

<i>Hypoxis hirsuta</i> (Yellow Stargrass)	.7%
<i>Myosotis verna</i> (Scorpion-grass)	13.2%
<i>Oxalis</i> sp. (Wood-Sorrel)	Trace
<i>Panicum lanuginosum</i> (Panic-Grass)	2.9%
<i>Polygala sanguinea</i> (Milkwort)	.7%
<i>Setaria glauca</i> (Yellow Foxtail)	16.9%
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i> (Indian Grass)	14.7%
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i> (Northern Drop Seed)	2.2%
<i>Trifolium procumbens</i> (Low Hop-Clover)	Trace
Unidentified vegetation	.7%
Percentage of total food ingested that was plant matter	82.9%
II. Animal Foods	
Arachnida (Spiders)	3.7%
Hexapoda (Insect fragments)	Trace
	(less .1%)
Coleoptera (Beetle fragments)	Trace
<i>Chrysomelidae</i> (Leaf Beetles)	.7%
<i>Curculionidae</i> (Weevils)	3.7%
<i>Pentatomidae</i> (Stinkbugs)	.7%
Lepidoptera (Caterpillars and moths)	.7%
<i>Formicidae</i> (Ants)	Trace
<i>Cicadellidae</i> (Leafhoppers)	7.4%
Percentage of total food ingested that was animal matter	16.9%

—DAVID A. EASTERLA, *Missouri Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Columbia, Missouri.*

Feeding Habits of the Mississippi Kite.—During July 1961, 12 hours of a five-day period were spent on the observation of the actions of the Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) on a semiprairie and meadow area in Montgomery County, Alabama. This area is partially surrounded by two rivers and comprises about 1,200 hectares (3,000 acres). The actual feeding area involved was completely bare of trees.

The study was conducted with three objectives in mind: (1) to determine the type of prey species taken, (2) methods of securing prey, and (3) the amount consumed in a given period of time.

With the aid of field glasses on a clear day it was possible to attain all three of these objectives rather satisfactorily. The types of prey taken included a species of May beetle (*Phyllophaga* sp.), Carolina Locust (*Dissosterra carolina*), and undetermined grasshoppers and dragonflies. Two kites were collected, as well as examples of the prey species other than those contained in the stomachs of the kites. During this particular period May beetles were very common and made up a major portion of the diet. Dragonflies and grasshoppers were both common; however, more grasshoppers were taken, probably because of their ease of capture. Many passes made on dragonflies were unsuccessful. The grasshoppers were picked up from the ground and eaten aloft. The beetles and dragonflies were taken and consumed in the air.

The method of attack on dragonflies and beetles was the same. The bird circled in a leisurely way, usually about 50 meters (150 feet) to 100 meters in altitude, then stooped in a falconlike manner, which in all cases indicated prey had been sighted.

The angle of the stoop was usually slight (less than 20 degrees) and extended in length from a few meters up to, in one case, over 100 meters. The stoop was occasionally accompanied by a few, quick, short wing strokes or a half barrel-roll, but was usually straight and unaided. In most cases it terminated in a quick, short turn upon contact with the insect. On occasion a bird was noted to rise on a slight grade in a straight, headlong manner, accompanied by deep, steady wing beats until the prey was overtaken. Several times a beetle was struck and fell and the kite immediately wheeled and caught it in midair. Some of the beetles were flying in copulation when struck by the kite, in which case one beetle would fly off, apparently unharmed, and less often fall to the earth. At no time was it determined that the kite took both insects on the same pass. Twice single beetles were struck and fell straight to the ground, no attempt being made by the bird to retrieve them. Immediately after the capture of prey the birds would level off and commence circling and feeding, unless the strike was made low to the ground, in which case altitude was gained quickly. All prey was eaten while the kites were in flight. Both of the bird's legs may or may not hang down while feeding; however, only one foot was used to hold the insect. The bird's wings are held steady and level, the tail generally half spread. Slow, easy circles are performed with an occasional wing beat. There was a general tendency to gain altitude during the whole process.

The method of attack on grasshoppers was a straight, swift drop of approximately 90 degrees, terminating a couple of feet from the ground. The instant the prey was grasped, deep wing strokes carried the bird off 50 to 75 meters (50 to 75 yards) distant and 30 to 40 meters' elevation, at which time feeding took place. On other areas, where grasshoppers frequented tall grass or wheat, they were captured by the kite in a sweeping, continuous stoop with a partial break in speed at the point of contact.

Several times individual kites were observed for periods of up to 40 minutes to determine the amount of prey taken and the time involved between each take. Forty minutes was the maximum time a kite was noted to feed before leaving the area or rising to an elevation too far to be observed. The soaring time between each strike was three to six minutes. The required time to consume each prey animal was 30 to 70 seconds. There was an average of 10 kites feeding at one time, which would indicate approximately 60 prey species taken in a 40-minute period or about six grasshoppers, beetles, or dragonflies taken by each kite.

There was a general tendency for all the kites on the area to feed during the same period of time and for all to disappear about the same time. Occasionally, one or two would stay within view of the feeding area but appeared not to be feeding or feeding only sporadically.—ROBERT W. SKINNER, *State Conservation Department, Game and Fish Division, Montgomery, Alabama.*

The Weights of 11 Living Eagles and Vultures at the New York Zoological Park.—Despite the fact that zoological parks have opportunities to weigh living birds of prey, such weights have been recorded for very few raptors. While the weights of eagles and vultures vary from time to time and from individual to individual, as well as from small males to the large females of many species, their weights are so much a matter of public interest that it seems worth while to publish the following weights recorded on 3 May 1960 at the New York Zoological Park. Weights were recorded on a Howe metric scale of 250 kg capacity, and the following procedure was followed. Each specimen was captured in a bag net and carried, net and all, to the scale platform where its captor stood holding the bird in the net. A total weight was recorded, following which each bird was released in its cage. Then the bird keeper