

denly drawn to a Robin's nest in a small grove of trembling aspens about 75 feet away by a great furor created by two adult Robins, a pair of Eastern Kingbirds (*Tyrannus tyrannus*), and several Say's Phoebes (*Sayornis saya*). With 8 × 25 binoculars I could see that their concern was an adult (sex undetermined) Cooper's Hawk standing on the Robins' nest. The parent Robins repeatedly darted very close to the hawk. The hawk clenched its feet rapidly several times, presumably to kill the young nestling(s), uttered a low "cack-cack-cack" several times while being harassed, then quickly flew across a small marsh into another grove of aspens, hotly pursued by the kingbirds. By following the kingbirds' calls and attacks into the foliage I was able to find the hawk and see that it carried one almost fully grown young Robin. The kingbirds chased the hawk several hundred yards—and I was unable to see where the hawk took its catch.

Richards (Condor, 69: 88, 1967) reported a Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*) tearing the top from the nest of a House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) while being harassed by a pair of Robins; he also noted seeing a Sparrow Hawk with a fledgling Robin "that must have been removed from a nest." Drinkwater (Auk, 70: 215, 1953) saw a Sparrow Hawk eating a young bluebird it had apparently taken from its nest. Obviously the Cooper's Hawk also occasionally captures nestling birds in their nests.—R. WAYNE NELSON, *Department of Biology, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.*

A Brant specimen from Alabama.—On 10 January 1968, Eugene Collett and William Sweeton, both of Huntsville, Alabama, shot a Brant near the Beaverdam Creek Embayment of Wheeler Reservoir, Limestone County, Alabama. These men brought the specimen to the office of the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. Employees there tentatively identified it as a Brant and air expressed this specimen to the U. S. National Museum where its identification was verified as *Branta bernicla hrota* by Roxie C. Laybourne. The specimen, in first year plumage, is now preserved in the collection of that museum. This appears to be the first recorded specimen from Alabama.—THOMAS Z. ATKESON, JR., *P. O. Box 1643, Decatur, Alabama 35601.*

Egg puncturing behavior in Laughing Gulls.—Interspecific territorial disputes sometimes result in one species destroying the eggs of another species (Bent, 1926: 174–175, 182; Weller, 1961), but very few reports exist of breeding birds destroying eggs of their own species (Goethe, 1937; Dexter, 1956). This note documents a case of egg destruction by members of a colony of Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*). During a 4-year study (1964–67) of habitat selection in a maritime Laughing Gull colony in Cape May County, New Jersey, I used 122 extensive and permanently established 20 × 20 meter quadrats to count and record the positions of hundreds of gull nests in various parts of the gullery. The low-lying salt marshes where the Laughing Gulls breed have an elevation at or near mean high water level and are often flooded by higher than normal tides during the breeding season (Stone, 1937: 337, 549, 573–574, 600–606).

On 15–16 June 1965 storm tides flooded parts of the gullery, floating many nests. The wind then pushed them along with other floating debris, mainly dead grass stems known locally as "thatch," into huge, floating, jumbled masses of nests and flotsam approximately 100–400 square meters. After moving 10 to 100 or more meters, these

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF EGGS PUNCTURED FROM DISPLACED AND NONDISPLACED NESTS

	Group of nests	Number of nests	Eggs intact	Eggs punctured	Eggs punctured per 100 eggs intact
Area I, 40 per cent survival of non- displaced nests	1	22	41	2	4.9
	2	24	39	0	0.0
	3	26	42	1	2.4
	4	59	110	3	2.7
					2.5 = \bar{X}
Area II, all nests floated into area during storm	5	10	17	1	5.9
	6	15	36	1	2.8
	7	27	37	17	46.0
	8	29	40	18	45.0
	9	32	52	7	13.5
	10	128	188	53	28.0
					23.5 = \bar{X}

displaced nests with their eggs and young chicks grounded elsewhere on the marsh when the tides subsided. Nests in more favored parts of the gully were not floated away; some were displaced 0.5 meters or less, but essentially they remained in their original positions (I refer to them as nondisplaced nests in Table 1).

On 17 June I surveyed the damage to nests in the 122 quadrats and found many punctured eggs. Each punctured egg had one large opening or slightly oblique cleft in one side with the shell around the hole reflected inward from the force of the peck. Sometimes the opposite side was pierced by a much smaller hole where the bill had gone through the center of the egg to the opposite side. The contents were either strewn near the punctured egg or left untouched. As the contents were not eaten in so many of the eggs examined, I do not believe the adult birds made the punctures to obtain food. Far too few Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*), Fish Crows (*Corvus ossifragus*), and Clapper Rails (*Rallus longirostris*) were present the day after the storm to have punctured so many eggs. Furthermore crows and gulls (including Laughing Gulls) raiding another bird's nest normally do not leave the egg contents, but devour them (Bent, 1921; Paynter, 1949; Emlen, 1956; Tinbergen, 1961; Harris, 1965). In this case the evidence points to egg destruction by the Laughing Gulls themselves and not to obtain food. I think that the storm precipitated a mass confusion in the gulls when so many of the nests began drifting into other parts of the colony. Noble and Lehrman (1940), although they moved some Laughing Gull nests short distances (less than 2 meters) in their experiments with egg recognition, found no cases of egg destruction.

During the reconnaissance I noted a difference in the amount of egg destruction in nondisplaced and displaced nests. In a topographically higher site consisting of 18 quadrats, approximately 40 per cent of the nests survived the storm in their original positions; all the nests had floated into the second site (consisting of the remaining 104 quadrats) as large agglomerations of mats or rafts. Table 1 compares the amount

of puncturing in eggs in nondisplaced and displaced nests. Significantly more puncturing of eggs occurred with displaced nests than with nondisplaced nests.

The question is posed: why the greater amount of egg puncturing in displaced nests? Was it because more of these nests were left unguarded during the storm and attacked more readily by neighboring Laughing Gulls? Or were the nest contents destroyed by the owners themselves? The answer remains obscure and unanswered.

Two days later Fish Crows and Herring Gulls increased at the gully, presumably scavenging unattended eggs and dead chicks. I found a few chicks on 17 June that had evidently died from pecks delivered by adult Laughing Gulls; the carcasses had bloodied heads with the skin lacerated along the back of the neck, top of the head, and around the eyes. Similar cases are reported for Herring Gulls (Paynter, 1949) and Ring-billed Gulls (Emlen, 1956). I saw no evidence of cannibalism of chicks as is known to occur with major disturbances in gull colonies (Harris, 1964). On 17 June I saw two adult Laughing Gulls fly over the salt marsh each with a dead chick in its bill. Each flew out over the nearby channel, dropped the carcass in the water about 50-100 meters from shore, and then returned to an undetermined part of the gully.

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