

EASTERN SCREECH-OWL HATCHES AN AMERICAN KESTREL

TIMOTHY F. BREEN AND JOHN W. PARRISH, JR.¹

*Department of Biology
Georgia Southern University
Statesboro, Georgia 30460-8042 USA*

Abstract.—An Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus asio*) was found incubating her own egg and that of a Southeastern American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*) in late March 1995. Three owlets and the kestrel successfully hatched in early May; all appeared normal. The kestrel was not present in the nest box with the three owlets when the box was checked two days later, and its fate is not known.

INDIVIDUO DE *OTUS ASIO* INCUBA HUEVO DE *FALCO SPARVERIUS PAULUS*

Sinopsis.—A finales de marzo de 1995, se encontró a un individuo de *Otus asio* incubando su propio huevo y otro de *Falco sparverius paulus*. Tres huevos de buhos y uno de falcón eclosionaron exitosamente en mayo. Dos días más tarde, cuando se examinó la caja nuevamente, había desaparecido el pichón de falcón.

As part of an ongoing study of the nesting biology of the Southeastern American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*) in Georgia (Breen 1995), 71 nest boxes were placed on Fort Gordon military base, Richmond County, southwest of Augusta (33°21'N, 82°11'W). On 28 Mar. 1995, one nest box located on a utility pole in a small clearing surrounded by pine trees was found to contain one kestrel egg and one Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus asio*) egg. A pair of kestrels had been observed in the area of the nest box the previous week. When the nest box was checked on 5 April, a rufous-phase screech-owl was incubating two screech-owl eggs and the kestrel egg. The nest box was left undisturbed until 2 May, when it contained three screech-owl nestlings and one kestrel nestling, all of which were no more than a couple of days old. The kestrel was examined carefully and appeared normal. Because no kestrels had yet hatched eggs in any of the other nest boxes in the study area, we left the kestrel chick in the nest box with the owls. The kestrel was not present two days later. Its fate is unknown.

To the best of our knowledge this represents the first report of a screech-owl successfully incubating and hatching an American Kestrel egg, although Hanna (1936) found addled kestrel (*F. s. sparverius*) eggs in a Western Screech-Owl (*Otus kennicottii*) nest in a Joshua tree north of the San Bernadino Mountains, California. Hanna (1940) later discovered two screech-owl eggs in a kestrel nest in a Joshua tree in the same area of California. Although neither of those reports indicate whether any of the eggs hatched, Sumner (1933) observed a tree nest in which a pair of kestrels not only incubated a screech-owl egg, but successfully fledged the owlet, along with three kestrels, near Sacramento, California. American Kestrels, which had recently lost a brood, inexplicably incubat-

¹ Author to whom reprint requests should be sent.

ed and successfully fledged European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) from a nearby nest box while aggressively chasing off the starling parents (Tlusty and Hamerstrom 1992). These observations imply that adult kestrels and hatchlings are quite tolerant of hatchlings of other species of birds, but that may not be so with screech-owls. Although it is probably a rare event, we suggest that kestrel eggs and nestlings be immediately moved from screech-owl nests when possible.

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