

The omnivorous appetite of this reptile is well known to many who have had the curiosity to examine a number of their partially digested meals, as attested by Allen and Swindell (*Herpetologica*, 1948: 1st suppl.). Although "birds" are not uncommonly listed as prey of this reptile (Ditmars, 1936. "The Reptiles of North America," p. 329, 330; Carr, *Tech. Publ. Univ. Florida, Biol. Ser.*, 3[1]:94) few have cited specific instances as have Adams (1956. *Wilson Bull.*, 68:158) and Carr (1937. *Proc. Fla. Acad. Sci.* 1:86-90) in his delightful essay on the Gulf-Island Cottonmouth.

The unusual size of the species ingested seems worthy of record in this instance.—
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Egg-carrying by the Whip-poor-will.—On June 26, 1956, in Tamworth, New Hampshire, a Whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) flew from the ground at noon and hovered irregularly back and forth before my face. With tail depressed, the bird's flight was fluttering and moth-like. It alighted parallel to the limb of a fallen tree, approximately four feet above the ground and 10 feet from where I stood. The Whip-poor-will was facing me and holding an egg in full view, beneath its body and against the bark, as my two sons could readily see. Although the bird's feet were not visible, it appeared that the egg was being held with the legs and feet. The Whip-poor-will flew away a minute later, carrying the egg. I now discovered two more eggs lying on dead leaves six or seven feet from where the bird had been perching. One was whole and a chick had just begun to pierce the shell of the second one. The eggs, although shaded, lay adjacent to a bare area exposed to full sunshine, 100 feet from a field, in woods of low growth and slash resulting from hurricane damage.

I returned an hour later. The slash made a quiet approach difficult. The parent bird flew up as before, carrying an egg in the region of its legs and hovering before my face. It again alighted on the limb of the fallen tree, with the egg in full view. Then it flew to a log on the ground, about 25 feet from its nesting site. It perched parallel to the log, with egg pressed against the bark. One downy, brown chick had completely emerged at the nesting place. It made a low "bee-rp" note. I returned again at 2:30 p.m. The Whip-poor-will hovered in hesitating fashion, then perched cross-wise on a limb behind me. It was not carrying an egg. A chick and an egg were at the nesting site. It appeared possible that the bird had lost its third egg when flying away with it at the time of my second visit. The second chick had hatched by the following morning. On June 28, the parent bird fluttered in front of me, then perched cross-wise to a limb with wings drooping and, with throat puffed out, gave a grotesque appearance. It made several low notes; a "chuck," a "qu-irk," and a "qu-irr." The two chicks were a few inches from where they had been located originally.

The above incident appears of interest because of the scarcity of recorded information on how a Whip-poor-will may carry an egg and the fact that three eggs were present. Although I have encountered no adequate descriptions of egg-carrying in related birds, Dr. Herbert Friedmann has furnished the following reference regarding an African coucal (1929. *The Bateleur.*, 1:29). "Mr. C. Giles reports that a coucal (probably *Centropus superciliosus*) at Kampala, Uganda, removed its chicks one by one to a place of safety, when the elephant grass in which its nest was constructed was on fire, by carrying each one in turn between her thighs. Mr. Giles is most emphatic in describing what he observed and is certain that the adult bird did not carry the chicks in her feet."—LAWRENCE KILHAM, 7815 Aberdeen Road, Bethesda 14, Maryland, July 10, 1956.