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**Tail flashing display in the Whip-poor-will.**—On 25 April 1954 I was walking at dusk with a companion along a dirt road on the wooded banks of the Mohican River near Spellacy, Ashland County, Ohio. Whip-poor-wills (*Caprimulgus vociferus*) were calling and suddenly we came upon one sitting in the road in front of us. We paused within 20 feet to watch it. In about a minute the bird ascended more or less vertically on beating wings to a height of nearly a meter above the road, hovered there momentarily, and then began a display that evidently has not been reported in the literature. While it still hovered silently, the tail feathers appeared to hang loosely suspended in a vertical position. In a few seconds they were suddenly spread for a fraction of a second and fell back in a folded position. This rapid opening and closing of the tail revealed the white spot on the outer rectrices, which showed it to be a male, and produced an instantaneous white "flash" in the gathering dusk. The Whip-poor-will continued to hover and repeated the performance five or six times in perhaps 15 seconds. Welty (1963, *The life of birds*, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Co.) published an excellent photograph of identical hovering behavior in the European Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*). The function of this display has been variously interpreted as courtship, aerodynamic stabilization, or attracting or flushing insect prey.—JAMES A. BRUCE, *4144 Suitland Road, Apartment 102, Suitland, Maryland 20023*. Accepted 2 Aug. 1972.

**Gopher snake predation on the Common Bushtit.**—At 14:45 on 19 April 1972 we watched a gopher snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*), enter the nest of a pair of Common Bushtits (*Psaltiriparus minimus*) 2.6 m from the ground in a 5-m high cypress tree on the University of California, Santa Barbara campus. Adult bushtits near the nest gave alarm notes, but did not attack the snake. By 15:25 the snake was completely inside the nest; its weight stretched the supporting strands and partially dislodged it. Removing the nest from the tree and carefully opening a longitudinal

slit in the side, we found two 11 to 12-day-old nestlings dead in the constricting folds of the snake's body and noted two visible lumps on the snake's ventral surface. The stretched nest was approximately 9 cm in internal length, its internal diameter was 6 cm, and its entrance only 2 cm in diameter. The snake weighed 223 g, was 102.5 cm long, and had a maximum diameter of 2.5 cm.

When we fluoroscoped the snake the next day three or possibly four nestlings were discernable in its digestive tract. We kept the snake in captivity and on 28 April 1972 found remains of at least one nestling in its excreta. Microscopic examination revealed one complete tarsometatarsus and tarsal bones with a possible second set of tarsal bones also present. The remainder of the casting consisted of matted, broken feathers. Gopher snakes have been known to rob bushtit nests (Baldwin 1933, unpublished M.A. thesis, Stanford, California, Stanford Univ.), but the complete entry of a snake into the narrow confines of the bowl of a bushtit nest has apparently not been reported before this. Research was supported by a Chapman Memorial Fund Grant.—STEPHEN ERVIN and CYNTHIA ROSE, *Department of Biology, University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106*. Accepted 28 Jul. 72.

**First Brown Booby specimen from Texas.**—On 21 September 1971 Mr. and Mrs. Herbert O. Mueller of San Antonio, while visiting Port Aransas in Nueces County, Texas, saw a grounded sulid beside the road across from the City Hall building and notified the junior author. The bird proved to be an immature Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*), apparently exhausted and unable to fly. In spite of being fed finger-size mullet (*Mugil* sp.) and small pen fish (*Lagodon rhomboides*) the bird died 25 September.

The senior author prepared the bird as a study specimen, which is now in the University of Dallas bird collection. Extensive scar tissue on the midneck region suggested the bird had sustained a rather deep and severe injury. The specimen (No. 1864) proved to be a juvenile male, with soft parts as follows: yellow iris, slaty blue bill, and yellowish-orange feet. Measurements are as follows: length 736 mm; tail, worn, 160 mm; wing, flattened, 403 mm; and bill, 99 mm. This is the first Brown Booby specimen for Texas.

Reports of this pelagic species for Texas are few. Sight records known to us include one that was caught 12 September 1937 by a fisherman in the Gulf of Mexico and brought to Mrs. Myrtle Braman of Victoria, Texas, for identification (files, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service); birds off Rockport in June and September (Hagar and Packard 1952, Check-list of the birds of central coast of Texas, Rockport, Texas, privately printed); and of two different adult birds, 12 and 15 miles off Mustang Island on 10 August 1961 and an adult, 8 miles off shore and 17 miles southwest of Sabine Pass, on 18 August 1961 (Webster 1961, Audubon Field Notes 15: 479).

Hurricane Fern spawned in the western Gulf of Mexico around 8 September some 200 miles off the Texas coast. This storm moved erratically in a northerly direction over the next several days, with sustained maximum winds around 100 mph. Although not a very strong storm, Fern covered a rather large area and was quite diffuse and unorganized. After approaching the coast close to Galveston, the storm veered southwestward, paralleling the coast, until it made landfall just east of Port Aransas on 10 September. Early in the afternoon on this date the eye of the storm actually passed over Port Aransas.

The period after this tropical storm was generally quite warm and mild with only a few rainstorms passing through Port Aransas. Winds varied from the northeast to