

deformity resulting from the position in which the tibia end had healed. The leg had much recovered by August 9, and the bird was striking viciously with it.

Both Hawks were killed on August 10, No. 1 on the 34th day and No. 2 on the 24th day after injury, and 23 and 14 days respectively after the use of the legs had obviously been resumed.

It may be said that the time required for the healing of broken leg bones was practically the same for the two nearly grown Marsh Hawks studied. As might be expected of a raptorial species having access to abundant calcium in the bones of its prey, recovery took place rapidly, voluntary function being regained about the 11th day after injury, and emergency function at least a day earlier.—PAUL L. ERRINGTON, *Iowa State College Ames, Iowa.*

Purple Gallinules (*Ionornis martinica*) are Predatory.—For many years I have known that the Purple Gallinule (*Ionornis martinica*) was predatory, as I have seen them take the young and eggs from the nests of Herons and Egrets and other birds a great many times.

My first knowledge of their predatory habit was more than thirty years ago. At that time, I was raising Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*) along the edge of my Heron colony now known as "Bird City." The young Ducks were inclosed by a fine-meshed wire fence with an overhanging top, so that they could not climb out or stray away. From time to time I would miss some of them and was at a loss to know what was destroying them, as they were closely confined at night, and in the daytime, were in water too shallow for loggerhead turtles or other predatory creatures.

As the loss continued with great regularity, I built a blind near the pen and put an old darky to watch. In a few hours he came to me and stated that the young Ducks were being taken by "dem blue marsh hens." Knowing that he meant Purple Gallinules, I did not give his statement credit, but decided to watch for myself.

Getting into the blind, I soon was convinced that the Purple Gallinules were the reason for the disappearance of my young Ducks, some of which were almost half-grown and beginning to be quite well feathered. I had hardly gotten into the blind when a Purple Gallinule flew from the rushes of the pond beyond the fence, alighting in the shallow water near the bank and quite near me. There were no Ducks near where it lit, but a number of them were feeding towards it perhaps fifty feet away. The Gallinule walked along in the shallow water on the border of the pond, seemingly busily searching for insects, as it moved slowly and pecked from time to time in the grass which grew out from the bank into the water. It paid no attention to the Ducks, as they approached, until they came directly to it, when suddenly it sprang onto the back of one of the largest, and at one stroke of its beak severed the spinal cord at the base of the brain. It then proceeded to peck a hole in the back of the dead Duck, which was accomplished with remarkable speed, the viscera being drawn out piece by piece and eaten. After eating the viscera, it continued pulling out, through the back, bits of flesh. I had taken my gun into the blind with me, and shot it as it stood on its victim.

Supposing this was an unusual case of the Gallinule preying on the young Ducks, I did not wait to see if more Gallinules would attempt the same thing, but as from day to day I continued to miss my young Ducks, I had a watch set covering a full day, arming the watchman with a gun, and he killed five Gallinules, three of which had already gotten young Ducks before he shot them.

In later years, I have seen Purple Gallinules many times take eggs and young of many species of birds. This predatory habit was brought definitely to my attention during three consecutive days—on May 10, 11, and 12 of this year.

On Sunday, May 10, Stanley Solar and I were observing a large colony of nesting Boat-tailed Grackles (*Cassidix mexicanus major*). We had already remarked the large number of empty nests, that the Sunday before, had contained small birds. We heard a young Grackle crying in distress, and on going toward the place from where the noise came, saw a Purple Gallinule standing on the edge of the nest holding with one foot a half-grown Grackle while it deliberately tore at its back with its beak. On our nearer approach, the Gallinule took the still living young Grackle in its beak and flew with it about 75 yards to the pond's bank, where we watched it tear it to pieces and eat it. It first tore a hole in the back of its victim, and pulling out the viscera in sections, swallowed the pieces as they came free. It then tore bits of tender flesh from the body, paying no attention to my approach in a boat to within about sixty feet of it.

On Monday, May 11, I was in "Bird City" with Mr. and Mrs. Orr, who were photographing the birds for the Fox Movietone Corporation. My attention was attracted to a Purple Gallinule by the flirting of its white tail. It was standing on a willow stump about forty yards from us, and I called attention to its pulling strongly at something held under its feet. We could see it was the body of a young Heron. After considerable pulling and pecking, a hole was evidently torn through to the viscera, which we saw this Gallinule draw out in sections and eat. I was at the point of going to investigate in a boat, when a second Gallinule flew at the one on the stump and endeavored to rob it of its prey. The feeding bird seized its victim in its mouth and flew with it to an unoccupied section of a nesting platform nearby where it continued its meal.

On Tuesday, May 12, I had my floating blind, from which I photograph the nesting individuals of "Bird City," moved to a position where we could get close-ups of nesting Anhingas (*Anhinga anhinga*). I had the men with me clip a few twigs that obstructed the view of two nests low down in a cypress, each containing four eggs. The blind was set in position to photograph a nest quite near, in which the young Anhingas were more than half-grown. The moving of the blind and the noise of getting the three cameras set up frightened the Anhingas from the nests, and they flew to the top of several partly dead cypress trees nearby. All of this preparation took perhaps ten minutes. When we were about ready to begin the picture-taking, I looked towards the two Anhinga nests in the cypress from in front of which I had had the screen of twigs cut, and saw a Purple Gallinule standing on one nest eating a young Anhinga it had torn from its egg. Fearing it would destroy the entire set of eggs, I went outside the blind, and by waving my arms, frightened it away.—E. A. McILHENNY, *Avery Island, La.*

A New Illinois Record for the American Avocet.—On the afternoon of October 28, 1935, three men were hunting from a blind on a Mississippi River sand bar two miles South of Quincy. Late in the afternoon, as they were watching the shore-birds playing on the beach, a flock of large white birds with black wings settled among the Killdeer. As they alighted, they held their wings above their heads for a moment, then settled and began feeding in the mud and sand, moving their heads and long up-curved bills back and forth in the water. One of the hunters whistled a Plover-like call. The entire flock of eleven birds took wing immediately and circled over the wooden decoys. One hunter shot into the flock and killed two of the birds which were brought to me for identification.

They proved to be a pair of American Avocets in typical fall plumage. The specimens weighed eleven ounces and were in fine physical condition. Good skins