

That the Ruff has been observed in the Midwest (Ohio, Indiana, Iowa) is mentioned by Hall (1960. "A Gathering of Shore Birds," 242 pp.).

It was most interesting to note that Camp (1962. *Aud. Field Notes*, 16:381-450) collected a male Ruff on 26 April at Winous Point, Ohio, two days prior to our observation.

Since our observation, two Ruffs have been observed during the fall of 1962 at St. Louis, Missouri, by members of the St. Louis Audubon Society.—DAVID A. EASTERLA, *Kansas City Junior College, Kansas City, Kansas, 8 February 1963.*

Three species observed anting on a wet lawn.—On 2 September 1962, I watered my lawn after a prolonged drought. Within about 30 minutes the water attracted 25 Robins (*Turdus migratorius*), three Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), and one Yellow-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) to feed, bathe, and in some instances, to ant.

About 10 minutes after arriving, an adult female Robin actively applied ants to the feathers under the wings (apparently the wing-linings as well as the sides of the body), the crissum, and occasionally to the breast and upper tail coverts (near the uropygial gland). The behavior was similar to that described by several authors (see Whitaker, 1957. *Wilson Bull.*, 69:195-262). During the next 45 minutes she applied ants to her plumage no fewer than 25 times. Several times the bird tripped and fell. This may have resulted from a loss of balance caused by the bird's unusual position during anting. No state of "ecstasy," as described by some authors, was apparent. Between periods of anointing itself the bird continued normal Robin-like feeding activities. Several times during, or immediately after anting, I noticed swallowing movements in the bird's throat. After swallowing, the Robin usually resumed anting motions but without an ant in its bill. The behavior was observed at three locations on the lawn.

I collected the Robin (NIUM No. 482) and searched the plumage with an aspirator and 20× hand lens for external parasites. No parasites were located, but a crushed small tan ant (*Lasius neoniger* Emery) was among the breast feathers. This is a rather common lawn ant and many were found over the lawn. Autopsy produced several larger black ants (*Formica fusca* L. complex) from the gizzard. Several members of this collective species were found on the ground and on the branches of a cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) sapling. At least three ants of this species had been eaten by the Robin. No internal parasites were found in the alimentary tract. The bird had little fat and was in fresh plumage. Some teleoptiles on the head, neck, and sides (under the wings) were in the early stages of development. Perhaps the growth of these feathers irritated the bird and stimulated it to ant. Possibly anointment with crushed ants lessened the irritation. There appears to be an absence of literature in which anting behavior is compared with the stages of molt. None of the other Robins anted nor did they appear influenced by the one bird's behavior.

Just before I collected the Robin, three Starlings, in winter plumage, landed near the watered portion of the lawn. One after the other the birds began active anting. Each bird anointed the underwing area for a brief period and then fed normally.

The flicker anted passively several times during the same period. Intermittent to feeding it flattened its body parallel to the ground, extended its neck, slunk along the ground, and then remained motionless for a few moments. Afterwards it fed and then anted again. The tan lawn ants were most abundant where the flicker performed this activity.

I searched the lawn for ants and found only two species, the same two obtained from the Robin. The tan ants were found in several places but the black ants were found in only two areas. I am grateful to Dr. W. L. Brown, Department of Entomology, Cornell University, for identification of the ants.

In trying to explain the purpose or function of anting, there are two suggestions resulting from my observations that may warrant investigation: (1) Whether or not other anting birds are molting or growing new feathers; and (2) since spraying water attracted birds to feed and bathe, is anting a behavior pattern associated with bathing and dusting.—WILLIAM E. SOUTHERN, *Department of Biological Sciences, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, 18 February 1963.*

The Carolina Parakeet in Michigan.—There has been no prior, even approximately acceptable, record for the occurrence of the Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) in Michigan. The following was written of the St. Joseph River in 1718: "It is the best place that could be found for getting a living and cultivating the soil. There are in this place pheasants, as in France; quails and paroquets" (Monsieur de Sabrevois, 1902. "Memoir on the savages of Canada as far as the Mississippi River, describing their customs and trade." *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, 16:372). Only a small part of the St. Joseph flows through Indiana. At present South Bend, Indiana, there was a short portage to the Kankakee River which flows into the Illinois River. The route was used extensively by the early French missionaries and fur traders. French forts once existed at the mouth of the St. Joseph, at Niles, Michigan, and at present South Bend. P. F. X. de Charlevoix (1923. "Journal of a voyage to North America." Chicago. II:189-190) wrote in 1721 that "parrots" were to be found on the Kankakee in summer, thereby strengthening the probability of their occurrence along the St. Joseph in Michigan.—A. W. SCHORGER, *University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 14 March 1963.*

A note on Snowy Owl food habits.—Snowy Owls (*Nyctea scandiaca*) invaded southern Wisconsin in considerable numbers during the winter of 1960-61. Information on food habits of some of these birds was secured, largely through pellet analyses. Most of the pellets were collected from the winter territories of five owls at Horicon Marsh. As anticipated, their staple diet consisted of meadow voles (*Microtus*) and muskrats (*Ondatra*) (Table 1). These two prey species were especially vulnerable due to the

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF PREY REMAINS IN SNOWY OWL PELLETS FROM HORICON MARSH, WISCONSIN¹

Prey species	No. pellets containing prey remains	Percentage of total pellets	Minimum no. of prey individuals represented
Meadow vole (<i>Microtus</i>)	27	73	56
Muskrat (<i>Ondatra</i>)	11	30	10
Duck	9	24	4
Rat (<i>Rattus</i>)	1	3	1
Other birds	1	3	1

¹ Based on 37 pellets picked up from five owl territories during January-March.

scanty snow cover and cold weather. Many muskrats with houses in shallower water were frozen out, and were seen in the Marsh as "runners." Crippled ducks were evidently taken from a waterhole below the federal dike; there were also numerous carcasses of ducks scattered about the Marsh from the previous hunting season.

Other food-habits data were as follows: The stomach of a bird killed on Lake Mendota