Short Communications

Wilson Bull., 110(4), 1998, p. 560

Attempted Kleptoparasitism of Ospreys by Great Blue Herons

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ABSTRACT.—Two attempts of kleptoparisitism of Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) by Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) were observed in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming. Two herons vocalized and bill thrusted at Ospreys as they emerged from the water following dives for fish. Although both attempts were unsuccessful (the Ospreys failed to capture a fish), the intensity of the attacks suggest that Great Blue Herons may be capable of taking fish from Ospreys. *Received 12 Nov. 1997, accepted 2 June 1998.*

On 25 April, 1989, while observing Trumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*) on the Snake River in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming, I observed kleptoparisitism attempts of Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) by Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*). Great Blue Herons take prey from gulls and shorebirds and fish from Osprey nests [Butler, R. W. 1992. Great Blue Heron. *In* The birds of North America, no. 25. (A. Poole, P. Stettenheim, and F. Gill, Eds.). The Academy of Nat. Sci., Philadelphia; The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington D.C.]. However, observations of direct kleptoparasitism on Ospreys by Great Blue Herons have not been reported. On 25 April, I observed two Ospreys hunting behind Jackson Lake Dam on the Snake River. As one Osprey dove into the water, a Great Blue Heron that was perched in a nearby tall conifer flew to the spot where the Osprey was briefly submerged. As the Osprey emerged from the water and tried to become airborne, the heron briefly hovered (similar to landing on nests) within 0.5 m of the hawk while vocalizing and thrusting its bill presumably in an attempt to force the hawk to drop any prey it may have captured. The Osprey, unsuccessful in catching a fish, flew rapidly in a zigzagged pattern down the river to evade the heron. The heron followed the Osprey for approximately 5 m before both birds left the area in different directions. Within a few minutes, a second Osprey plunged into the water in the same general area and a second heron, which was perched in a different conifer along the river, tried to force the Osprey to drop prey as described above. Although both attempts were unsuccessful, the intensity of attacks by these herons suggests that sometimes they are successful in taking prey from Ospreys.

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Wilson Bull., 110(4), 1998, pp. 560–561

The First Record of Burrowing Owls Nesting in a Building

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ABSTRACT.—A nuisance owl complaint resulted in the discovery of a Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) nesting in a dormer of a house in Davie, Florida. Burrowing Owls have been reported nesting in artificial nest boxes, pipes, and culverts but this is the first published report of nesting in a building. One adult and one downy chick were observed on the first two visits. Two adult sized birds were observed on the last visit. It is believed that wet conditions and unsuitable

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soil types in the area provided the impetus for the shift from ground to structure nesting. *Received 7 Jan. 1998, accepted 3 June 1998.*

Burrowing Owls (*Athene cunicularia*) typically nest underground in burrows excavated by other animals or dig their own. Instances of above ground nesting (Cavanagh 1990) and nesting in artificial structures such as concrete pipes, culverts, and under sidewalks have been observed (M. Robson, pers. comm.). Artificial underground nest boxes used in passive relocations also have been used for nesting (Trulio 1995). Other species of owls, notably the Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), regularly use buildings for nesting; however, this is the first published report of Burrowing Owls successfully nesting in a building.

A complaint from a home owner having roof repairs led to the discovery of a Burrowing Owl nest on 22 May 1997 in western Davie, Broward County, Florida. An adult Burrowing Owl was observed perched on the roof of the house. Feces and pellets were visible outside a triangular opening on the side of a dormer. One downy chick was observed and heard inside the crevice between the walls. I inspected the nest again on 9 June. At this time an adult was on the roof and I heard a chick calling. Two adult-sized birds were observed near the entrance hole on 8 July. One bird was slightly smaller and did not stray far from the nest entrance when approached; but I was unable to determine if it was a fledged young or an adult.

Although only one adult was observed during the first two visits, the home owner reported having seen a pair prior to the roof repairs. What is presumed to be the same pair was also observed nesting on the property the previous year by the home owner. The burrow was underground and adjacent to the house. The nest is thought to have failed as no young were observed. Burrowing Owls in Florida prefer sandy, well-drained areas with short herbaceous ground cover (Millsap 1996). However, western Davie is a former freshwater sawgrass (*Cladium jamaicense*) marsh drained to create cattle pastures and residential developments. Flooding and trampling of burrows by cattle are the primary causes of known nest failures in this area (Mealy 1997). Not surprisingly, there are few records of Burrowing Owls nesting in western Davie (Runde and Reynolds 1990). Wet conditions and unsuitable soil types on the property and the surrounding area might have forced the owls to use the dormer as a nesting burrow. The use of structures for nesting has also been reported in some species of terns and skimmers, especially in areas where suitable nesting habitat is limited or marginal (Fisk 1978, Smith 1996, Zambrano et al. 1997). Faced with intense agricultural practices and development of their nesting habitat (Millsap 1996), Burrowing Owls might similarly be exploiting alternative nesting substrates in otherwise unsuitable habitat.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Paul Cavanagh and Paul Sykes for providing helpful comments on early drafts of the manuscript. This publication was supported by the Florida Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund.

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