

**Feeding of nestlings by the Caracara in Costa Rica.**—A Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) nest was located on the edge of a fresh water marsh near Las Canas in Guanacaste Province, Costa Rica. The large bushy nest was approximately 30 m up in a 40 m *Pseudobombax septinatum* tree, and contained 2 nestlings that were close to fledging. I used spotting scope and binoculars to identify prey items brought to the young and the frequency with which the young were fed. The nest was observed during the dry season from 26 January through 30 January 1975. I spent 23 hours watching the nest from 06:00 to 11:30 and from 16:00 to 18:00 daily. The adult pair foraged over the marsh and in the surrounding areas of savannah and second growth arid scrub habitat.

During the 23 hours of observation, 47 visits were made to the nest by the adults, averaging about 2 trips to the nest per hour. The adults brought food to the young on 25 of these visits to the nest, or slightly more than once an hour. On only 5 occasions did more than an hour elapse between feedings. The food was torn apart in the nest by the adults and presented bite by bite to the nestlings—a feeding process typical of many raptors (Brown and Amadon, Eagles, Hawks, and Falcons of the World, Vol. I, McGraw-Hill, 1968). It took the adults an average time of 12 min to aid the young in consuming the prey.

Bent (U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 170, 1938) reports that some species of caracara feed their young fresh meat as opposed to carrion. Much of the food I observed brought to the nest (though difficult to ascertain) appeared to be freshly killed. The following food items were observed: Birds—3 *Jacana spinosa* (1 adult, 1 juvenile, 1 juvenile leg), 1 unidentified small bird; Mammals—1 peccary (lower jaw of *Tayassu pecari*), 1 cotton rat (*Sigmodon hispidus*); Reptiles—2 tails of *Ctenosaura similis*, 2 tails of *Iguana iguana*, 4 *Ameiva* lizards (probably *festiva*); Amphibians—1 large frog; Fish—2 fish of the family Eleotridae; Arthropods—1 tarantula or large insect; Miscellaneous—3 unidentified pieces of carrion. In addition to these, 4 items brought to the nest could not be identified at all before they had been fed to the young. The freshwater fish of the family Eleotridae were probably found in nearby ponds and waterways that were quite shallow as a result of the dry season. The cotton rat (*Sigmodon hispidus*) appeared to have been freshly decapitated and was one of the few instances in which the adult Caracara carried the food in its feet instead of with the bill. The peccary jaw was identified after an adult, flustered by an attack by a Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) dropped the jaw and I retrieved it.

The Caracara is usually described as a carrion feeder (Glazener, Condor 66:162, 1964), and is sometimes seen in association with vultures (Monroe, Ornithol. Monogr. No. 7, 1968). It is of interest that only in 4 cases (including the peccary jaw) did the adults bring what appeared to be carrion to the nest. Since occasionally both adults joined the young in the nest after one of the mates brought food, it is possible that the adults were feeding along with the nestlings on the food brought to the nest. Thus during the nesting season the adult *Caracara cheriway* may feed on more fresh prey than hitherto reported.

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**Unusually large vulture roost in Virginia.**—On 29 December 1975, in the Radford Army Ammunition Plant (RAAP), 14 km west of Blacksburg, Va., we saw a large roost of Black (*Coragyps atratus*) and Turkey vultures (*Cathartes aura*). We counted 813