

Although this particular instance of specialized feeding is of note, the overall effects of the storms on tree-feeding species were probably slight. Most of the ice on branches was lost soon after the storms had passed; more notably, both species of kinglets were observed feeding beneath limbs during the interval before melting—presumably the usual method under these and similar conditions.

I am grateful to Dr. P. H. Klopfer for reading the manuscript and making several helpful suggestions.—HENRY A. HESPENHEIDE, *Box 5898 Duke Station, Durham, North Carolina, 14 May 1961.*

Some foods of the Yellow Rail in Missouri.—On 17 April 1961, a Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) was flushed by fire during an experimental burn at Tucker Prairie (a 160-acre tract of virgin prairie owned by the University of Missouri). The rail was captured alive and taken to the Missouri Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, photographed and put in a large glass cage. The bird adjusted quickly to its new home and soon gave its pebble-clicking call. It was banded and released on 6 May on Tucker Prairie after being kept captive for 29 days.

TABLE 1
YELLOW RAIL GIZZARD AND DROPPING CONTENTS

Food item	Volume in cc gizzard	Dropping
Plants		
<i>Setaria glauca</i> (yellow foxtail)	0.03 cc	
<i>Acalypha virginica</i> (Three-seeded mercury)	Trace	
<i>Viola sagittata</i> (arrow-leaved violet)	Trace	
<i>Rosa</i> sp. (rose)	Trace	
Unidentified	0.10 cc	
Animals		
Diplopoda		
Millipede	0.05 cc	Trace
Hexapoda		
Carabidae (ground beetle)	Trace	Trace
Formicidae (ant)	Trace	
Eggs		Trace
Gravel	0.04 cc	

On 2 May 1961, David Snyder and I flushed another Yellow Rail on Tucker Prairie. It was flushed twice at 7:00 PM without use of a dog. The rail was collected, prepared as a study skin and the gizzard contents saved.

Many references were checked for food habits of the Yellow Rail, but few specific data were found. Wayne (1905. *Auk*, 22:395-400) mentions finding fresh-water snails in the stomachs of eight birds collected in South Carolina in February. "American Wildlife and Plants" (Martin, Zim, and Nelson, 1951) gives the only extensive listing of Yellow Rail foods. Sixteen stomachs of birds collected in the east (four in winter, four in summer, one in spring and seven in fall) contained beetles, snails, grasshoppers, spiders, ants, fly larvae, true bugs, various crustaceans and eight kinds of plants. Sedge, smartweed, nutrush, and bristlegrass were the most important, plus traces of spike-rush, bulrush, common ragweed, and bayberry.

The captive bird did not eat for the first three days, but then began eating once a day when food was put before it. Earthworms and sowbugs always seemed to be the first choice when a dish filled with a variety of invertebrates was offered. When the earthworms and sowbugs were not available, foods next in preference were small snails, carpenter ants, German roaches, black crickets, lepidopterous larvae, spiders, ground beetle larvae, horsefly larvae, and rat-tailed maggots. The dipterous larvae were always eaten last.

Ground beetles, lady beetles, aquatic beetles, and braconid wasps were eaten only if no other food was present. Usually the beetle heads and elytra were not eaten. The bird refused to eat millipedes, slugs, and large land snails. The refusal to eat the large snails probably was due to their large size and heavy shell.

With the help of Leroy Korschgen, Missouri Conservation Commission Biologist, the Yellow Rail gizzard and dropping contents were analyzed. The gizzard contents were from the Yellow Rail collected on 2 May the one dropping was collected from the Yellow Rail on the day that it was captured by hand, 7 April 1961.

The captive rail refused to eat millipedes (although it had previously done so as shown by its droppings). The gizzard contents of the Yellow Rail shot also indicated consumption of millipedes. Either there was a species difference between millipedes fed in captivity and those taken in the wild or the food selection of the captive rail was influenced by the fact that more desirable items (sowbugs, earthworms) were accessible most of the time. Perhaps the bird never became as hungry in captivity as it had been in the wild during this stage in its migration.—DAVID A. EASTERLA, *Missouri Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Stephens Hall, Columbia, Missouri, 19 July 1961.*

Winter Barn Owl foods in a Louisiana coastal marsh.—Although the Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) is usually associated with agricultural or wooded areas, it has been frequently encountered in the coastal marshes of Louisiana (April issues of *Aubulon Field Notes*, 1952–61). During the annual Christmas bird count an average of five Barn Owls per year for a 10-year period was reported in the marsh near the Sabine National Waterfowl Refuge. The Barn Owl was the most common owl, with 14 being reported in 1953. The fact that coastal marshes are a somewhat unique habitat for Barn Owls stimulated our interest in the foods of this bird.

The primary purpose of the study was to determine the foods consumed by winter resident Barn Owls on Marsh Island and to associate this with the availability of such foods. Also, the study was to serve as a check of the relationship between Barn Owls and the young of furbearing animals and game species in a coastal marsh.

Marsh Island Wildlife Refuge, which is owned and managed by the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, consists of 85,000 acres of sub-delta marsh. It lies in the Gulf of Mexico just offshore in south central Louisiana. Over 90 per cent of the island is composed of soft brackish marsh and shallow lakes. The dominant marsh vegetation is salt-meadow grass (*Spartina patens*), three-cornered grass (*Scirpus Olneyi*), and rush (*Juncus Roemerianus*). The only area of firm marsh lies in the southwestern portion of the island adjacent to the Gulf beach. This beach ridge is sparsely covered by hackberry (*Celtis laevagata*), southern prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum Clava-Herculis*), and rattle box (*Daubentonia texana*). The largest trees are about 8 inches in diameter and 50 feet high.

Barn Owls were observed on Marsh Island under a wide variety of conditions. They were seen roosting in trapper's camps, trees, low shrubs, and on the ground. Since there