

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) in the gizzards of King Rails, but no mention is made of how these may have been obtained. European Water Rails (*R. aquaticus*) kill small birds (Axell, 1962; Blundell, 1962; Thompson, 1962), and our observation demonstrates that the Clapper Rail may be similarly opportunistic.

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Return Rates among Highland Rufous-collared Sparrows.—During a study on vocal dialects in the Rufous-collared sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) in northwestern Argentina in 1972–1974 (Handford and Nottebohm, *Evolution*, **30**: 802–817, 1976), a banding program was conducted to investigate site fidelity between two adjacent song dialect areas. Given the paucity of information in the literature on return rates, these results should be valuable.

The birds were banded in the 1972–1973 season in two localities 4 km apart at 2,800 and 2,980 m (Table 1). Banding commenced after clear signs of pair-formation to ensure that only resident birds were marked. The 199 birds captured during the first season were each given a numbered aluminum band and an individual combination of colored

TABLE 1.
Returns of Rufous-collared Sparrows in Argentina.

Site of banding	Number banded 1972–1973	Number returned 1973–1974			Percent return rate
		Recaptured	Resighted	Total	
2,800 m					
Adults ♂	58	7	6	13	22.4
Adult ♀	31	10	4	14	45.2
Juvenile	15	1	5	6	40.0
Total	104	18	15	33	31.7
2,980 m					
Adult ♂	55	8	9	17	30.9
Adult ♀	34	3	4	7	20.6
Juvenile	6	0	2	2	33.3
Total	95	11	15	26	27.4
Grand total	199	29	30	59	29.7

plastic bands. The aluminum band was placed either on the left or the right leg according to the site of capture to enable immediate recognition of origin in the following season.

Of the 199 banded in 1972–1973, 59 (29.7%) were recaptured, or individually identified by their color bands, in the 1973–1974 breeding season. All returns were within 500 m of the banding site with the great majority within 200 m. Four birds were resighted singing from their same characteristic perches. Between the two banding sites 38 hr were spent searching the region but no banded birds were observed. Twelve days netting at a site 4 km below the 2,800 m banding site also failed to produce a banded bird. In the fifth season following banding (January 1978), several hours searching for banded birds at both banding sites yielded none. Given the ready visibility of territorial birds, the apparent absence of survivors suggests that five years may exceed the upper ceiling of mean survival for a cohort of these sparrows at this altitude. This is consistent with the indication of a 30% overall yearly survival rate. This estimate is considerably lower than the 50–84% survival reported for other small passerines by J. O. C. Roberts (*Bird-Banding*, **42**: 165–184, 1971), I. R. Savidge and D. E. Davis (*Bird-Banding*, **45**: 152–155, 1974), and L. R. Mewaldt (*N. Amer. Bird Bander*, **1**: 14–20).

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Anting by Common Crows.—In the past few decades anting has received the attention of several biologists (Whitaker, 1957; Potter, 1970; Potter and Hauser, 1974; Skutch, 1977). Most authors agree that observing anting in the wild is uncommon, even though Potter (1970) considers it a common form of avian behavior. This paradox can be attributed to the unpredictability of the behavior, in part an artifact of our lack of understanding its function. Because the purpose of anting is still unresolved, it seems desirable to continue documentation of observations of this activity in wild birds.

On 11 May 1979 along the Clark Fork River in Missoula, Montana, at 1000 (temp. 65°F), a Common Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) landed in the weeds in direct sunlight about 30 m in front of me. With binoculars I could see two other crows on the ground partly hidden in the weeds. I was able to approach to within 7 m of the birds before one saw me and flew away. The other two remained undisturbed. At that distance I could hear constant guttural vocalizations from both birds. One bird was settled atop a mound of ants (*Formica criniventris* Wheeler) with its wings partly spread at the sides, tail fanned, belly on the ground with body plumage ruffled. The other was settled in similar posture on a trail adjacent to the mound where ants were common also. Both birds remained in their positions for 10–15 sec, then stood and moved to new spots, one bird on the mound and one on the trail. I saw both birds do this 4 or 5 times each over a 3-min period before they flew away. During that time I was detected by both birds yet they continued to ant, leaving only when disturbed by the passage of a nearby train. One bird then perched atop a stationary boxcar for 1 min during which it picked at its legs and belly plumage several times, possibly removing ants.

The behavior of the crows fits the description of passive anting (defined in Whitaker, 1957, and Potter, 1970) in which the bird settles on ants and allows them to crawl through the plumage. In previous weeks crows in the area were molting remiges and retrices, but I failed to note plumage conditions of the anting birds. Thus I cannot provide additional evidence in support of Potter's (1970) hypothesis that anting is related to feather emergence. Passive anting by captive Common Crows has been described by Weber (1935) and Ivor (1956), but to my knowledge this is the first documented case of anting for this species in the wild.

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