

its body, causing the gull, which barely cleared the fence, to land immediately outside the enclosure and swallow the head and neck of the duckling for a better grip. Taking flight it initiated a series of deep swallows, and the Mallard rapidly disappeared into the gullet of the gull. Less than a minute later the gull alighted on a nearby pond and took several sips of water before flying away into the marsh.—NICHOLAS J. CHURA, *Wildlife Research Unit, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.*

Comparison of the Weight-Lifting Capacities of a House Finch and a Golden Eagle.—While observing the nest-building activities of a pair of House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), I saw the female return to the nest site with a large piece of fabric in her beak. By frightening her I caused her to drop the load. It proved to be a ribbonlike piece of cloth 1.2 to 1.8 cm in width, 80 cm long, 4 layers thick, and weighing 4.885 g. She had picked up this rag in a yard near the nest site and was seen flying in over the roof of my garage.

Wishing to secure further data on the strength and lifting ability of House Finches, I found that Partin (*Condor*, 35: 60, 1933) had made an exhaustive study of House Finch weights and had determined an average of 20.85 g for the species. Thus a female House Finch having a body weight of 20.85 could lift and become airborne with a bulky load weighing 4.885 g on an almost windless morning. This appeared to be a remarkably heavy load for such a small bird.

Lewis and Marian Walker (*Nat. Mag.*, 33: 320–323, 1940) give details of weight-lifting trial flights for a male Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). They found that the eagle could carry 2 lb (907 g) in “effortless” playful flight; that 4 lb (1,814 g) proved “difficult,” and 8 lb (3,628 g) was beyond the carrying capacity of the bird. There was no mention of the body weight of this experimental eagle. However, Poole (*Auk*, 55: 517, 1938) gives the weight of a female Golden Eagle as 4,664 g. Bent (*U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull.* 167: 300) gives the weight of an adult male Golden Eagle as 4,169.4 g.

Thus, the House Finch weighing 20.85 g carried a 4.88 g load, which is 23 per cent of her weight, and the Golden Eagle weighing 4,169.4 g carried a 907 g load, which is 21 per cent of his weight.

The eagle could probably have easily lifted a few more grams, but it is noteworthy that the ratio of their body weights to the loads carried is very nearly equal.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, California.*

The Terminology of the Short Extensor Muscles of the Third Toe in Birds.—During my current study of the myology of the pelvic appendage in the genera *Tympanuchus* and *Pedioecetes*, I was faced with the problem of conflicting terminologies for the short extensors of the third toe. This paper is the result of my effort to resolve this problem.

Hudson (1937: 54), on the basis of studies of a wide variety of birds, states: “In no case was more than one short extensor found attached to the third toe. Gadow, however, gives two: *M. extensor proprius digiti III* and *M. extensor brevis digiti III*. He states that both are well developed and entirely independent of one another in the Ratitae. This condition apparently does not occur in any other group of birds. It seems probable that the name *M. extensor brevis digiti III* should be discarded as a synonym of the *M. extensor proprius digiti III*. The former name was introduced by Gadow while the latter had been used by previous writers. It is not uncommon for a muscle to be double in certain restricted groups of birds, but this is no valid argument for the use of two muscle names.”