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Feeder access: deceptive use of alarm calls by a White-breasted Nuthatch.—While observing interactions among birds visiting my feeder, I noticed several instances of apparent deceptive use of alarm calls by one or more White-breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta carolinensis*). The observations were made at a six-perch oil seed feeder at my home in Waterville, Lucas County, Ohio, during the winters of 1989–1990 through 1991–1992.

In each instance, a nuthatch approached the feeder while it was occupied by three to six other birds, usually House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*). The nuthatch perched 6–10 m from the feeder, either in the overhanging branches of a black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) tree or clinging to the brick wall of our house. After watching the activity at the feeder for a few seconds, the nuthatch uttered a loud, rapid series of high-pitched "yank-yank" notes, seemingly identical to the alarm calls given by nuthatches when Cooper's (*Accipiter cooperii*) or Sharp-shinned (*A. striatus*) hawks appear in our yard. Upon hearing the call, birds at the feeder flew immediately to cover in nearby shrubbery. Simultaneously, the nuthatch flew directly to the feeder and began extracting seeds.

Accipitrine hawks are frequent visitors to our yard, so birds at the feeder apparently receive enough positive reinforcement to continue to respond to all alarm calls as if an accipiter were present. Although two or more nuthatches reside almost continuously within sight of the feeder each winter, I have observed the deceptive use of alarm calls by nuthatches infrequently—perhaps eight times in more than 50 h of feeder watching. Most often, a nuthatch would simply fly directly to the feeder and displace a House Finch from one of the perches by probing at it with its bill. But deceptive alarm calling allows a nuthatch to gain feeder access without risking injury in a physical encounter with another bird. Perhaps, like the boy who cried "wolf," a nuthatch who uses the deceptive alarm call strategy too often might eventually render it ineffective. It would be interesting to know what special circumstances, if any, cause nuthatches to choose this strategy.

ELLIOT J. TRAMER, *Dept. of Biology, The Univ. of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio 43606.* *Received 22 Sept. 1993, accepted 8 Dec. 1993.*

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Unusual copulatory behavior by Fiery-throated Hummingbirds.—On 17 June 1991, we discovered two Fiery-throated Hummingbirds (*Panterpe insignis*) lying together on the ground in the middle of a foot path at 2650 m elevation in Parque Nacional Volcan Poas, Alajuela Province, Costa Rica. The two birds appeared to be copulating; their cloacas were joined, and one bird clung tightly with its feet to the feathers of the other's lower back and made occasional thrusting motions with its abdomen. The habitat was an epiphyte-laden elfin forest with abundant leaf litter on the ground. Dominant large plants included *Clusia* and *Gunnera* species. During about 15 min of observation, the putative female (the sexes are similar in this species) attempted several times to disengage and fly off, but the mounted (male?) bird kept its grip on its partner's back and remained firmly attached. During these attempts to disengage, the two birds spun wildly about on the ground with the female (?) giving a series of rapid, buzzy scolding notes. Simmers returned to the spot 35 min later and found the birds still in a copulatory position in the middle of the trail. After a few more minutes they finally separated and flew off in different directions. As they separated a drop of clear fluid (semen?) was shed from the rear of the female (?) bird, presumably from the

cloacal opening. This behavior is unusual in two respects: (1) The long time of coupling. The birds were already copulating when we discovered them and, therefore, were together for over 50 min and possibly for much longer. (2) The unusual location on the leaf litter of the forest floor rather than on a branch. We are unaware of any records of copulation on the ground or for prolonged intervals by hummingbirds. It seems doubtful that such behavior is adaptive, given the extreme vulnerability of the birds to predators while so engaged.

ELLIOT J. TRAMER AND BRENDA SIMMERS, *Dept. of Biology, The Univ. of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio 43606.* *Received 22 Sept. 1993, accepted 6 Dec. 1993.*

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First description of the nest and eggs of the Sooty-faced Finch.—Sooty-faced Finches (*Lysurus crassirostris*) occur in dense undergrowth of wet forests that border streams along the Caribbean slope of Costa Rica between 600 to 1500 m in altitude. Its distribution is from Cordillera de Tilarán in Costa Rica to eastern Panama (Slud, *The birds of Costa Rica. Distribution and ecology.* Bull. Amer. Mus. of Nat. Hist. 128, 1964; Stiles and Skutch, *A guide to the birds of Costa Rica.* Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, New York, 1989).

On 5 May, 1993, I found a Sooty-faced Finch nest containing two eggs at the Reserva de San Ramón on the Caribbean slope of Costa Rica (800 m; 10°13′N and 84°37′W). The nest was attached to a fern stem 1.5 m above the ground in primary forest. The nest was roofed and had a side entrance, the 15 × 13 cm cavity was lined with fern rootlets and bamboo leaves. A soft bulk of moss decorated with fern leaves and *Selaginella* surrounded the outer part of the cavity and extended, just touching the fern trunk, for 67 cm below the nest. The nest contained two short-oval shaped eggs (terminology of Harrison, *A field guide to nests, eggs and nestlings of North American birds.* Collins, Toronto, Ontario, 1984) with the following dimensions and mass, respectively: 24.85 × 18.90 mm and 25.00 × 18.75 mm; and 4.5 and 4.6 g. The eggs were ivory-colored with vinaceous-pink spots (Smithe, *Naturalist's color guide.* Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. New York, New York, 1975) covering most of the wide tip and dispersed speckles (of the same color) toward the narrow end. Embryonic development had just begun in one egg but not in the second. This is the first description of the nest and eggs of this species. The nest and eggs were deposited in the ornithology collection of the Museo Nacional de Costa Rica.

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GILBERT BARRANTES, *Museo Nacional de Costa Rica, 749-1000, San José, Costa Rica;* and *Escuela de Biología, Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica.* (Present address: *Dept. of Biology, Univ. of Missouri–St. Louis, 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499.)* *Received 1 Oct. 1993, accepted 3 Dec. 1993.*