

GENERAL NOTES

Captive Barn Owls stockpile prey.—Wild owls have been observed to stockpile prey in the nest when incubating eggs or brooding young (e.g., Bent, *U. S. Natl. Mus., Bull.* **167**, 1937; Reese, *Auk*, **89**: 106-114, 1972; and references therein). However, non-nesting Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) maintained individually in large enclosures killed more prey than was eaten. Because of these observations, two experiments were designed to test for stockpiling in captive Barn Owls and the results are reported here.

Prey were placed in field enclosures (3.6 x 9.0 x 3.9 m with sparse vegetation, described in Kaufman, MS) in the evening, and the location and number of uneaten mice were recorded the next morning. In Experiment 1, 10 *Mus musculus* (25-30 g each) were placed in enclosures with each of three Barn Owls during three trials on different nights. All of the 90 *Mus* were killed but only 56 plus parts of three others were eaten. Only one of the uneaten mice was left in the center of the pen whereas the remainder were placed on a covered perch (9) or on the ground in the corners of the pen (24). The owls made nine stockpiles of 2-4 mice, three on the perch and six in corners.

In Experiment 2, the number of prey was increased to 30 *Mus* (25-30 g) and 25 *Peromyscus polionotus* (12-15 g) in the first and second trials, respectively. All 165 mice were killed but only 51 plus parts of 13 additional mice were eaten. Barn Owls stockpiled 98 of the 114 (86%) uneaten prey (Table 1).

These experiments have demonstrated that Barn Owls will kill more prey than are eaten when prey are readily available. Wild owls probably kill more prey than are eaten when prey densities are high at any time of the year. But since field observations on stockpiling are usually made only at the nest (e.g., Reese, 1972, op. cit.; and references therein), this cannot be verified.

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TABLE 1. Number of uneaten mice placed by Barn Owls on the perch, in corners, or other areas of the enclosures.

Owl	Prey	Perch	Corner				Other
			1	2	3	4	
1	30 <i>Mus</i>	8	7	5	0	5	1
2	30 <i>Mus</i>	10	3	5	1	4	2
3	30 <i>Mus</i>	6	3	6	2	3	4
1	25 <i>Peromyscus</i>	6	3	2	0	3	1
2	25 <i>Peromyscus</i>	4	0	1	0	0	5
3	25 <i>Peromyscus</i>	0	3	7	0	1	3

Ring-billed Gull relocates nest as a result of egg displacement.—While studying social behavior of Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) at an established colony near Rogers City, Presque Isle County, Michigan, we recorded the details of a situation that resulted in a nest being moved by the adults. To our knowledge this is the first time that such an event has been reported for this species although Prevett (*Auk*, **90**: 202-204, 1972) recently reported a similar incident for the Blue Goose (*Anser caerulescens*).

During incubation, eggs are not infrequently rolled out of the nest by the feet of the adult Ring-billed Gulls. This usually occurs as the birds take flight, especially when they are disturbed suddenly. If the eggs are undamaged and within approximately 30 cm of the nest, the adults usually roll them back into the nest as described by Beer (*Ibis*, **104**: 388-398, 1962) and Tinbergen (The Herring Gull's World. London, Collins, 1953). Frequently in Ring-billed Gull colonies, however, abandoned eggs are found outside of nests.

In our study area that included 50 of the approximately 4,000 nests that existed in the colony in 1972, both adults and nests were marked with enamel paint so that ownership could be easily determined and individuals recognized. Each nest and

the adult pair associated with it were marked with the same colors. On 9 June 1972, Nest 504 contained two eggs as it had done since the third week in May. The marked adults attending the nest were both at least three years old (based on plumage). On 10 June, both color-marked eggs were observed approximately 40 cm outside of the nest cup. Within several minutes one of the marked adults was incubating the two eggs on the ground outside of the original nest site. Later on during the day both adults were observed nest-pointing or choking over the eggs, a pre-nest building behavior described by Tinbergen (*ibid*). No attempt to roll the eggs back into the original nest was observed although constant vigilance had not been maintained by the authors.

Since we both have observed egg-rolling behavior on several occasions in incubating Ring-billed Gulls, it is likely that the adults attempted to retrieve the eggs in this manner but might have been unable to roll them back to the nest. The substrate between the original nest and the final location of the eggs was uneven, rocky, and on a slight downgrade. All of these factors would have made egg-rolling difficult.

On 11 June, both adults carried nest material from the original nest to the site of the two displaced eggs. By evening, a new nest had been constructed around the eggs. During construction the eggs were rolled slightly to allow for placement of nest material underneath the eggs. As far as we could determine, all of the material for the second nest came from the original nest. The sites of the original and second nests were 40 cm apart from nest center to nest center (Fig. 1).

The nest was observed again on 12 June. One egg was missing and could not be located in the immediate nesting territory. In its place was a smooth egg-shaped rock which had been rolled or moved in some other manner into the nest from the surrounding area (Fig. 2).

Our final observation of the reconstructed nest was made on 30 June. The remaining egg and the rock still were being incubated, and it was obvious that the egg would not hatch because it was cracked slightly and the contents were dried and light in weight. During the three days between the time the eggs were first observed out of the nest and the time that the second nest was completed, incubation was interrupted by nest-building activity and might have occurred only at night, thus causing the embryo to die.

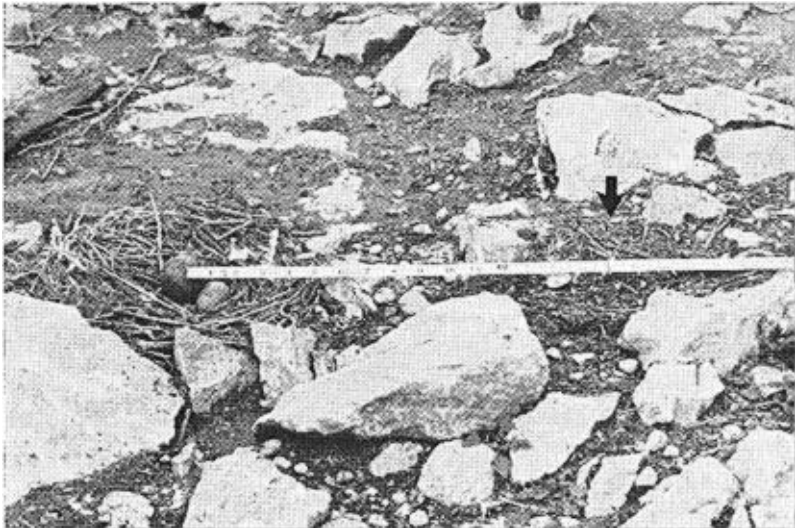


FIGURE 1. Positions of the original (right) and new (left) nests. The arrow marks the top center line of the original nest, and the ruler runs through the center of the nest.



FIGURE 2. Close-up of the reconstructed nest containing one of the original two eggs and a smooth egg-shaped rock.

In a Ring-billed Gull breeding colony where nest density is high, apparently egg-rolling behavior would be favored over the construction of a new nest, because in most cases a distance greater than 30 cm from the original nest would locate the eggs in the nest territory of another pair of adults. However, the nest that we observed, although in an area of high density, was located next to a nest territory that had been deserted earlier in the season. Therefore, when the eggs were displaced, the adults did not have to compete with another adult pair for the new nest site.—FRANCESCA J. CUTHBERT and WILLIAM E. SOUTHERN, *Department of Biological Sciences, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois 60115*. Received 7 March 1973, accepted 20 March 1973.

A longevity and round trip record of Purple Finches.—An adult male Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*) No. 73-53582, banded at my home 7 March 1966, was retaken 17 February 1970, repeating in March and April. I recaptured him on 20 and 31 January 1973 and 18 March 1973. When banded in raspberry red plumage, he was at least in his second year of age. Therefore in 1973, he was in at least his ninth year.

Another individual, No. 79-42897 banded on 14 February 1972, age and sex unknown, was captured and released by Gordon Loery of Morris, Connecticut on 8 and 12 May 1972. I recaptured this bird on 15 and 19 January 1973 in female plumage.—AMELIA R. LASKEY, *1721 Graybar Lane, Nashville, Tennessee 37215*. Received 16 March 1973, accepted 22 March 1973.

More on one-night mileage of migrants.—Amelia R. Laskey has noted the meagerness of published data on distances covered in a day or night by banded migratory birds (*Bird-Banding*, 43: 287, 1972). Although the Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*) is not a regular migrant, my one record of flight time and distance is of interest. Between 12 February and 24 February 1960, I banded 14 Pine Siskins at Somesville, Maine, of which four were recovered in Brunswick, Maine, by F. Burton Whitman, Jr., on 25 February and 26 February. The straight-line scaled distance between Somesville and Brunswick is 96 1/4 miles.