survey area
<i>Larus glaucescens</i>	17	21
<i>L. occidentalis</i>	129	25
<i>L. argentatus</i>	56	65
<i>L. californicus</i>	230	12
<i>L. delawarensis</i>	17	0
<i>L. heermanni</i>	19	0
<i>L. philadelphia</i>	165	0
<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	227	1333 <sup>a</sup>
unidentified	2533 <sup>b</sup>	213

<sup>a</sup> Most were seen in one day, see species account.

<sup>b</sup> Most were probably Western, Herring and California gulls.

time the head-down posture, which appeared identical with that shown by other nearby birds that actually were head-scratching.

In contrast, a caged White-fronted Parrot (*Amazona albifrons*) was able to scratch the right side of its head despite a missing left leg. In March 1973, R. B. W. was attracted to a captive individual that was whistling from the doorway of its owner's house in Chetumal, Quintana Roo, Mexico. Pausing in its performance, the parrot hooked its upper mandible through one of the bars of the top of its bell-shaped wire cage and lifted itself from the perch. While hanging vertically, the bird arched its back, brought up its right foot, and scratched the right side of its head. Parrots are perhaps better adapted for such behavior than other birds since they often use their beaks for climbing in the wild.

In sum, the gull appeared to persist in unsuccessful head-scratching attempts with a missing leg, whereas the parrot showed an ingenious solution to scratching one side of its head despite a missing limb. These attempts to solve the unique problems presented by missing limbs reinforce the suggestion that head-scratching is functionally important behavior.

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central United States, buteos prefer dead trees, telephone poles, and fenceposts as perch sites. Most of the eagles observed during a winter aerial census in southeastern Colorado were perched on the ground or on fenceposts (Anderson et al. 1970). Perch-site preferences of sympatric species in an area have rarely been compared. Winter censusing of larger diurnal raptors provided an opportunity to determine perch-site preferences of sympatric species on the shortgrass prairie in northeastern Colorado.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Thirteen semi-monthly censuses of larger diurnal raptors using hawk winter censusing methods (Craighead and Craighead 1956) were conducted between October 1969 and March 1970 on a 145-km<sup>2</sup> study area in Weld County, Colorado. This area is on the shortgrass prairie approximately 56 km NE of Fort Collins, Colorado.