

The procedure which the grackle followed in capturing the minnows was as follows: The bird flew back and forth eight to ten feet above the water, then upon sighting a minnow it dipped down, hovered immediately above the fish and captured it with a quick thrust of the beak. This grackle appeared to be very adept at catching the minnows; it was not observed to miss a capture and got only its breast feathers wet during the procedure.—A. M. BEETON and LARUE WELLS, *U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

Eastern Phoebes Fishing.—On April 1, 1956, in Jackson Park, Chicago, Illinois, Richard Macomber and I observed two Eastern Phoebes (*Sayornis phoebe*) catching and eating small fish.

The birds were at the edge of a small harbor which is part of a chain of lagoons connected at two points with Lake Michigan. In the immediate vicinity of the birds' activity, the harbor is delimited by a concrete wall rising vertically 25 inches from the water. Behind the wall is a parking area and beyond this, about 25 feet from the water, is a low bank covered with dense bushes.

The two Phoebes were observed for twenty minutes (4:50 P.M. to 5:10 P.M., C.S.T.). During this time, they caught a total of seven fish.

The birds stood on the level top of the concrete wall, peering intently into the water. Suddenly, one would swoop downward. Then one of three things would happen. Either the bird would strike the water immediately at the bottom of its dive; or it would hover for several seconds, two or three inches from the water, and then strike; or it would hover and then return to its perch without touching the water. The only parts of the bird to make actual contact with the water were the upper breast, throat, chin, bill, and forehead.

If the attempt was successful, the bird flew with its catch to the middle of one of the dense bushes. About half the attempts were successful. If unsuccessful, the bird returned to the edge of the wall to resume its watch.

When a fish was caught, it was held by its middle, crosswise in the bill of the bird. Upon reaching a bush, the bird attempted, in one swift motion, to turn the fish in its bill and swallow it head first. Then the Phoebe sat in the bush for one or two minutes before returning to the wall.

Near the wall the water teemed with small, silvery fish from one to three inches long. We were able to see the Phoebes eat only two of the seven fish caught. One was about 1½ and the other about 2½ inches long. The Phoebe which caught the larger fish had a great deal of trouble swallowing its prey, but was eventually successful. Unfortunately, the species of fish was not determined.

Most of the fish seemed to remain two to three inches below the surface. Apparently, the Phoebes caught only those that ventured nearer to the surface. This was evidenced by the fact that the birds sometimes had to scan the water for several minutes before making an attack, and that in catching a fish less than an inch of the total body length of the bird was submerged. The fish caught were apparently alive and active. One was seen to wriggle vigorously as the bird maneuvered it in its bill. I carefully examined the water but could see no floating dead fish.

It is extremely difficult to give a satisfactory explanation for this behavior. It is possible that poor fly-catching conditions forced the birds to change their diet, but weather conditions do not seem to bear out this hypothesis. According to the Chicago Weather Bureau, at 6:00 P.M. (C.S.T.) on April 1, the temperature was 64° F., the relative humidity 44 per cent, and the wind from the southeast at 14 mph. There was no precipitation until 6:56 P.M., about two hours after our observations. The wind was considerably less than 14 mph in the area of observation.

Hence, it would seem that none of these conditions would effect insects in such a way as to hamper the Phoebes in fly-catching.

Once we saw one of the Phoebes fly to the top of a forty-foot tree and commence to fly-catch, only to return to fishing after a few minutes.

Oberlander (Condor, 41: 139, 1939) has observed similar fishing behavior in the Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*).—LAURENCE C. BINFORD, *University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan*.

***Falco peregrinus* at Sea.**—While aboard a ship crossing the North Pacific Ocean from San Francisco to southern Japan, I was startled one clear morning to observe a falcon approaching from the south. After circling widely about the ship three times, the bird came to rest upon a cable in the upper rigging of the foremast. Our position at eight o'clock that morning, 3 November 1953, when the hawk was first sighted, was approximately 600 miles north by east from Honolulu, Hawaii, more than 500 miles from the nearest land!

From sketches made during the succeeding days and from the bird's size and characteristic activities (I am no ornithologist), it has been identified as an immature Peregrine Falcon, or Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus*). How such a bird came to be so far from its known places of habitation is problematical. We had not been experiencing severe winds that might have helped to explain its presence. Once it came aboard, however, it showed no inclination whatsoever to leave the ship, except for brief forays out over the sea to obtain food. From its perch high upon the mast it occasionally dropped and flew swiftly out over the waves to capture small sea birds, which it brought back to the ship and devoured. I was unable to keep a close watch on the hawk, but I did see it catch a bird on 5 November and two more the next day, as we passed within a hundred miles of Midway Island. Again the following day I observed the capture of another small bird; and it may be assumed that the hawk caught several in addition to those seen. Birds eaten included a small, white tern and at least two Bonin Islands Petrels (*Pterodroma leucoptera hypoleuca*). The latter were identified from my sketches and notes by Dr. Deignan of the United States National Museum.

The falcon was last seen on the evening of 10 November, and it is probable that it left the ship during a storm which we encountered early on the morning of the eleventh. By this time, we were about 700 miles off the main islands of Japan, and it may be that the hawk was able to complete its trip in the air. It had remained with the ship for about seven days (The International Date-line must be considered) and for a distance of nearly 3500 miles!

Races of *Falco peregrinus* are known to inhabit both sides of the Pacific, at latitudes at least as far north as British Columbia and Japan and Siberia. However, there is no record of this species in Hawaii, either in G. C. Munro's *Birds of Hawaii* or in Bryan and Greenway's *Contribution to the Ornithology of the Hawaiian Islands*. The latter work lists *Buteo solitarius* as the only Hawaiian hawk, endemic on the island of Hawaii. It records the Marsh Hawk (*Circus cyaneus hudsonius*), as an accidental visitor on Oahu, and the American Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*), as an accidental winter visitor on several islands of the Hawaiian group. Because the transoceanic falcon both came aboard and departed from our vessel at sea, however, it seems unjustified to propose it as an accidental winter visitor in the Hawaiian Islands. Perhaps the range of the Duck Hawk should merely be extended by one record for "North Pacific Ocean, 157° W, 29° N to 148° E, 30° N."—GEORGE W. BYERS, *Division of Entomology, University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Mich.*