

No attempt will be made here to apply this suggestion in detail, since I have not myself carried on controlled experiments with the birds, but I should like to mention a few of the observations which first led me to think that Vultures might be practical entomologists.

The first incident took place at the Harvard Tropical Laboratory on the Soledad sugar estate near Cienfuegos, Cuba. In November, 1926, some dead fish were put out near Harvard House to attract beetles, but were stolen by Turkey Buzzards the first day. The bait had been hidden under fairly large stones, and since it was placed beside a garden where people were frequently moving about, there is no reason to suppose that the birds were attracted by my actions. They may, indeed, have smelled the fish, but it seems just as likely that they saw the insects which collected and which would have given the set away to any intelligent human being. Near Santa Marta, Colombia, in 1928, the same sort of thing happened, for when dead iguanas were put out they were invariably discovered by Vultures, even when the baiting was done in scrubby woods. The most rational explanation in this case seemed to be that the birds had heard the carrion-drawn flies.

These experiments, if they may be called that, were admittedly not planned to test the senses of Buzzards, but they have suggested a possible factor in the birds' behavior which seems to have been overlooked, and there are doubtless other factors still to be found. In fact I think it is a safe assumption that both the Turkey Buzzard and Black Vulture are very intelligent birds which make use of their senses in every possible way in their search for food. They must be forced to do so by strict competition. This conclusion is supported by conversations with Boston ornithologists and, indirectly, by various published accounts.

If a moral must be drawn from the preceding paragraphs, it is not primarily that Buzzards are attracted by carrion-feeding insects, although I think they are. Nor is it that they do or do not possess a nose. It is rather that they are highly organized animals which presumably react to a complex environment in a very complex manner, and which must be experimented with accordingly.—P. J. DARLINGTON, JR., *Care of Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Cambridge, Mass.*

Long-eared Owl at Lexington, Va.—The Long-eared Owl (*Asio wilsonianus*) seems to be quite rare in western Virginia. The first specimen to be recorded for the Lexington region, a large female, was brought to me on December 26, 1929. It had been shot early that morning in daylight when it was frightened from a dense covert in one of the large sink-holes that abound in this limestone region. This sink-hole is filled with a thick tangle of bushes, briars, and honeysuckle vines, with a few small trees. The stomach contained a flattened oblong mass of feathers and bones, evidently a pellet almost ready for ejection. Several whole grains of corn were stuck on one end of the mass. This was examined by the Biological Survey, with the report that it consisted "entirely of the remains

of a Mourning Dove," the corn being from the stomach of the Dove. The man who shot this Owl told me that he had seen one or more additional Owls of the same kind at this place and that they had been roosting there through the fall months. On visiting the place later I could not start one, but found where an Owl, presumably, though of course not certainly, one of this species, had been roosting on a small branch about a foot from the ground. From the mound of pellets beneath this branch I sent twenty-nine to the Biological Survey for examination, the report from which showed the following mammals: (43 mice and 7 shrews): *Microtus pennsylvanicus*, 25; *Pitymys pinetorum*, 6; *Reithrodontomys humilis*, 10; *Peromyscus* sp., 2; *Cryptotis parva*, 7.—JAMES J. MURRAY, *Lexington, Va.*

The Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus flammeus*) in the District of Columbia.—The Short-eared Owl, which is one of our rarer Owls, has been reported in the District of Columbia only once in recent years, on the second of March, 1913. During the autumn of 1929, however, it appeared in several different localities in the vicinity of Washington, and at least three specimens were collected. The first of these was obtained by Norman D. Linn, on November 11, at Clarksville, in Howard County, Maryland; another was reported by Miss Ida Elizabeth Dickerson on Seneca Creek, near Dawsonsville, Maryland, on December 14; and a third by the writer on the twenty-seventh of November, in Rock Creek Park, an unusual place for this species.—JOHN COURTS JONES.

The Florida Barred Owl in North Carolina.—In an account of the bird life of North Carolina¹ Pearson and the two Brimleys in discussing the Barred Owl remark that "it is probable that the Owls of this species found in summer in the southeastern part of the State may, upon closer study, prove to be the southern variety known as the Florida Barred Owl, *Strix varia alleni* (Ridgw.)."

During a recent visit to the section known as Bayview, on the north shore of the Pamlico River near Bath, N. C., I obtained a female Florida Barred Owl thus substantiating the supposition of occurrence of this form in the state. The bird in question was brought to me by Fred Cutler on January 16, 1930, and is preserved in the collections of the National Museum. It shows in normal manner the lack of feathering on the toes that distinguishes this race. Barred Owls were common in this lowland area.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

Downy Woodpecker and Moth Cocoons.—I had tied out one each of *Attacus cecropia* and *Telea polyphemus* cocoons to a lilac bush. One day a Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens medianus*) found them. He had already eaten the contents of the polyphemus cocoon, through a very small aperture, and was intently working on the cecropia when I

¹ Pearson, T. G., Brimley, C. S., and Brimley, H. H., *Birds of North Carolina*, *North Carolina Geol. Econ. Surv.*, vol. 4, 1919, p. 180.