

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

### NORTHERN HARRIER CASTS PELLET WHILE IN FLIGHT

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To my knowledge there has never been any mention of a raptor casting a pellet while in flight, but on 1 June 1986 at 0825 H on the Buena Vista Marsh in central Wisconsin I watched an adult male Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) cast a pellet while flying. He was hunting over open grassland and as he passed above an active harrier nest, he began to circle and climb until it reached a height of about 30 m. The adult female, previously color-marked, returned to the nesting area. The Harriers circled each other for approximately 30 seconds and then the female flew directly to the nest. Once she had landed, the male continued to hunt. As he flew past me, I noticed that he was not carrying anything in his talons or beak. As he continued to traverse the field, he appeared to stall in the air only 20 m from me; his wings were fully extended and tilted backwards so that they caught the wind and held the hawk motionless in the air for about 3 seconds. While

the bird was stationary, I trained my binoculars on him and watched as he seemed to be trying to force something out of his crop with a series of three muscular contractions. With each contraction, the harrier lowered his head toward his breast—apparently trying to dislodge an obstruction. By the third contraction, he opened his mouth and cast a pellet. He then continued to hunt.

RESUMEN.—Un *Circus cyaneus* macho disminuyó la velocidad de su vuelo, vomitó residuos no digeribles en un fragmento de su vuelo y continuó en su afán de cacería.

[Traducción de Eudoxio Paredes-Ruiz]

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### ABOVE-GROUND NESTING BY BURROWING OWLS

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While most Burrowing Owls (*Athene cunicularia*) occupy "typical" burrows (i.e., underground and either excavated or expanded by an owl), some exceptions have been observed. Stoner (1933) described Burrowing Owls occupying cavities that had been dug into haystacks. Brotherton and Brotherton (in Williams 1986) reported a Burrowing Owl living in a section of pipe that was in use as a parking lot barrier. Neither report involved nesting birds. Here I present an account of Burrowing Owls nesting and incubating eggs outside of burrows.

I observed three Burrowing Owl nests above ground at Tamiami Airport, Kendall, Dade Co., Florida. I discovered these nests on 16 April, 11 May, and 17 May 1987. Each nest was a near-circular scrape in a section of maintained lawn (Table 1). Two nests (1 and 2) were lined with debris and all contained at least one egg (Table 1). Egg dimensions were similar to those reported by Bent (1938) for Florida Burrowing Owls. I observed incubating adult owls at each nest. No eggs hatched, and all nests were eventually abandoned.