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Nest predation and interference by Western Meadowlarks.—Feeding on eggs of other birds and destroying nest contents is not widespread among passerines (Hatch 1965, *Condor* 67: 354) and has not been reported in ground-nesting oscines. During our researches on the habitat exploitation patterns and population dynamics of grassland birds (U. S. International Biological Program Grassland Biome, Pawnee National Grassland, north central Colorado) we observed Western Meadowlarks (*Sturnella neglecta*) destroying or eating the nest contents of two other ground nesting species.

The first instance of nest predation was recorded at 12:30 MST on 2 June 1972. While conducting a vehicular search for nests on a sparsely vegetated, dry pluvial lake bed, our attention was drawn to a Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) nest site. Both male and female Horned Lark were extremely agitated, uttering continuous alarm calls and fluttering up to approximately 1 m above the ground. The male then dived at and struck with its wings a heretofore unnoticed larger bird that was intently engaged in unknown behavior. When the third bird stood erect, we identified it as a male Western Meadowlark and noticed it had egg yolk dripping from its bill. Another male Horned Lark soon appeared and landed about 8 m from the nest. This male also voiced alarm cries, but did not join the unsuccessful attempt to drive away the meadowlark. We watched the entire event for approximately 60 seconds before we intervened. Nest inspection showed two eggs had been present, one of which was still intact. Whether the remaining egg was incubated after nest predation was not learned. On returning to the site a few days later we found it had been inundated by a heavy rain.

The second occurrence was at the nest of a Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) on 19 June. The nest contained three eggs that had been incubated for 4 days (the first egg laid on 12 June). We were taking time budgets of the male Lark Hunting, watching from a portable, 20-foot high tower 20 m away from the nest, when a male meadowlark approached. At the time the meadowlark had an active nest containing five 4-day-old young 35 m to the southwest of the Lark Bunting nest. The meadowlark was foraging slowly less than 1 m from the Lark Bunting nest at 08:37 MST when the male bunting flushed from the nest and flew approximately 15 m to the north. The meadowlark exhibited an initial startle response, i.e., flight intention movements and alarm clicks, then approached the Lark Bunting nest and spent 27 seconds at it before making a 250-m flight to the south while giving two flight song repetitions. We inspected the nest immediately and found all three eggs pecked open and the yolks exposed, whereas all eggs were normal when inspected at 07:30 MST. The Lark Bunting pair returned to and inspected the nest, but did not incubate the broken eggs. On 23 June these same color-banded Lark Buntings initiated a second and successful nest 25 m north of the original site.

Interference by meadowlarks at a second Lark Bunting nest occurred at 09:50

MST on 7 July when a male meadowlark approached a nest that contained three 2-day-old young. Neither Lark Bunting was in attendance at the nest at the time, although as the meadowlark neared the nest the female bunting returned to within 3 m of the nest and gave a series of alarm calls. The meadowlark was seen to probe into the nest several times before the female bunting dived at it and succeeded in chasing it away. The nest was inspected and a nestling, which was partially out of the nest cup, had several deep puncture wounds in the back and neck. The other young were not injured. Later we saw the female bunting drag the injured nestling away from the nest. The remaining young fledged successfully 7 days later.

This meadowlark behavior may be more widespread than earlier suspected. Of approximately 240 Lark Bunting and Horned Lark nests found in the last 3 years, five additional nest failures were definitely related to avian predation, i.e. eggs were pecked open or shells crushed, although the specific causes of these instances were not observed or known. Little has been reported on the opportunistic feeding patterns of meadowlarks, although Terres (1956, Auk 71: 289) and Hubbard and Hubbard (1969, Wilson Bull. 81: 107) reported meadowlarks feeding on fresh roadkills. These meadowlark behaviors reported here also may represent a response to an immediate food opportunity. However, the adaptive significance of interference behavior on interspecific competition should not be underestimated. Our study has shown (unpublished data) that various species adjust to interspecific competitive pressures through temporal and spatial segregation of demands. D. L. Beaver and P. H. Baldwin (unpublished manuscript, 1973, "Ecological overlap and the problem of competition and sympathy in the Western and Hammond's Flycatchers") indicated that the Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*) vacated areas of overlap with the Western Flycatcher (*E. difficilis*) to avoid competitive interactions. It would seem to be highly adaptive if a species, in this case the Western Meadowlark, could pressure a second species into vacating overlap areas by active nest interference. The immediate result of this interference would be spatial segregation if the disturbed pair renested elsewhere, and/or temporal segregation if their nesting sequence were forced back to an initial stage.

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Orange-breasted Bunting in southern Texas.—The Orange-breasted Bunting (*Passerina leclancherii*) is a not uncommon resident of the rather arid habitat of southwest Mexico from Chiapas north to Jalisco. I know of no previous records of its occurrence north of Jalisco. At approximately 09:00 on 2 December 1972 we netted an adult male on the World Wildlife Refuge 7 miles south of Mission, Texas, 900 miles from Jalisco. We were working in typical brush country of prickly pear, mesquite, retama, hackberry, huisache, and heavy underbrush with much willow near the river, and interspersed with small grassy openings.