

immediate danger. Common Ravens (*Corvus corax*) were common (200–300 birds in total) though persecuted by residents for pilfering their vegetable garden.

The one breeding landbird that appeared rare was the Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*). Everett (1988) reported no more than 10 and we saw and heard only one. Rooting by pigs may be a reason for the owl's decline.

The following species, unrecorded from Clarion (see Brattstrom and Howell 1956, Jehl and Parkes 1982, Everett 1988), were also observed: 60–100 Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*), one immature Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), 12 Semipalmated Plovers (*Charadrius semipalmatus*), one Sanderling (*Calidris alba*), one first-year Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), one American Water Pipit (*Anthus rubescens*, see Knox 1988), one Palm Warbler (*Dendroica palmarum*), and one male Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*).

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BROWN JAYS AS ARMY ANT FOLLOWERS¹

PAUL D. HAEMIG

Department of Animal Ecology, University of Umeå, S-901 87 Umeå, Sweden

Key words: Brown Jay; Cyanocorax morio; army ants; Eciton burchelli; Melodious Blackbird; Dives dives; Ivory-Billed Woodcreeper; Xiphorhynchus flavigaster; mixed-species flocks; Tamaulipas.

Since the publication of Hardy's paper (Condor 76: 102–103, 1974) on jays following army ant swarms, we have known that three species of neotropical jays engage in this activity. In Campeche, Nayarit, and Nicaragua, Hardy found Yucatan Jays *Cyanocorax yucatanicus*, San Blas Jays *C. sanblasianus*, and Bushy-crested Jays *C. melanocyaneus*, respectively, accompanying swarms of army ants to feed on arthropods and other small animals fleeing hiding places to escape the advancing ants. Hardy concluded his report by saying that it would "be instructive to know if this habit has gone unnoticed in any of the other neotropical jays."

I recently discovered that still another species of neotropical jay follows army ants. On the morning of 15 April 1989, I observed Brown Jays *Cyanocorax morio* accompanying a swarm of army ants *Eciton burchelli* in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. The locality at which I made this observation was a second-growth

tropical deciduous forest along the Rio Sabinas, 4 km west of the town of El Encino (23°8'N, 99°6'W), Municipio de Llera, in the same general area where Sutton (Condor 53:16–18, 1951) observed a larger and far more diverse mixed-species flock of ant-following birds.

Accompanying the small army ant swarm that I saw were six Brown Jays, two Melodious Blackbirds *Dives dives*, and one Ivory-Billed Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus flavigaster*. I followed this mixed-species flock for 2 hr (08:00–10:00) through the forest and watched them feed on animal life fleeing from the advancing ants. While most of the food that the birds consumed appeared to be arthropods, I saw one Brown Jay devour a small frog that was driven from hiding by the ants. The jay was forced to eat the frog rapidly, for as soon as the other jays saw it, they tried to steal it. The foraging behavior of the Brown Jays closely resembled that of the Yucatan Jays described by Hardy (1974).

From a numerical standpoint, it can be seen that the Brown Jay was the principal attendant present at the ant swarm. The jays Hardy (1974) reported on were also the principal attendants in the mixed-species flocks he observed following army ants. No antbirds (Formicariidae) or ant-tanagers (*Habia*) were present in his flocks or in mine. Like Hardy, I also found that the jays I studied were tamer acting when following ants, and thus easier than normal for a human to approach and observe. The same can be said for the blackbirds and woodcreeper.

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