

A question is whether female Swallow-tailed Kites always demand anoles in courtship feeding. Snyder (1974), in the two courtship feedings he describes, noted an anole in one and a lizard in the other.

Although Swallow-tailed Kites are not considered a threatened species, they have been extirpated from most of their range within the United States (Bent 1937). The Parker's Island colony, consisting of 20 pairs in the 1950s (local report), had dwindled to three pairs by 1979. Any factors that may contribute to further decline would seem worthy of study. The persistent time- and energy-consuming intrusions of the unmated male must have been a handicap to the mated pair. Yet interpretations are difficult. Pines suitable for nesting appeared to be scarce, and pair A might have experienced delay even without the intruder. Although I left Florida on 1 April, subsequent observation by Fred E. Lohrer showed that pair A did succeed in establishing a nest.

#### *Acknowledgments*

I am obliged to my wife, Jane Kilham, for aiding in my observations; to Fred E. Lohrer for checking on the colony after I had left; and to James N. Layne for reading and commenting on my observations.

#### *Literature Cited*

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- Skutch, A. F. 1965. Life history notes on two tropical American kites. *Condor* 67:235-246.
- Snyder, N. F. R. 1974. Breeding biology of Swallow-tailed Kites in Florida. *Living Bird* 13:73-97.

## **JUVENILE PRAIRIE CHICKEN PREDATION BY MARSH HAWK**

by

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While Marsh Hawks (*Circus cyaneus*) are known to prey upon Prairie Grouse (Grange, Wisconsin Grouse Problems. Wisc. Cons. Dept., Madison, 1948), no published account could be located in the literature detailing an observed attack. During a study of the reproductive ecology of Greater Prairie Chickens (*Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus*) in northwest Minnesota near Crookston, I observed the predation of a 29-day-old chick by an adult female Marsh Hawk.

At 19:15 on 24 July 1975 I located a radio-tagged hen with a brood of 4 chicks feed-

ing in a hayed alfalfa field 15 cm tall. The hen and brood were 25 m from a 6-m-wide strip of small grain 40 cm tall. I remained in a mobile-receiving vehicle some 110 m from the brood and observed with binoculars. I gave a chick distress call to determine the exact location of the hen. When the radio signal became constant at 19:20 (indicating no movement), I observed the hawk which had apparently just landed about 5 m from the hen near the edge of the grain strip. The hawk preened until 19:22 when it flew away from the brood, over the grain strip, and landed 100 m away. At 19:27 the hawk returned, flying near to the ground, landed, and sat motionless at the edge of the grain strip near the crouched hen and brood. At 19:30 the hawk flew toward the brood, hovered briefly about 1 m off the ground and then dropped sharply, apparently attacking a chick. Immediately the hen flew at the hawk, and feathers were observed flying about from an apparent struggle on the ground. The radio signal indicated considerable activity for 1 or 2 minutes and then became constant as though the hen had been killed. At least 2 chicks then flushed and flew 100 m out into the alfalfa. At 19:34 the hawk took flight, carrying a chick, and once again the hen flew at the hawk, following it for 10-15 m, but no aerial contact was noted. The hawk flew 150 m and landed, probably to eat the chick.

It is probable that the strip of small grain provided ambush cover for the hawk. I had not seen it approach initially, and perhaps the hen had not either. The short cover of the hayfield likely enhanced detention of the brood by the hawk and made possible the subsequent predation.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### WANTED: RECORDINGS OF RAPTOR VOCALIZATIONS

We are in the process of developing and testing a technique for censusing diurnal and nocturnal raptors. The technique is based on responses to recorded raptor vocalizations. We are interested in access to recordings of all North American woodland hawks and owls for which the following information is available: Location and behavioral context within which the recording was made and, if possible, age and sex. We would be happy to respond to any inquiries and to establish correspondence with anyone who is involved in related work. Direct correspondence to: Dr. James A. Mosher, Appalachian Environmental Laboratory, University of Maryland, Frostburg State College Campus, Frostburg, Maryland 21532.

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The Migratory Bird and Habitat Research Laboratory, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has been asked to determine the population status of the Cooper's Hawk and the Golden Eagle in the eastern United States and to identify research and management needs. We would appreciate historic and current information about productivity, habitat use, and sources of mortality and disturbance. Please contact:

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