

Fla. Field Nat. 10(1): 23, 1982.

Common Crows and a Florida Red-shouldered Hawk mobbing feathers on the ground.—On 28 January 1981, at 0900 at the Hendrie Ranch, 24 km S of Lake Placid, Highlands County, Florida, I heard cawing as 6-8 Common Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) suddenly gathered in a small grove of bay trees (*Magnolia virginiana*, *Persea* spp.). The grove was small (about 16 m in breadth) and open, due to the passage of cattle, and the crows were relatively tame. At distances of 15 or more m I saw them perched on open limbs; most were looking at the ground, and some were cawing or giving harsh *grrs*. I saw nothing that might be causing the mobbing.

Two days later, at the same time and place, I witnessed another sudden gathering of crows. This time their caws were mingled with the screams of a Florida Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus alleni*) which, like the crows, was relatively tame. The crows were looking at the same area of ground as on 28 January. I noted that the hawk, perched 3 m up, was doing so likewise. Again I saw no cause of the mobbing and the crows and hawk left after about 5 min. When I reached the spot, I found three large piles of feathers, from body, wings and tail, where some predator had plucked a Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*). With an absence of the usual iridescence, the feathers looked a dull, dark brown.

Similar situations have been described for other corvids. Verbeek (1972, J. Ornithol. 113: 297-314) once found Yellow-billed Magpies (*Pica nuttalli*) mobbing a mummified magpie and, on three occasions, three black tail feathers on the ground. He noted that the mobbing was as intense as to a predator, such as a bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). In fact he believed that a group of feathers is mobbed as if it were a predator, the selective advantage being "that it reinforces the members of the colony to take communal action." Whereas Verbeek found that at least three feathers were needed and that magpies would not react to a single feather, Lorenz (1970, Contributions to the study of the ethology of social Corvidae. Pp. 1-56 in Studies in animal and human behavior I, Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press) found that his Jackdaws (*C. monedula*) reacted to a single large black feather with angry rattling cries. The subject is one that could stand more study. The large piles of Turkey feathers at the ranch may have provided a supernormal stimulus to the crows. Earlier (Kilham 1964, Condor 66: 247-248) I described a number of instances of joint mobbing of owls by Common Crows and Red-shouldered Hawks in Maryland and New Hampshire.—LAWRENCE KILHAM, Department of Microbiology, Dartmouth Medical School, Hanover, New Hampshire 03755.

BOOK REVIEW

Bird casualties at a Leon County, Florida TV tower: A 25-year migration study.—Robert L. Crawford. 1981. Bull. Tall Timbers Res. Sta. 22: 1-30. Available from Tall Timbers Res. Sta., Rt 1, Box 160, Tallahassee, FL 32312 for \$1.25 + .75 postage.—The letters WCTV are as familiar to students of bird migration as are the letters ATP to cell-biologists. Every day since October 1955 biologists at Tall Timbers Research Station have conducted a dawn search for migrant birds killed by nocturnal collision with the 308 m (204 m before 1960) WCTV tower 24 km N of Tallahassee near the Georgia border. The carcasses are identified, tabulated, and frozen for later use. Many