

1968). The Laysan Albatross is the only colonial bird in which promiscuity has been thoroughly studied. Fisher (Living Bird, 10:19-78, 1971) showed that in this species promiscuous copulation never resulted in intromission. Although I did not conduct a similar study with the White Ibis, I detected no differences between the behavior and duration of promiscuous copulations compared to those of paired birds. It therefore was my impression that many promiscuous copulations were successful. If this is true, the effect, if any, that such behavior may have on the reproductive success of an individual deserves attention (see Mayr, Animal species and evolution, Cambridge, 1963:199-201). In the case described here, the male lost his nest, which is a highly probable event if nest attentiveness is relaxed during any stage of incubation. This and the predominance of strictly monogamous relationships in the White Ibis suggest that promiscuity would be maladaptive for an individual. However the fact that such behavior is widespread in colonial species of birds and in some cases extremely common within a colony (e.g., Meanley, op cit.) suggests that the existence of promiscuous behavior in typically monogamous, colonial birds may in some cases be of importance within the population and merits further study.—JAMES A. KUSHLAN, *Department of Biology, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida 33124, 23 October 1972.*

Marsh Hawk catches fish.—On 26 October 1972 while scanning a coastal salt marsh in Milford, Connecticut, I saw an immature Marsh Hawk, (*Circus cyaneus*) slowly gliding over the grass and water filled ditches. It reached a pool that had been formed by an exceedingly high tide and began circling. Then it began a wild, bouncy flapping flight back and forth over the pool obviously harrying something in the pool. It did this for a minute or so then swooped up to a point 10 feet or so above the pool, held its wings out in back and plummeted in Osprey fashion with outstretched talons into the water. It remained on the surface for a few seconds then rose with a fairly large, 10 inch or so, fish dangling from its talons. It flew a few hundred feet then settled on a knoll of high ground and began to devour the fish.

Investigation showed the pool to be roughly round in shape with a 50 foot diameter; and the depth averaged two and one half feet. The hawk had taken the fish in roughly two feet of water. There is no doubt that the fish had been caught in this pool during the exceptional high tide of the night before as it was obviously only a temporary pool.

Though fish are listed as part of their diet there are few accounts of their hunting methods dealing with this form of food.—NOBLE S. PROCTOR, *Biology Department, Southern Connecticut State College, 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06515, 1 November 1972.*

Some food preferences and aggressive behavior by Monk Parakeets.—The Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*) is well established in New York, southern New England, and the Middle Atlantic States. A pair found in a suburban section of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the winter of 1971-72 engaged in one of the first occurrences of attempted breeding west of the Allegheny Mountains or Piedmont Plateau. The birds were almost surely a local introduction, there being no evidence and little possibility that they crossed the Alleghenies from the East Coast. In following the breeding efforts of this pair, several interesting food and behavioral patterns were recorded. They are presented here as they may be of some value in attempting to evaluate the pest status of the species in the Northern Hemisphere.

The Pittsburgh birds were first observed in September 1971, building a bulky nest of thorny sticks in a blue spruce tree 10 feet from the third-story window of a home. Invariably the construction took place by one bird passing twigs to the bill of the other for placement in the nest; apparently one adult was thereby responsible for most, if not all, of the actual construction.

By December 1971, at least three nests were completed. Although this was originally thought to indicate the presence of at least two pairs of parakeets, there has been no evidence to date to prove that more than one pair of birds was responsible for all nests in the area. This was a breeding effort in our winter, which corresponds to summer in the birds' native South America. At least two young were alleged to have been born but apparently perished over the winter. It is quite likely that the other two winter nests were for roosting or decoy purposes only. One of these nests was built on a set of three capacitors on an electric utility company pole, attracting the interests of the utility company and, in such an exposed condition, literally hundreds of ordinary citizens. School children often threw stones at the nest, but no great damage resulted.

By May 1972, at least five bulky nests had been located—all within a quarter-mile-square area covering two rather urbanized ridges and a partially wooded ravine. Two of the nests were on utility poles, three in trees, and all were the apparent work of one pair of parakeets. It was in May that House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) became involved in a territorial dispute with the parakeets. For several years, House Sparrows had nested in a space between the three capacitors and a crossarm on the utility pole. This space was now entirely encircled by parakeet nesting material. A lady resident of the home nearest the pole heard a commotion one morning in mid-May, the parakeets' shrill voices being easily recognized every time the birds approached or left a nest or feeding site. The lady observed House Sparrows entering and leaving the entry hole of the parakeets' bulky nest, obviously greatly agitated. Within the nest, at least one parakeet and House Sparrows were heard in raucous dispute. Later, the lady found a freshly dead House Sparrow, sex undetermined, on the street directly beneath the entry hole of the parakeets' nest. Several cuts were evident on the sparrow's body, particularly about the head and neck, and several "patches" of missing feathers were observed. There was no commotion observed at this nest site thereafter.

In mid-summer I was called to the area to see young parakeets on the wing. On 12 August 1972 I observed both adults and one well-fledged young bird. Residents of the area later confirmed the existence of three young of the year, with the unproven possibility of a fourth. All were the apparent result of one breeding pair of adults, and the summer nesting appeared to be an early change of mating habits to our warm months, the winter 1971-72 breeding effort having failed.

Many residents have noted the natural and proffered food preferences of the parakeets. Native fruits make up the majority. One resident noted the parakeets frequently left remains of red and blue berries after feeding the fledgling young. There are many varieties of berries in the area—including forms of huckleberry and poison ivy—but the precise identity of the preferred berries has not yet been determined. Several apple and pear trees exist in the neighborhood, and both are favored food sources of the adults, particularly in late fall and winter. Seeds such as millet and supermarket "wild bird seed" are taken when offered, and bread is well accepted, although the parakeets shy away from traditional feeding trays and take food mainly from beneath the trays or on patio decks, etc. Seed and bread are spurned, however, whenever raw corn is offered. Corn kernels—plucked from the cob by the parakeets' bills—are the most favored food of the Pittsburgh birds, apparently even over available fruits. In South America, of course, where the

species is considered a great agricultural pest, the parakeets feed frequently in corn fields and do considerable damage to commercial crops of various grains (U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Sport Fisheries & Wildlife Leaflet 496, May 1971). As no corn fields exist in the rather urban area of Pittsburgh chosen by these parakeets, the only corn available is in the form of handouts. The parakeets are very much the rulers of the feeding periods when hungry, aggressively intimidating all other birds from approaching the food.

The birds have had wide exposure in area newspapers, company publications and other communications media, but nest disturbance has not visibly deterred the birds from beginning what may well become a small colony similar to those on the Atlantic Seaboard.—DAVID B. FREELAND, 336 *Earlwood Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15235*, 29 November 1972.

Response by a Long-eared Owl to Barred Owl Calls.—On 21 April 1972 I saw an interspecific reaction by a Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*). I was with one other observer in Massachusetts Audubon's Highlands Farm Sanctuary in Belmont, Massachusetts. At about 22:00 we were passing from a thick pine forest through a stand of young oaks bordering a small clearing, much of which was surrounded by mature spruces. About every fifteen seconds I was hooting the typical eight-hoot call of the Barred Owl (*Strix varia*).

After approximately five owl imitations, an owl flew rapidly across the clearing with quick wingbeats and several sharp turns. On each of two subsequent Barred Owl calls the bird flew directly over our heads, roughly fifteen feet off the ground. Immediately following a third call it flew from a stand of spruces and perched in a young oak twenty feet from us. A flashlight illuminated an adult Long-eared Owl, quickly glancing about and periodically shifting positions on the branch. Several additional hoots caused marked reactions in the bird—it appeared agitated by the calls, turning sharply toward us, staring intently in our direction, and at least twice moving several inches farther out on the branch. Throughout the encounter it remained silent. After approximately three minutes the bird left, apparently flying back into the spruce thickets. Although a pair of Long-eared Owls had been reported nesting in the vicinity, further attempts to call it back, that night and on later nights, failed to attract a bird. Based on its attention to the Barred Owl calls, however, I have no doubt that the owl was attracted and excited by the possible presence of that species.

Instances of interspecific reactions among smaller owls have been documented (Foster, Auk, 82:651–653, 1965), but I have found no indication in the literature of such behavior in any of the larger species. Two possible situations may explain this behavior. First, L. Miller (Condor, 54:89–92, 1952) describes instances in which several birds, including some large hawks, were attracted by his imitations of the Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*), presumably in response to the presence of a potential predator. The presence of a Barred Owl may pose a threat to fledgling Long-eared Owls, causing this nervous response in the adult. Second, the occurrence of interspecific territoriality between birds with similar ecological requirements continues to receive increasing attention in the literature (e.g. Murray, Ecology, 52:414–423, 1971). The similar nesting habits and food sources of these species suggest that the recognition of a competitive owl species may have caused the bird to seek out the source of the calls. A Barred Owl had recently been seen within the 44-acre sanctuary, and it apparently left the area within several days of the first reported sighting of the Long-eared Owl. Its disappearance may have been related to the