

chus for hippopotamuses, which lack fur, would seem to contradict this relationship, though all foraging on hippopotamuses is on tissue from open wounds (Olivier and Laurie *ibid.*). The importance of bill shape in taking this type of food is unknown, but a narrow bill could possibly be advantageous. Attwell (*ibid.*) considers the preferences of *B. africanus* for buffalo and of *B. erythrorhynchus* for domestic cattle as paradoxical on the basis of the close taxonomic relationship between the substrates, but these choices are predicted by the suggested relationship between bill shape and the density of substrate fur.

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Magpie kills a ground squirrel.—Small mammals make up 7–12% of the diet of the two North American magpies, the Black-billed, *Pica pica hudsonia*, (Kalmbach 1927, The magpie in relation to agriculture, U.S. Dept. Agr. Tech. Bull. No. 24) and the Yellow-billed, *Pica nuttallii* (Linsdale 1937, The natural history of magpies, Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 25). Blackburn (1968, Condor 70: 281) gives the only account of magpies killing these mammals, the previous assumption being that they were taken as carrion.

On 31 March 1974, 40 miles east of Edmonton, I watched a Black-billed Magpie chase and kill a Richardson's ground squirrel, *Spermophilus richardsonii*. On this day in an especially late spring, many ground squirrels had surfaced and were running about on the snow that still covered the ground to depths of 1 m and more. The magpie, foraging over the open field, encountered the squirrel about 9 m from its tunnel in the snow. The squirrel ran toward its tunnel, but was intercepted by the magpie and ran about bewildered. The magpie harassed the squirrel for more than a minute until it stopped running and crouched down on the snow, where the bird killed it immediately with a sharp peck at the back of the neck. The magpie sat on its kill, ate at it for some time, then flew into a copse of aspens bordering the field.—LORAN L. GOULDEN, *Renewable Resources Consulting Services Ltd., 11440 Kingsway Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5G 0X4. Accepted 1 Jul. 74.*

First record of Purple Sandpiper for Louisiana.—On 4 April 1974 the authors and a student, Paul S. Frey, collected a Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) at the east jetty of the Calcasieu ship channel, Cameron, Cameron Parish, Louisiana. We saw only the one sandpiper, which was in a loose flock of Sanderlings (*Calidris alba*) and Ruddy Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*). The rock jetties at Cameron extend about a mile into the Gulf of Mexico, and we collected the bird about 100 yards from the south end.

We find no previous specimen or sight records for this species in Louisiana, and this is one of the few records for the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Recently this species has been seen and photographed along the Texas coast (Webster 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972). The 4 April date is in agreement with the Texas records that occurred between 30 November and 23 April. Burleigh (1958) lists three Georgia specimens, and Sprunt (1954, 1963) reports three specimens and numerous sightings in Florida. Our specimen (Louisiana State Univ. Mus. Zool. No. 75533)

was a female in winter plumage but undergoing molt. It had considerable subcutaneous fat. The fieldwork was sponsored by the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, project No. 1647.

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Ashton Blackburne's place in American ornithology.—Ashton Blackburne was an important early collector of birds in the New York City region at the time of the Revolutionary War. His contributions to American ornithology were graciously acknowledged by Thomas Pennant (1785, 1: leaf A2) in "Arctic zoology." He disclosed how Blackburne's specimens came into his hands, and pointed out their importance to him:

"To the rich museum of American Birds, preserved by Mrs. Anna Blackburn, of *Orford*, near *Warrington*, I am indebted for the opportunity of describing almost every one known in the provinces of *Jersey*, *New York*, and *Connecticut*. They were sent over to that lady by her brother the late Mr. *Ashton* Blackburn; who added to the skill and zeal of a sportsman, the most pertinent remarks on the specimens he collected for his worthy and philosophical sister."

Mrs. Allen (1951) implied that Ashton Blackburne was one of Pennant's collectors in North America, but the statement above affirms that their connection was less direct.

McAtee (1963) determined the number of birds from New York that Pennant described from Ashton Blackburne's specimens amounted to "no fewer than 101." The number is still higher when the birds from adjacent areas are included. This brief biographical sketch of a neglected naturalist also attempts to identify those species and subspecies that have maintained their priority and are cited in the A.O.U. Check-list (1957).

The Blackburne family has been referred to occasionally in the popular literature, but much of the information about them has been recopied from earlier sources (cf. Pennant 1774). The amount of material I found in a rather extensive search is sparse and contains frequent inaccuracies.

Ashton Blackburne was the fifth son of John Blackburne (1693-1786), a well-known and highly respected horticulturist of *Orford Hall*, near *Warrington*, in