

Later observations on brood success revealed a loss of 4 Mallard ducklings by 28 April. The remaining duckling apparently survived as did the 5 juvenile Canada Geese.

I would like to thank Allentown's Urban Observatory Board for their permission to publish these findings. I also thank my co-worker, Terry L. Master, as well as Dr. Carl Oplinger and Dr. John Trainer for the helpful suggestions and criticism in preparing this note.—THOMAS N. MATHER, *Dept. of Entomology and Applied Ecology, Univ. of Delaware, Newark, DE 19711. Accepted 24 Feb. 1978.*

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Notes on food habits of the Plain Chachalaca from the Lower Rio Grande Valley.—The Plain Chachalaca (*Ortalis vetula*) is an endemic species of the brushy resacas in the delta of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas. The food habits, habitats, and status of this bird have been recently examined by Marion (1974, *Wilson Bull.* 86: 200-205; 1975, *Texas Parks Wildl.* 33:16-18; 1976, *Auk* 93:376-379). This study provides additional information on the food habits of the Plain Chachalaca in south Texas.

Nineteen Plain Chachalacas were collected by shooting in late December, 1976 from near San Benito, Cameron Co., Texas. On necropsy, esophageal and gizzard contents were stored in 70% ethyl alcohol for later study. A reference herbarium collection of plants was made in areas from which birds were collected. Fruits and leaves from upper digestive tract contents were compared grossly with representative plant species from the region. Also, a microscopic technique for identifying plants from the fruit and leaf epidermal cell structure was employed (Sparks and Malechek, 1968, *J. Range Manage.* 21:264-265). Plants were identified to species where possible, but in the case of several species of composites and other families only identification to genus was possible. Likewise, where only trace amounts of material occurred even generic identification was not possible.

Birds collected in this study were herbivorous and/or frugivorous. There was no evidence of arthropods or other animal matter in their diet. Only 5 of 19 birds examined had small quantities of plant material in the esophagus or proventriculus. All had considerable quantities of leaves and/or fruits in the gizzard. Twenty-five species of plants were recovered (Table 1). The predominant food item, based on frequency of recovery from individual birds, was the leaves of several plant species, especially daisies (*Aphanostephus* sp.) and thoroughwort (*Eupatorium* sp.) (42% of individuals examined). Often Plain Chachalaca gizzards were considerably distended with leaves tightly packed in a layered fashion. Macerated and partially digested leaves were found in the remainder of the lower digestive tract. The fruit of the hackberry (*Celtis laevigata*) occurred frequently (26%). Because the contents of the gizzard often consisted of the mixed, partially digested, or macerated remains of several plant species which could only be identified microscopically, it was not possible to quantify volumetrically the food items observed in most birds. Traces of at least 9 additional plant species were recovered, but these could not be identified because of inadequate taxonomic characteristics.

Marion (1976) concluded that the Plain Chachalaca feeds on a wide range of succulent plant materials and very little animal matter. This is substantiated by our study and suggests that this bird may indiscriminately feed on an even wider range of plants. Only 2 of 42 identified plant species were common to both studies.—ZÄN D. CHRISTEN-

TABLE I
ESOPHAGEAL AND GIZZARD CONTENTS OF 19 PLAIN CHACHALACAS FROM THE
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY, TEXAS

Food Item	No. of individuals in which taxa were found
Leguminosae	
Locoweed (<i>Astragalus</i> sp.)*	1
Honey Mesquite (<i>Prosopis glandulosa</i>)*	1
Black Brush (<i>Acacia rigidula</i>)**	3
Asclepiadaceae	
Milkweed (<i>Asclepias</i> sp.)*	1
Rhamnaceae	
Brasil (<i>Condalia hookeri</i>)*	3
Solanaceae	
Ground Cherry (<i>Physalis</i> sp.)**	2
Urticaceae	
Hammerworth (<i>Parietaria pensylvanica</i>)*	1
Onagraceae	
Evening Primrose (<i>Gaura villosa</i>)*	1
Oxalidaceae	
Wood-sorrel (<i>Oxalis dillenii</i>)*	1
Euphorbiaceae	
Croton (<i>Croton</i> sp.)*	2
Compositae	
Lazy Daisy (<i>Aphanostephus</i> sp.)*	8
Throughworth (<i>Eupatorium</i> sp.)*	8
Mexican Hat (<i>Ratibida peduncularis</i>)*	1
Abrojo (<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>)*	1
Zexmenia (<i>Zexmenia hispida</i>)*	1
Ulmaceae	
Hackberry (<i>Celtis laevigata</i>)**	5
Unidentified Plant Material **, *, †	9

* Leaves

** Fruit

† Includes 9 species of plants.

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