

Fla. Field Nat. 19(2): 55, 1991.

## BLUE JAY IMITATES HAWK FOR KLEPTOPARASITISM

ROBERT W. LOFTIN

*University of North Florida, 4567 St. John's Bluff Rd., South,  
Jacksonville, Florida 32216*

Jack P. Hailman's (1990, Fla. Field Nat. 18: 81-82) discussion of why Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) imitate raptors prompts me to put the following observation on record. On 8 February 1975, S. L. Sutton reported to me that he had observed a Blue Jay using raptor calls to obtain food by frightening Boat-tailed Grackles (*Quiscalus major*).

The incident observed by Sutton took place at the picnic area near Picnic Pond at St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge, Waukulla County, Florida. This picnic area is frequented by Boat-tailed Grackles, which are fed by humans and feed on crumbs left by picnickers. On this occasion, a grackle was feeding on a large piece of bread on the ground in the open when a jay flew into the oak tree overhead and gave a vocal imitation of a Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*). On hearing this predator call directly overhead, the grackle dropped the food and took cover, whereupon the jay swooped down and ate the food.

This particular behavior is apparently not widespread among Blue Jays, but Sutton was convinced that this jay had learned to use predator calls to scare other birds away from food. Hailman proposed four hypotheses to explain raptor imitations by Blue Jays: (1) to signal that a raptor of this species is in the vicinity, (2) to indicate to companions where a raptor has been in the past, (3) to deceive some third species into believing a raptor is present, and (4) jays simply incorporate environmental sounds into their repertoires. He favored the second hypothesis, but this observation supports the third. Hailman noted that "the possible benefit to the jay from such deception is unclear." This observation, however, suggests one way a jay might profit from this mimicry.

It is possible that this was an isolated incident, perhaps even unique to this individual jay. Other observers should be alert to examples of this behavior to further examine the hypothesis that jays mimic raptors as an aid to kleptoparasitism.

Fla. Field Nat. 19(2): 55-56, 1991.

## BANDED BROWN PELICANS IN SOUTHEASTERN FLORIDA

PAUL W. SYKES, JR.<sup>1</sup> AND HOWARD P. LANGRIDGE<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>1080 Forest Road, Watkinsville, GA 30677, and

<sup>2</sup>1421 West Ocean Avenue, Lantana, FL 33462

Two banded Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) were observed as they perched on the railing of the fishing pier at Lake Worth, Palm Beach County, Florida (Lat. 26°37'N, Long. 80°2'W), during the autumn of 1990. The birds permitted close approach and we were able to read the band numbers using 10x binoculars. The band numbers were triple checked for accuracy. Both birds appeared to be healthy judging from plumage conditions, soft parts, and flying abilities.

The first pelican was observed on 22 October, was seen again on 14 November, and had band No. 599-36163. The bird hatched in captivity at the Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary,