

following the opossums,—some on both sides, some in the rear. Suddenly, three or four of the vultures attacked one opossum at the same time. In less time than I can write it, both opossums were covered with a swarm of hissing, flapping birds, and within fifteen minutes there was nothing left of them but the larger bones and the hides, and these were stripped of every vestige of flesh.

It is also of interest to note in the feeding habits of these birds, that during dry periods when food is scarce, Black Vultures congregate in the early morning where the herds of cattle are bedded down for the night, and as the cattle move off to graze shortly after sun-up, the vultures feed on the fresh excrement which the cattle drop as they begin their day's grazing. This is a common feeding habit of the Black Vultures which I have observed for many years. The Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*) apparently has not this same food habit, nor have I ever seen it attack a living animal.—E. A. McILHENNY, *Avery Island, Louisiana*.

Eastern Sparrow Hawk feeding on big brown bat.—About 6.30 o'clock (eastern daylight time), on the morning of May 5, 1939, while observing birds in Washington Park in the heart of the city of Albany, New York, my attention was drawn to a female Eastern Sparrow Hawk (*Falco s. sparverius*) perched high up in a large elm. As I watched, the bird, evidently unaware of my presence, suddenly darted from its vantage point to the trunk of an adjacent tree of similar kind and size, seized and carried away what appeared through the binocular to be a small bat. The color of the victim, its shape and a brief view of the tip of a weakly flapping wing afforded the bits of evidence for my first and provisional diagnosis.

On following the flight of the hawk it was observed to alight well out on the limb of another elm, about fifty feet above the ground, where at once it began vehemently and greedily to devour the prey. The first struggles of the victim, manifest principally in the flapping of one wing, soon subsided as the hawk continued to tear it to pieces. Perhaps two minutes elapsed before the bird had finished the meal. As I continued to watch these proceedings through the binocular, I wished that some way might be found to determine definitely on just what the hawk was feeding. Then, as though in answer to this thought, it arose in flight and in so doing dropped from its claws a fragment of the prey. Upon examination this proved to be the facial portion of the head of a big brown bat, *Eptesicus fuscus*. Although the brain case had been removed by the hawk, the furred facial skin, the intact left ear and the complete dentition provided sufficient evidence for positive identification of the bat. All the other parts of the animal had apparently been eaten by the hawk.

I have never before observed this feeding habit of the Eastern Sparrow Hawk and so far as I have been able to ascertain, records of the occurrence of this or any other bat in the stomachs of Sparrow Hawks appear to be very rare.—DAYTON STONER, *New York State Museum, Albany, New York*.

Falcon, Buteo and Harrier eat Herring Gull.—That many if not all of our hawks are occasional carrion eaters is a long-established fact and yet all too seldom is this factor mentioned or at least given sufficient significance when an analysis of the stomach contents of one of these birds is published. The writer has had several occasions to see how erroneous it might be for a stomach-contents analysis to be taken as a sign of exactly what the raptors might be killing. A recent observation even though extreme, strongly illustrates this point. While driving along an extensive mudflat on the south shore of Long Island my attention was attracted to a bird ripping apart a dead Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*). The bird turned out to be a large adult Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) which circled

widely, boisterously resenting my approach to its food. Even though the gull was still rather warm indicating recent death I hesitate to conclude that it had been actually killed by the Peregrine, for I have never seen any species of hawk even threaten an adult gull.

The same afternoon while returning past this spot I was astonished to see an American Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus sancti-johannis*) standing on the dead gull tearing off scraps of meat. I sat in my car for fully ten minutes watching this operation and then proceeded home. But the climax was not reached until the following day when I found a Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*) gleaning what it could from the nearly devoured carcass. Here were three species of hawks eating from the same piece of carrion. Anyone capable of analyzing the stomach contents of these birds assuredly would hesitate to say that the two latter species, if not the Peregrine, had destroyed this powerful gull. But then, the piece of carrion could just as well have been a dead pheasant or a dead chicken and the three hawks subsequently win the damnation of any sportsman witnessing the feast or reading of an authentic stomach-contents analysis by some scientist.—ALLAN D. CRUICKSHANK, *National Association of Audubon Societies, New York City.*

Purple Gallinule in Maryland.—On October 12, 1938, R. B. Smithers shot a gallinule on the Patuxent Marsh in lower Anne Arundel County, Maryland. The bird was sent in the flesh to the Natural History Society of Maryland. The specimen proved to be an immature female, and although we were not very familiar with gallinules in this plumage, characters of tarsi and nostrils indicated that it was a Purple Gallinule (*Ionornis martinica*). In January 1939, we were able to have this identification verified by Dr. Herbert Friedmann of the United States National Museum. The coloration tallies very closely with the description given for the juvenal plumage by Bent (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 135, p. 342). There is no indication of the dark purplish feathers which appear on the under parts in the post-juvenal molt. Thus, according to Bent's statements, the bird was probably less than two months old.

Although there are numerous records of the casual occurrence of this species north of the breeding range, it appears that no specimen has ever before been taken in Maryland. Kirkwood, in his list of Maryland birds (in Trans. Md. Acad. Sci., 1895, p. 281) speaks of one reported by Richmond to have been seen in Centre Market in Washington, D. C., from "down the Potomac somewhere." However, Cooke makes no mention of this species in her careful review of the 'Birds of the Washington, D. C., region' (Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, 42: 1-80). Bent (op. cit., p. 345), in a long list of casual occurrences, has no record from Maryland. Hence, it appears that this species can be added to the still inadequately inventoried avifauna of Maryland.—I. HAMPE, H. SEIBERT, H. KOLB, *The Natural History Society of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland.*

Spring flight of Golden Plover at Madison, Wisconsin.—On June 7, 1939, Mr. John Main and I found a flock of about forty Golden Plover (*Pluvialis d. dominica*) feeding in a field on an area known formerly as the 'Stoner Prairie.' A group of six birds that had separated from the main flock allowed me to approach within a distance of 75 feet. The large flock remained through the 14th; on the 15th, only six birds were left. Previously, neither of us had seen a flock in spring during the past twenty years.—A. W. SCHORGER, 168 N. Prospect Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin.

Recent observations on the Eskimo Curlew in Argentina.—In view of the near extinction of the Eskimo Curlew (*Phaeopus borealis*) it is of interest to record