

avored habitat appeared to be a thicket composed of characteristic trees and shrubs of this semi-arid region. Nest trees were along the border or in openings in the thicket. Dominant plants in such thickets were ebony, mesquite (*Prosopis chilensis*), retama (*Parkinsonia aculeata*), huisache (*Acacia farnesiana*) and several species of cactus (*Opuntia* spp.).



Other birds nesting in this habitat included the Red-billed Pigeon (*Columba flavirostris*), Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*), White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*), Ground Dove (*Columbigallina passerina*), Inca Dove (*Scardafella inca*), Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora forficata*), Kiskadee Flycatcher (*Pitangus sulphuratus*), Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*), and Boat-tailed Grackle (*Cassidix mexicanus*).

The writers are grateful to Mr. Montgomery for showing them the tree-duck nests on his lands.—BROOKE MEANLEY AND ANN GILKESON MEANLEY, P. O. Box 1365, Alexandria, Louisiana, August 1, 1957.

Interspecific defense of roost site by Loggerhead Shrike.—In late November, 1956, a Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) established a feeding territory in the vicinity of my home at the northwest edge of Midland, Texas. Within this territory, he chose an evergreen sumac (*Rhus virens*) about 12 feet in height as his nightly roosting place. He seldom sat in this bush during the day. Three days after the shrike began roosting in the sumac bush, a Pyrrhuloxia (*Pyrrhuloxia sinuata*) entered the bush in the afternoon. The shrike was then sitting on a wire about 150 feet from the bush. He immediately flew to the bush and alighted on one of the topmost limbs, uttering harsh, scolding cries. The Pyrrhuloxia left precipitously. The same thing occurred at various

times of day, for three successive days, until the Pyrrhuloxia no longer came to the shrike's roosting "tree."

A week later, a Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*) entered the sumac bush about noon. He "sang" there several minutes before the shrike dived, squawking, into the bush. The Cactus Wren moved to the other side of the bush and scolded the shrike. The shrike then flew directly at the wren, but the latter flew to a near-by tree, still scolding. After the wren left the sumac, the shrike showed no more interest in the wren. Similar occurrences took place for five consecutive days, after which the Cactus Wren began singing from a tree outside the shrike's feeding territory.

Another Loggerhead Shrike had a feeding territory about 750 feet south of the roost tree, but never attempted to alight in the bush.

Although the shrike took up residence in the area in early September, he did not begin defending the sumac until frosts had hastened the loss of leaves from other trees and shrubs in the vicinity.

The incidents reported above are of interest because no mention is made in the literature of such defense of roosting trees by shrikes. Alden H. Miller (1931. *Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool.*, 38(2):148) emphasizes that Loggerhead Shrikes defend their winter feeding territories against other shrikes. He also mentions (p. 158) that shrikes have within their breeding territory a favorite roosting place, but does not state whether he observed such roosting places in the winter territory, or whether such roost-trees are defended. K. E. L. Simmons (1951. *Ibis*, 93:409-410) cites instances of competition for feeding territory between two species of shrikes (*Lanius collurio* and *L. nubicus*) in Egypt, but does not mention defense of the roost tree.—FRANCES M. WILLIAMS, Rt. 2, Box 45-B, Midland, Texas, August 9, 1957.

Blue Jay feeding on a dead fledgling House Sparrow.—On May 25, 1957, a Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) was noted pecking repeatedly at a dead bird on a macadamized road at the Agricultural Research Center, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Prince George's County, Maryland. It reared back again and again as it pulled vigorously on a slender piece of intestine that would not yield. When I approached, the jay flew to perch in a tree near by, deserting its prey which proved to be a young House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

An examination of the sparrow, which was still warm, showed that the skin was torn from the back of the head where a hard blow apparently had been struck. The entire right side of the bird's body, including its ribs, the right side of the sternum, and the scapula was gone. The muscled portion of the right wing was completely skinned, and the humerus was broken into two pieces. The upper part of the right rear leg was skinned also. The body cavity was stripped of all organs except the kidneys. A piece of the trachea remained. A short piece of intestine was lying on the road near the sparrow.

The sparrow had a thick yellow rectal band. Wing and tail feathers had emerged from their sheaths; the longest feathers measured 36 and 22 mm. respectively, including the sheaths.

Victor P. Chase (1899. *Wilson Bull.*, 11:57) describes a Blue Jay attacking and killing a "a newly fledged bird" of a group of House Sparrows that were fluttering about it as it ate cherries from a tree. The jay became frightened and left its prey. Hiram M. Stanley (1898. *Science*, New Ser., 8[190]:223) records a Blue Jay seizing and eating one of four fledglings from a House Sparrow nest which had been destroyed.—DONALD H. LAMORE, 2C, Gardenway, Greenbelt, Maryland, September 3, 1957.