1983). If mayflies are natural prey of Green-backed Herons, our observations carry intriguing implications regarding optimal foraging theory. Theorists predict that, when prey densities are high, a predator will usually select the more profitable of 2 prey when given a choice between them (see Krebs et al. 1983 for review). In the present case, the Green-backed Heron risked one potential prey item in an attempt to secure larger, presumably more profitable prey. Mayflies were widespread and abundant during our observation period, and baiting with mayflies was probably a "low-cost" behavior.

Acknowledgments.—We thank K. L. Bildstein, W. E. Davis, Jr., and J. A. Kushlan for their helpful comments.

LITERATURE CITED


Great-tailed Grackle kills Barn Swallow in flight.—On the causeway from Port Isabel to South Padre Island, Cameron County, Texas, at dusk on 9 April 1985 I noticed a flock of 8–12 Barn Swallows (Hirundo rustica) flying 1–4 m above the mudflats near the end of the bridge and just south of it. As I watched, two female Great-tailed Grackles (Quiscalus mexicanus) flew up behind this flock. One of the grackles struck one of the swallows and drove it to the ground. The grackle then pecked the swallow and dragged it by one wing for ca 0.5 m as the other grackle watched. Both grackles then flew away.

After the grackles departed, 6 swallows remained flying over the mudflat at 18:00 h. I then retrieved the dead swallow (USNM 599917) which was autopsied and prepared by Joe T. Marshall. The bird was a male. A hemorrhage was present on the left frontal bone but the skull was unbroken in this area. There was a gaping hole behind the left ear. Although the grackle had pecked at the breast several times there was no obvious injury in this area.

Grackles (Quiscalus) are frequent predators of other bird's eggs and young (Bent 1958), but rarely have been reported killing adults. Great-tailed Grackles have killed adult House Sparrows (Passer domesticus) (Hansen 1976), and Common Grackles (Q. quiscalus) have frequently been reported killing this species (Poor 1946, Mayfield 1954, Taylor 1958). Common Grackles have been reported killing a Dickcissel (Spiza americana) (Baird and

Resting swallows have been killed by both Boat-tailed Grackles (*Quiscalus major*) (McIlhenny 1937) and Common Grackles (LaPorte 1974), and a foraging Barn Swallow was taken in flight by a California Gull (*Larus californicus*) (Laymon 1983). At least 2 similar acts of predation have been reported for Common Grackles. One grackle was seen killing an immature Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) as the latter fed in flight (Fisk 1970); another killed an immature Cedar Waxwing that had just been released by a bander (Ritchison 1982).

**LITERATURE CITED**


