

KLEPTOPARASITISM OF AN AMERICAN ROBIN BY A RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

Jerome A. Jackson

Dept. of Biological Sciences
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762

and

Bette J.S. Jackson

Div. of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
Mary Holmes College
West Point, Mississippi 39773

On 13 July 1994 at 11:30 under clear skies we observed an adult male American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) as it pulled an earthworm from the ground in closely mowed grass on the Mississippi State University campus in Oktibbeha County. Just as the worm was pulled free of the ground, an adult Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) flew to the ground to the right of the robin, seized the worm from it, and flew to the top of a utility pole with it, whereupon it swallowed its prize. The robin offered no resistance and continued its foraging; the woodpecker flew out of view. At 16:10 on the same date JAJ again saw a Red-headed Woodpecker steal an earthworm from an adult male robin at the same site.

The American Robin seems vulnerable to such thievery, known as kleptoparasitism, although this seems to be the first report of such kleptoparasitism by a Red-headed Woodpecker. It previously has been reported as the victim of House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*; Arnold 1907, Pershing 1930), European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Brown Thrashers (*Toxostoma rufum*), and gulls (Eiserer 1976).

LITERATURE CITED

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