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GALÁPAGOS MOCKINGBIRD PECKS AT SEA LION MOUTH

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The mockingbirds of the Galápagos Islands (*Nesomimus* spp.) are well-known for their opportunistic feeding habits. Hood Island Mockingbirds (*N. macdonaldi*), in particular, use a wide variety of sources for food and water. Presumably, the extreme aridity and barrenness of their home island have precipitated such habits as egg-eating, blood-drinking, and predation on *Tropidurus* lizards and nestling sea-birds.

Bowman and Carter (*Living Bird* 10:243-270, 1971) tabulated feeding habits of Galápagos mockingbirds. While at Punta Suarez on Hood Island, 26 July 1973, I witnessed a behavior not recorded in their paper or elsewhere in the literature. A *N. macdonaldi* foraged along a sandy beach littered with sleeping sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*). This mockingbird spent several minutes hopping from one sea lion to another, pecking at their teeth (fig. 1). The bird appeared to obtain and swallow bits of moist food and/or droplets of saliva. The sea lions continued to sleep, showing no reaction to the mockingbird's pecks. Lack of water, a conspicuous feature of Hood Island, has fostered several unusual methods of feeding in the island's mockingbirds; pecking at sea lions' mouths seems to be an addition to this repertoire.

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DOMINANCE HIERARCHIES IN WINTER SONG SPARROWS

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In many species of birds, some individuals are excluded from establishing territories in optimal habitats. Earlier we have shown that first year birds are excluded from spring territories in the Song Sparrow



FIGURE 1. Hood Island Mockingbird pecking at the mouth of a sleeping sea lion.

(*Melospiza melodia*) (Knapton and Krebs 1974). Empty territories were rapidly refilled by young birds after experimental removal of adults. In this note we report that the replacement birds were young who had been dominant in winter flocks in the study area. Odum (1942) and Dixon (1963) reported similar cases of dominant birds in winter flocks establishing territories in the spring, but their results were less detailed. Glase (1973) showed that resident pairs were most dominant in winter flocks, and Smith (1976) has reported that higher ranking individuals can obtain better quality breeding territories.