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Nest provisioning behavior by a male Northern Harrier on the death of his mate.—At about 10:00 on 16 May 1980, at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Harney Co., Oregon, Thompson observed an adult female Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) carry a small mammal to a nest. The nest, which was located in a broad-fruited burreed (*Sparganium eurycarpum*) over 30 cm of water, contained three young and a pipping egg. The young were estimated to be under 10 days old, based on comparisons to other nestlings of known age.

When we reexamined the nest on 3 June, it contained one live, 3-week-old nestling and one dead nestling of about the same age. A dead adult female harrier was found floating ventral side down 0.5 m from the nest. The nest was littered with prey carcasses. Of 36 whole prey counted on and around the nest, most were montane voles (*Microtus montanus*) or long-tailed voles (*M. longicaudus*), but a few ground squirrels (*Spermophilus* sp.) were present. Some prey were fresh, while others were in various stages of decay. Of 10 harrier nests examined from incubation to fledging in 1980, only this one contained prey remains. Watson (The Hen Harrier, T. and A. D. Poyser, Ltd., Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, England, 1977) reported that the female harrier removes uneaten food from the nest until the chicks can feed themselves. Beske (pers. comm.) also found this to be true with his research on harriers in Wisconsin.

The nest was visited again on 12 June. The surviving nestling appeared healthy and about to fledge. Heysham (1783, cited in Watson 1977) reported seeing a male harrier feeding chicks and further stated that a male could rear a brood after his mate was killed. Watson (1977) could find no recent reports of male harriers feeding chicks. He stated that the nestlings would likely survive only if they were well developed and capable of tearing up prey for themselves.

We do not know if the adult male was feeding the surviving nestling or simply bringing prey to the nest. Breckenridge (Condor 37:268–276, 1935) reported that a male's visits to a nest lasted only long enough to release prey. Watson (1977) observed a male visit a nest repeatedly and remain there for a minute or more, but did not see the male feed nestlings. In our case, the nestling appeared large enough and strong enough to feed itself. After the death of a female harrier in Wisconsin, Beske (pers. comm.) recorded a similar nest history in which a male continued to provide prey to a nest containing nestlings.

The dead female was clearly visible from above. We did not remove her from the vicinity of the nest, because of the possibility that her presence may have stimulated the male to continue provisioning the nest. To the best of our knowledge, this is only the third record

of a male Northern Harrier continuing to bring prey to a nestling following the death of his mate.—STEVEN P. THOMPSON AND JOHN E. CORNELLY, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 113, Burns, Oregon 97720. Accepted 1 Mar. 1982.*

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Notes on the hunting behavior and diet of the Crested Caracara in northeastern Chiapas and Tabasco, Mexico.—Crested Caracaras (*Polyborus plancus*) are opportunistic scavengers that forage on the ground, feed on carrion, and pirate prey (Bent, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 170, 1938; Sprunt, *North American Birds of Prey*, Maaper and Bros., New York, New York, 1955; Glazener, *Condor* 66:162–163, 1964). Caracaras seldom have been observed chasing birds and we know of only two recorded incidents of caracaras catching adult birds. Bent (1938) reported that a caracara chased and killed a White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), and Brown and Amadon (*Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of the World*, McGraw-Hill, New York, New York, 1968) note that three or four caracaras pursued and captured an egret.

During March and April, 1977 and 1978, we observed caracaras in the area between Villahermosa, Tabasco, and Palenque, Chiapas. The region is level coastal plain 50–200 m elev., and is characterized by extensive cattle pasture dotted with trees, snags, and groves of remnant tropical moist forest.

Here, we describe four caracara hunts, three directed at Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) and one at a Brown Jay (*Cyanocorax morio*). Three hunts were made by duos of caracaras and one was made by a lone caracara.

On 13 April 1977 at 09:13 we watched a caracara fly into a flock of 10–15 Cattle Egrets which were flying at approx. 30 m. Very soon an egret separated from the flock and the caracara pursued it. At this point another caracara headed toward the first and joined the pursuit. Quickly a pattern became evident. The egret turned evasively to one side every time a caracara approached to within 1 m. As the caracaras' turning ability was poorer than that of the egret, the pursuing raptor continued off at a tangent each time the egret turned. At each turn, the other caracara continued the pursuit. After about 2 min, the egret dropped down, passed through a grove and among some tall shrubs, and then began climbing. The caracaras continued the pursuit until the egret had flown to 60–90 m altitude when the raptors soared away together. This encounter lasted about 2–3 min.

The second egret hunt occurred at 08:15 on 21 March 1978. A lone caracara flushed a flock of 50–100 Cattle Egrets from a pasture a few hundred meters in front of it. The caracara flew toward the flock, following as it turned in a wide arc. The egrets climbed and turned back and forth in close ranks. At this point a second caracara began following the first. Based on its smaller size, the first caracara could have been a male. When the egrets were about 60 m above the ground, the male broke off the chase, while the female was about 120 m distant, chasing a lone egret also at 60 m, the male joining her pursuit. After a few seconds, the egret dove straight down, and the female stooped, gaining rapidly on the egret. All three birds disappeared behind vegetation until both caracaras flew up from the area 3 min later. Evidently the egret had escaped. The time elapsed until the stoop was about 3 or 4 min.

The third incident involving a single caracara and Cattle Egret occurred on 17 April 1978. At 17:35 an adult caracara flew into view, pursuing a Cattle Egret. As in the hunts already described, the encounter was characterized by tight, twisting, evasive flight by the egret with the raptor gaining on the egret in straight flight and falling behind in the turns. The caracara seemed to seek a height advantage over the egret during the 2 min of observation, but did not succeed before the pursuit continued out of sight.