

Wilson Bull., 91(2), 1979, p. 330

Black-billed Magpie Predation of a Killdeer Nest.—On 6 June 1975, I observed a group of 6 adult Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) vocalizing and displaying near a Black-billed Magpie (*Pica pica*). Their behavior was similar to the “mobbing” behavior described by Phillips (*Anim. Behav.* 20:1–9, 1972). Four of the birds stood in sleek or fluffed upright postures, moving occasionally as the magpie hopped among them. The other 2 birds frequently assumed “false brooding” postures, settling on the ground as if incubating, then moving and resettling when the magpie approached them. The magpie hopped back and forth among the Killdeer, stopping occasionally for 1–2 sec and cocking its head from side to side as if inspecting the ground. This behavior continued for 14 min.

One of the Killdeer that had been false brooding then attacked the magpie, flying at it from behind and attempting to beat its wings against the magpie’s head and back. The magpie hopped a few cm in the opposite direction, keeping its head pointed toward the attacking Killdeer; it then hopped in its original direction pausing to fend off 2 similar attacks made by the same Killdeer. Finally, it picked up an egg in its beak and flew out of sight to the south accompanied by a juvenile Black-billed Magpie that had been standing approximately 60 m from the Killdeer nest. After 10 min, 5 of the Killdeer dispersed and 1 returned to incubate the remaining eggs.

Thirty min later a magpie flew back from the south. Again 6 Killdeer converged near the nest and joined the incubating Killdeer in displaying near the magpie. The Killdeer attending the nest made 2 attacks on the magpie but within 5 min the magpie found the nest and flew out of sight to the south with a second egg. Following this encounter the nest was left unattended. One h later a magpie flew back from the south, landed less than 1 m from the nest and removed a third egg. I then inspected the nest and found that 1 egg remained. The nest was empty when I returned the next morning.—JOHN T. MUNDAHL, *Dept. of Biology, Utah State Univ., Logan, Utah 84322.* (Present address: *College of Veterinary Medicine, Univ. of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55108.*) Accepted 1 Mar. 1978.

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Opportunistic feeding on man-killed prey by Ferruginous Hawks.—On 24 September 1977, while I was using a rifle to collect black-tailed prairie dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) 10 km east of Hayden, Union Co., New Mexico, a Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*) appeared and alighted near my vehicle. This occurred after several shots had been fired. Within 10 min the bird was joined by 4 more Ferruginous Hawks. These birds also landed and their positions, along with that of the original hawk, outlined a rough semicircle (with a 35-m radius) that was centered on my vehicle. The hawks were spaced at ca. 25-m intervals. When a prairie dog was shot in the general vicinity of 1 of the hawks, the bird would run (not fly) to claim the kill. This hawk then mantled over the kill and threatened other hawks that approached. Once a hawk had claimed a kill, it was reluctant to fly (I often approached within 3 m of a feeding hawk), and I had to chase it away to recover the specimen. As I drove to different parts of the prairie dog colony, 3 of the hawks followed my vehicle attempting to claim each kill in their vicinity. The 2 others joined approximately 20 White-necked Ravens

(*Corvus cryptoleucus*) in scavenging remains of previously shot prairie dogs. The owner of the land, Homer Ricketson, said that the prairie dog town is hunted for sport frequently, and the hawks appear regularly when shooting begins. Apparently, the hawks have associated the gunfire with an easily obtained food source, since previous hunters have left the prairie dogs.

I would like to thank Gary D. Schnell for reviewing this manuscript.—RONALD K. CHESSER, *Dept. of Zoology, Univ. of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73019. Accepted 1 Mar. 1978.*

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Misidentified "Eskimo Curlews."—In his admirable "Birds of the Labrador Peninsula and Adjacent Areas" (Univ. Toronto Press, 1963:308), Todd mentions the last specimen of the Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*) known to have been taken in Labrador. This bird, collected by Ernest Doane on 29 August 1932, at Battle Harbour, was reported by Van Tyne (*Wilson Bull.* 60:241, 1948). Todd goes on to say that "the same collector had also taken specimens at Red Bay, on September 5, 1926 (one) and August 29 and 31, 1927 (four). These are in the collection of the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology." All 6 specimens are indeed in the collections of this Museum, but only the first is an Eskimo Curlew. The others are Whimbrels (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*) and were catalogued as such by Van Tyne after they were purchased from Walter Koelz in 1929. There is no indication on the labels that they were ever identified incorrectly. I am at a loss to see how this error came about and feel that it should be corrected.

Todd (*loc. cit.*) deplored the "woefully small" number of specimens of the Eskimo Curlew from Labrador still preserved in scientific collections. While this number is smaller than he believed, it should be pointed out that the critical shortage is in anatomical material of this species. Joseph G. Strauch, Jr., in a search for skeletons of this species was able to find only partial skeletons at the Museum of Comparative Zoology and the United States National Museum. The complete skeleton listed by Ames and Stickney (*Postilla* 118:17, 1968) as at the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, is another misidentified Whimbrel. Should remains of Eskimo Curlews be found in the future, it is essential that they be preserved whole in fluid or as skeletons.—ROBERT W. STORER, *Museum of Zoology, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109. Accepted 1 Apr. 1978.*

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The role of parent and helper Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at the nest.—Breeding pairs of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (*Picoides borealis*) are often assisted by helpers (Baker, pp. 44–59 in *The Ecology and Management of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker* [R. L. Thompson, ed.], Bur. Sport Fish. Wildl. and Tall Timbers Res. Stn., Tallahassee, 1971; Beckett, pp. 87–95 in *op. cit.*; Lay et al., pp. 74–77 in *op. cit.*; Ligon, pp. 3043 in *op. cit.*; and Ligon, *Auk* 87:255–278, 1970). Information in scanty, how-