

kleptoparasitism (Arnason and Grant 1978) mated birds may leave their nesting territory to hunt in groups with other jaegers.

Several other workers have made observations on cooperative and group hunting in Parasitic Jaegers resembling those above. During the 3 summers of my work I received reports of no fewer than 15 instances of the hunting procedure from 3 different areas in Alaska. Cooperative hunting may be an important contribution to the success of Parasitic Jaegers in hunting birds. The Long-tailed (*S. longicaudus*) and Pomarine (*S. pomarinus*) jaegers prey much less on birds than does the Parasitic Jaeger (Maher 1974) and no reference could be found describing cooperative hunting in either of the former species. Sharing of food, however, has been recorded in all 3 species (Andersson, *Ornis Scand.* 2:35–54, 1971; Martin and Barry 1978; Pitelka, unpubl. data). This behavior may facilitate pair bond maintenance and the tearing of prey into small pieces which would make swallowing easier (Andersson 1971).

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Incubating Wood Duck and Hooded Merganser hens killed by black rat snakes.—Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) nest boxes (N = 78) were erected 2–8 m above high water level in seasonally fluctuating river swamp ecosystems on the Department of Energy's Savannah River Plant, a 81,000-ha area occupying portions of Aiken, Allendale and Barnwell counties, South Carolina. Protection from predators was provided by 42 cm wide wrap-around shields placed 0.5 m below the nests boxes. Nest boxes were inspected bi-weekly during the nesting seasons of 1973, 1974 and 1975 and monthly during the nesting seasons of 1976 and 1977.

The black rat snake (*Elaphe obsoleta*), an excellent swimmer, readily circumvented predator shields and was the only known nest predator during the 5 years of observation. This species destroyed 24 of 76 nests (32%) initiated from 1973–1975. Noteworthy is evidence that nesting Wood Duck and Hooded Merganser (*Mergus cucullatus*) hens may also be killed during rat snake nest depredations. The following 4 incidents were observed: (1) On 26 March 1974, I found a 162 cm long rat snake which had eaten 10 of 12 eggs in a nest box with a dead female Wood Duck. The Wood Duck's neck was twisted, possibly broken. (2) On 3 April 1975, I found a large black rat snake which had consumed several eggs in a nest box with a dead female Wood Duck. Again the Wood Duck's neck was twisted. (3) On 17 April 1975, I found a dead female Wood Duck with a twisted neck in a nest box. No snake or eggs were present. (4) On 15 April 1977, I found a large rat snake which had consumed several eggs in a nest box containing a dead female Hooded Merganser. The carcass was so decomposed that condition of the neck could not be determined.

These data suggest that large rat snakes occasionally kill incubating Wood Duck and Hooded Merganser hens. I believe the deaths to be the result of circumstance rather than active defense by the hen or pursuit by the snake. Wood Duck nest boxes have 1 hole which serves as entrance and exit. After the snake has partially entered the nest box, the hen may attempt to leave the box through the hole occupied by the snake. The rat snake may react to this apparent attack by striking and coiling its body around the bird (with the coils ultimately ending up around the hen's neck). The hen's death is possibly caused by her attempts to escape.

Other investigators have reported deaths of incubating Wood Duck hens in conjunction with nest predation, primarily by raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) (Grice and Rogers, Massachusetts Div. Fish and Game, Fed. Aid Proj. W-19-R, 1965; Cunningham, Southeast Assoc. Game and Fish Comm. 22:145-155, 1968; Beshears, Alabama Dept. Conserv. and Nat. Resour., Fed. Aid Proj. W-35, Job I-F, 1974). Only 1 instance of a black rat snake killing an incubating Wood Duck hen was found in the literature (Hester and Dermid, *The World of the Wood Duck*, J. P. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1973).

The 3 Wood Duck deaths attributed to black rat snakes in my study (1973-1975) represented 4% of all Wood Duck nests initiated ($N = 76$) on the study area. The death of an incubating hen has a greater potential impact on the population than the loss of a clutch or the loss of individual hatchlings because that hen can make no further contribution to the population. Black rat snake predation on incubating Wood Duck and Hooded Merganser hens and nests could have a significant impact on the reproductive success of populations using natural cavities in southeastern river swamp ecosystems.

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Sandhill Cranes nesting in Illinois.—On 24 May 1979 at 13:30, I flushed a pair of Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*) from a plowed field at Deer Lake, Antioch Township, Lake Co., Illinois. One bird flew a short distance away; the other walked towards me and stopped within 6 m of me. Both cranes were calling. The pair were brown, except for their gray necks and wing coverts. Two downy chicks accompanying the closer bird scurried away.

Deer Lake is a private hunt club consisting of 404 ha of open water, deciduous woods and marsh. The field in which the cranes were found was adjacent to an extensive cattail (*Typha* spp.) marsh. The owner of the property has noted the presence of a pair of cranes during the last 3 summers, but saw no signs of nesting (W. Brook, pers. comm.). Several Sandhill Cranes have also summered at Chain of Lakes State Park about 13 km southwest of Deer Lake, but again no actual evidence of nesting has been observed (D. Johnson, pers. comm.).

Although Sandhill Cranes were formerly common breeders in Illinois, my observations indicate the first definite nesting in the state since 1872. At that time a nest was found in Champaign County (Bohlen, *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Illinois*, Illinois State Museum, Springfield, Illinois, 1978:46).—JOEL GREENBERG, 922 Sumac Lane, Mt. Prospect, Illinois 60056. *Accepted 7 Aug. 1979.*

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A Mallard \times Mottled Duck hybrid.—Hybrids between Mallards (*Anas p. platyrhynchos*) and other species of *Anas*, are frequently found in the wild (Cockrum, *Wilson Bull.* 64:140-159, 1952; Gray, *Bird Hybrids, A Checklist with Bibliography*, Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau, Bucks, England, 1958; Johnsgard, *Am. Midl. Nat.* 77:51-63, 1967). However, reports of crosses between a Mallard and Mottled Duck (*A. fulvigula maculosa*) are rare.