

Disposal of Fecal Sacs in Water by Common Grackles

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Welty (1975:345) stated that swallows and martins dropped fecal sacs over water, and that a Lyrebird (Menura superba) may submerge the fecal sac under water in a stream or may dig a hole and bury it underground. Welty did not cite the original sources for this information, and I have not been able to find them.

On 28-29 May 1975, I observed the Common Grackle (Quiscalus quiscula) defecating and dropping fecal sacs into the water of a lake at Leroy Percy State Park, Washington County, Mississippi. These activities usually occurred as soon as the bird was over water in its flight from the surrounding woods and before crossing the lake. Some birds flew out over the water, dropped the sac, and returned to the shore and woods of the same side of the lake, indicating that a special trip had been made to the lake for this purpose. Others dropped the sac and flew across the lake where most of the food gathering occurred. These activities were verified by dozens of observations.

Such disposal of the feces in water or underground at some distance from the nest may serve to conceal the location of the nest.

## Literature Cited

Welty, J. C. 1975. The life of birds. 2nd edition. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co. Pp. xvi + 623.

Observations on the Nesting Habitat and Nest Design of the Mockingbird

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As part of a study on nest site selection in the Mockingbird (Mimus polyglottos) I collected data on nest design and placement. A total of 45 nests were located before the start of the nesting season in and near Starkville, Mississippi during 1975. Nest height, placement, condition, and tree species were recorded.

Nesting habitat.- Of the 45 nest locations, 32 (71.4%) were in sugarberry (Celtis laevigata), 3 (6.7%) each in water oak (Quercus nigra) and Japanese magnolia, and 1 each (2.2%) in osage orange (Maclura pomifera), holly (Ilex sp.), firethorn (Pyracantha coccinea), apple (Malus sp.), pear (Pyrus sp.), plum (Prunus sp.), honeylocust (Gleditsia triacanthos), and viburnum (viburnum sp.). Mean height of