Sparrow Hawk eats European corn borer.—Because insect prey of the Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*) are usually not identified to species, cases in which such determinations are made, especially when unlikely prey are consumed are of interest.

On 4 April 1970 a Sparrow Hawk was caught on a Balchatri trap near Newark, Licking County, Ohio. A few minutes after capture, the bird died of unknown causes. The specimen was a male with enlarged testes and weighed 113.7 g. The stomach contained 71 European corn borer (*Ostrinia nubilalis* Hübner) larvae of various sizes. This prey item comprised about 95 per cent of the stomach contents. Other contents were two small pellets composed wholly of fur of the meadow vole, *Microtus pennsylvanicus*. At this time of year in central Ohio, Sparrow Hawks subsist principally on small rodents, particularly the meadow vole.

Since during the early spring European corn borer larvae are dormant within the stalks of corn plants and emerge as adults in June, this insect would not be regularly incorporated into a Sparrow Hawk's diet. In a search of the literature, we found no records of Sparrow Hawks eating this insect, although Lepidopterans in general frequently comprise a substantial part of this falcon's diet. The significant aspect of this record is that these larvae were eaten so early in the season. In fact, it is surprising these insects were eaten at all. One may speculate on the source and manner in which the hawk obtained such a large number of larvae. Early spring plowing or disking of fields may have broken corn stalks exposing many larvae to predators.—CLIVE A. PETROVIC, *F. T. Stone Laboratory, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210* AND GREGORY S. MILLS, *Dept. of Zoology, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 3 April 1972.*

Black Rails hit a television tower at Raleigh, North Carolina.—In 1969 and 1970 two Black Rails (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) collided with the WRAL television tower, nine miles southeast of Raleigh, North Carolina. This tower is 1,175 feet high, and its base is 190 feet above sea level.

The first bird, a female with unossified skull, died the night of 19–20 September 1969. Its weight was 32.9 g; fat class, 2; chord of wing, 78 mm; culmen from skull, 13.2 mm. The crop contained 14 quartz particles each measuring about 1 × 1 mm. The stomach contained no food. During the night of 19–20 September there was rain, wind of 7–12 mph from N to NNE, and the ceiling was 400 to 1,500 feet.

The second bird, a male with an unossified skull, died the night of 27–28 September 1970. It weighed 31.7 g; fat class, 3; weight of subcutaneous fat, 2.6 g; culmen from skull, 14 mm. The stomach was empty. During the night, there was rain, and the wind was 9–11 mph from the NE. The ceiling lowered to 100 to 1,200 feet.

These are the first records of the Black Rail in central North Carolina since 1902. In 1891, C. S. Brimley found Black Rails nesting in the present town of Raleigh (Ornithologist and Oologist, 16:26, 1891). However, it is unlikely that the tower killed birds were local birds, since local Black Rail habitat has long since disappeared. The two birds probably originated from a coastal area to the northeast. That such a flight is possible is indicated by the finding of a Seaside Sparrow (*Ammospiza maritima*) at this tower (Wilson Bulletin, 83:102, 1971). A Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris*) also has hit this tower (N. C. State Museum specimen No. 2671, picked up 28 September 1965).

Black Rails are rarely killed in collisions with man-made structures. There are only 10 recorded casualties, all from Florida (Bull. Tall Timbers Res. Sta. No. 8:51, 1967; Fla. Nat. 39:53, 1966; Am. Birds, 25:723, 1971). Since Black Rails are nocturnal birds and also have a limited distribution, it is no wonder they are rarely found colliding with man-

made obstacles. However, it is more unusual that they should be found at an inland television tower. The nearest known present breeding site for Black Rails are the marshes of Chesapeake Bay, about 200 miles NE of Raleigh.—Micou M. Browne and William Post, *Zoology Department, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, 27607, 3 February 1972.*

Eggshell removal in the Spotted Sandpiper.—Tinbergen and co-workers suggested that the latency of eggshell removal depends on two factors: the importance of cryptic coloration to protection of the eggs and young and the extent of predation on unguarded young (Tinbergen, Broekhagsen, Feekes, Houghton, Kruuk, and Szulc, Behaviour, 19: 74–117, 1962; Tinbergen, Nat. Hist., 72:28–35, 1963). Partially hatched and wet gull chicks are subject to heavy intraspecific predation (Tinbergen, 1963, op. cit.). Removal of conspicuous eggshells is often delayed until the chicks dry. The Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) and Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) are less subject to the intraspecific predation found in gulls, depend on cryptic coloration for escape, and remove their eggshells much sooner after hatching than do the gulls. But this is all the comparative evidence Tinbergen mustered in support of his hypothesis.

On 14 July 1970 I saw an adult Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) flying over a speckled alder thicket and holding an eggshell in its bill. The shell hung down, pointed end forward. The bird called loudly every 5 sec during its entire flight. It landed on a plank bridge and placed the eggshell on the bridge. It stood by the shell for a short time then flew through the alders in the general direction of its nest. It continued to call, a loud *peet-weet* whistle, while standing by the shell, but became silent upon departing.

The eggshell, the larger portion with the pointed end, the blunt end having been knocked out, was damp inside with the allantoic membranes still clinging to the inner surface. The shell was deposited about 40 m from the nest.

Four chicks were present in the nest which less than two hours earlier had contained only two chicks. There were no eggshells in the nest nor within 1 m of the nest. Two of the chicks were dry, one was damp, and the fourth was wet.

I had checked the nest two hours earlier, thus no more than two hours could have elapsed between hatching and eggshell removal. The wet membranes lining the eggshell and the chick's wet down would seem to indicate that only a few minutes had elapsed. The Spotted Sandpiper, a solitary-nesting species not subject to intraspecific predation on wet chicks, a species whose eggs and young are cryptically colored, appears to remove eggshells quickly as predicted by Tinbergen.

I made these observations while doing research supported by a grant from the Surdna Foundation to Bowdoin College.—Edward H. Burtt, Jr., *Department of Zoology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, 14 February 1972.*

Stomach capacity in the Common Nighthawk.—Analyses of the stomach contents of the Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) have occasionally revealed the presence of surprisingly large numbers of insects, particularly winged ants (Bent, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull., 176:224–225, 1940). Two nighthawks collected from a migratory flock near Roanoke, Virginia, on 4 September 1971, contained such an impressive quantity of food material that I was prompted to make the following measurements.

The birds, both female, weighed 101.2 g and 99.7 g, and were extremely fat. Their stomachs were distended with queen ants (Formicinae), and the wet weights of the