

On commencement of harvesting, the egrets walk right up to the laborers with apparent confidence. As the workers advance in the field, the egrets also keep pace, remaining within 0.5–1 m of the humans. However, the egrets have not been observed picking insects off the laborers' legs, as they commonly do with cattle. At times, Pond Herons (*Ardeola greyii*) also feed with the Cattle Egrets in a similar manner. It has yet to be ascertained whether the egrets are following humans preferentially. Many egrets are seen feeding by themselves in the field and along the flowing water channels. Small groups of egrets also follow the few water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) grazing at this locality.

The commensal feeding of *A. greyii* with the Cattle Egrets using human workers as 'bearers' is noteworthy. Instances of Squacco Herons (*A. ralloides*) feeding gregariously among cattle, as do Cattle Egrets, are known (Cramp and Simmons, *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*, Vol. 1, 1977). Furthermore, the behavior of *A. greyii* and *A. ralloides* is considered to be quite similar (Cramp and Simmons 1977). There is considerable discussion as to the taxonomic relationship of the Cattle Egret, and Payne and Risley (*Misc. Bull. Mus. Zool., Univ. Michigan*, No. 150, 1976) concluded that *B. ibis* is not closely related to *A. greyii*. Thus, additional information on commensalistic feeding behavior of species of *Ardeola* could facilitate further understanding of the taxonomic relations of these herons.

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**Scrub Jay captures Hermit Thrush in flight.**—The opportunism demonstrated by many corvids in obtaining food has been well documented (Bent, *U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull.* 191, 1946; Goodwin, *Crows of the World*, Comstock/Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, New York, 1976; Coombs, *The Crows: a study of the corvids of Europe*, B. T. Batsford Ltd., London, England, 1978). Predatory behavior by corvids is not unusual, but prey rarely includes birds in flight. Use of the feet to seize flying birds has been reported for several species of *Corvus* (see Coombs 1978 for review; Heathcote, *Br. Birds* 71:134–135, 1978) and at least once for jays (Carothers et al., *Wilson Bull.* 84:204, 1972). A Magpie (*Pica pica*) presumably used its wings to "beat" a Swift (*Apus apus*) to the ground (Pulman, *Br. Birds* 71:363, 1978). Our report concerns a Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) which used its bill to capture a Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla guttata*) in flight.

The incident occurred at 12:30 on 28 September 1979 on the campus of the University of California at Davis. A Hermit Thrush flew from beneath a hedge to a sunlit area where flying insects were visible. The bird hovered, apparently attempting to capture the insects. Seconds later, a Scrub Jay flew from the same hedge and attacked the hovering thrush. After a few seconds of struggling and a short pursuit, the jay managed to grasp the thrush by the neck. Still flying, the jay carried the thrush in its bill to a branch in a nearby tree. The jay placed its foot on the thrush, released the bird's neck and struck the thrush's head with two rapid strokes of its bill. The thrush, which had been screaming distress calls since its capture, fluttered briefly and became silent. The jay then began plucking feathers from the thrush's back.

In order to examine the dead thrush, we frightened the jay from its prey. The Hermit Thrush had a single hole in the right side of its head, just behind the eye. Hemorrhaging was evident on the right side of the neck. Remiges of the left wing and contour feathers of the back and neck had been removed, but no flesh had been torn. Internal examination

revealed that the thrush was an immature female. Insect remains, almost exclusively elytra of unidentified beetles, were present in the gizzard.

Past sightings of jays killing birds capable of flight did not involve prey as large as the Hermit Thrush. Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) killed a Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*) (Downs, Bird-Banding 29:244, 1958), a Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) (Johnson and Johnson, Wilson Bull. 88:509, 1976) and a House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) (Maser, Wilson Bull. 91:470, 1979); a Mexican Jay (*A. ultramarina*) caught an unidentified sparrow (Roth, Condor 73:113, 1971); and Steller's Jays (*C. stelleri*) killed Gray-headed Juncos (*Junco caniceps*) and a Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*) (Carothers et al. 1972). Only the Pygmy Nuthatch was flying when captured. The Scrub Jay's method of holding food items with its feet when perched was typical of corvids (Bent 1946, Goodwin 1976), as was killing a vertebrate by striking repeated blows to the prey's head near the eye (Bent 1946; MacCracken, Auk 66:210, 1949; Bateman and Balda, Auk 90:39-61, 1973; Maser, Wilson Bull. 87:552, 1975; Mulder et al., Condor 80:449-451, 1978).

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**Food habits of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks occupying rice culture habitats.—**

Apart from a few anecdotal reports (Bent, Life Histories of North American Wildlife, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 130, 1925; Cleare, Birds, The Argosy Co., Georgetown, Guyana, 1938; Haverschmidt, Field Notes on the Black-bellied Tree Duck in Dutch Guyana, Wilson Bull. 59:209, 1947; Giglioli, Crop Histories and Field Investigations, 1951-1957, Br. Guiana Rice Development Co., Georgetown, Guyana, 1959; Haverschmidt, Birds of Surinam, Livingston Publishing Co., Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, 1968) and two studies in southern Texas (Bolen and Forsyth, Foods of the Black-bellied Tree Duck in south Texas, Wilson Bull. 79:43-49, 1967; Bolen and Beecham, Notes on the foods of juvenile Black-bellied Tree Ducks, Wilson Bull. 82:325-326, 1970), the food habits of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) have been little studied. In 1973, I initiated an ecological study of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks to evaluate the magnitude of their foraging activity in ricefields. Preliminary results (Bourne and Osborne, Black-bellied Whistling Duck utilization of a rice culture habitat, *Interciencia* 3:152-159, 1978) indicate that overall depredation levels are low even though the ducks ingest newly sown, pregerminated paddy or seed rice (*Oryza sativa*). The purpose of this paper is to present data on the food habits of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks in Guyana, South America, when they occupied rice culture habitats during crop sowing in June 1973 and July-August 1974.

*Materials and methods.*—I conducted fieldwork in Burma (6°28'N, 57°45'W) at the Mahacony and Abary Rice Development Scheme (MARDS). Detailed descriptions of the study area and its flora and fauna are available in Giglioli (1959) and Osborne and Bourne (Breeding behavior and food habits of the Wattled Jacana, Condor 79:98-105, 1977). In 1973, two methods were used for obtaining specimens: 15 ducks were shot between 05:00 and 07:16 with the aid of playback vocalizations and 15 were mist-netted between 20:00 and 20:55. Adults and juveniles collected in 1974 were shot between 05:00 and 07:16 with the aid of playback vocalizations. Two ducklings were hand caught in a fallow field on 8 August 1974, at 08:10 and 08:25. Specimens were dissected within 30 min and the entire