

NOTES

ROBBERY OF NESTING MATERIALS BY THE CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD

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On 27 May 1978, while looking for birds in the White Mountains near Tollhouse Springs, Inyo County, California, I located an active Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*) nest which was placed approximately 1 m high near the top of a low sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) shrub. While Judy Atwood, Thomas LaRoque and I were observing the female gnatcatcher on the nest, we were rather startled to see a female Calliope Hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*) fly to the gnatcatcher nest and, while hovering, remove nesting material from the outside of the nest cup. Although the female gnatcatcher appeared to watch the pilfering hummingbird during the several seconds it was present at the nest, the gnatcatcher continued to incubate and made no effort to drive the hummingbird away. The male Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was not observed near the nest until several minutes after the hummingbird had departed. We flushed the female gnatcatcher from her nest and found three eggs in it.

The Calliope Hummingbird's direct, unhesitating flight to the gnatcatcher nest, despite our presence within 1 m of the site, suggests that the hummingbird had previously made similar piratic visits. Both species use similar materials in the construction of their nests (Harrison 1978). Considering the energy expenditure involved in gathering nest-building materials, it is perhaps not surprising that the hummingbird would make repeated thefts from this concentrated and apparently poorly defended source of nesting materials.

Welty (1962) summarized a number of examples of intraspecific robbery of nesting materials, and cited this behavior as being quite common among colonial nesting birds such as penguins, cormorants, pelicans, storks and Rooks (*Corvus frugilegus*). Brown (1963) noted frequent intraspecific nest robbing in cooperatively breeding Mexican Jays (*Aphelocoma ultramarina*), and Biaggi (1955) observed similar behavior in Bananaquits (*Coereba flaveola*). Bent (1940) did not mention any such piratic behavior by North American hummingbird species. However, Wagner (1945) regularly observed a Mexican hummingbird, the Green Violetear (*Colibri thalassinus*), constructing its nest with material stolen from active, but unattended, nests of the White-eared Hummingbird (*Hylocharis leucotis*); sometimes such behavior completely destroyed the latter species' nest.

In summary, intraspecific robbing of nesting materials has been reported relatively frequently, and instances of intrafamilial (Trochilidae) theft have also been observed. The robbery of nesting materials from an active Blue-gray Gnatcatcher nest by a female Calliope Hummingbird represents an interordinal (Apodiformes and Passeriformes) example of such behavior.

LITERATURE CITED

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NOTES

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- Wagner, H. O. 1945. Notes on the life history of the Mexican Violet-ear. *Wilson Bull.* 57:165-187.
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RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Raptor Research Foundation will be held 9-12 November 1979 at U.C. Davis Tennis Club, Davis, California. The meeting will include a two-day symposium on California raptors, a day of workshops, and two days of general papers and invited lecturers. Non-members wishing to receive registration and agenda information can write to David L. Harlow, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento Endangered Species Office, 2800 Cottage Way Room W-2527, Sacramento, CA 95825.

COLOR-MARKED CANADA GEESE

Plastic neck collars have been put on 1000 Canada Geese on their breeding grounds in northeastern California to more accurately determine the relationship between local breeding areas and wintering grounds. The collars are red with black numerals, a K followed by three digits. Any reports of these collared birds, whether or not the numbers can be read, will be appreciated. Please send reports to: California Department of Fish and Game, 1416 Ninth St., Sacramento, CA 95814 (916-445-6896) or P. O. Box 758, Gridley, CA 95948 (916-846-3569). All reports will be acknowledged.

WFO ANNUAL MEETING

16 - 18 February 1980

Santa Barbara Natural History Museum, Santa Barbara, California

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