

**Great Horned Owl attacking squirrel nests.**—The Great Horned Owl, *Bubo virginianus*, occasionally preys on the fox squirrel, *Sciurus niger* (see Errington, Hamerstrom, and Hamerstrom, 1940, *Research Bull.* 277, *Agr. Exp. Sta., Iowa State Coll.*, p. 791). However, the manner in which the owl catches this prey has not been recorded. Several observations have been made in Douglas County, Kansas, of the Great Horned Owl apparently seeking out squirrels in the daylight hours in an unusual manner.

At 10:30 a.m., on 19 November 1953, at the University of Kansas Natural History Reservation, while in the vicinity of Hole Woods (see Fitch, 1952. *Univ. Kansas Mus. Nat. Hist., Misc. Publ.* No. 4:10), I observed a Great Horned Owl slowly circling above the trees. Suddenly this bird glided swiftly downward at approximately a forty-five degree angle toward a yellow oak, *Quercus muehlenbergii*. When the owl was within about ten feet of the upper branches, it extended its feet and legs and then struck a squirrel leaf-nest in the periphery of the tree. A fox squirrel emerged, climbed down the supporting branch to the trunk of the tree and crouched there, facing the nest. The owl twice slowly circled the tree and alighted on the branch which bore the leaf-nest, facing the squirrel approximately eight feet away. When the owl lit on the limb, the squirrel began clicking its incisor teeth and continued this noise for about two minutes until the owl flew away south over Skink Field (Fitch, *loc. cit.*). Thereupon, the squirrel descended to the ground and ran west, disappearing in understory vegetation. Immediately following the disappearance of the squirrel, I inspected the nest and thought it intact enough for further use by squirrels. Repeated observations and checks of the nest until March, 1954, however, revealed that it has deteriorated; it seemed not to have been used by squirrels after 19 November.

At 4:30 p.m., on 5 March 1954, three miles west and two miles south of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas, north of the Wakarusa River, I noticed a Great Horned Owl flying just above an American elm, *Ulmus americana*. The owl attacked a leaf-nest approximately forty feet above the ground in this tree, but no squirrel was flushed. The owl flew into woods to the west. Examination through binoculars showed the nest to be mutilated externally.

Cloud cover seemed not to govern the described behavior of the owls, for the sky was overcast on November 19 and cloudless on March 5.

Mr. Terry A. Vaughan, a fellow graduate student, told me that at 3:00 p.m. on 7 February 1954, two miles west of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas, he saw a Great Horned Owl carrying a dead fox squirrel. The owl flew out of a tree which seemingly was being used for a roost. Mr. Vaughan and I examined this area on 21 February 1954, and located five pellets, none of which contained any squirrel remains. In the immediate area, however, there were several leaf-nests damaged in a fashion similar to those described above.

In review: the Great Horned Owl catches fox squirrels in daylight, regardless of cloud cover, by searching out and striking leaf nests.—ROBERT L. PACKARD, *State Biological Survey, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, April 1, 1954.*

**Pied-billed Grebe taking flight from land.**—On April 26, 1954, a live, healthy Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*) was brought to my home in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. It had been found stranded on a wet highway which it presumably had mistaken for water. When placed on the lawn in my back yard, it sat quietly for several minutes while three people stood by it. Little or no wind was blowing. Suddenly the bird arose and beating its wings rapidly ran with pattering feet through the two-inch-high grass

and white clover (*Trifolium repens*) for about 20 feet and took flight. Gradually gaining altitude, it flew between two houses, turned down the street, and at an altitude of about 40 feet disappeared among some trees approximately 500 feet from the starting point. Bent (1919. *U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull.*, 107:44) states that the Pied-billed Grebe "... seems to be incapable of rising from the ground [to fly]." In the exceptional case I observed, the short grass and clover, like water, gave proper resistance to the rapidly moving feet for impetus to aid the wings in successfully taking flight.—NICHOLAS L. CUTHBERT, *Biology Department, Central Michigan College of Education, Mount Pleasant, Michigan, June 30, 1954.*

**Hudsonian Curlew and Knot in Colorado.**—During the spring migration of 1953 I made almost daily observation trips around Union Reservoir, a natural lake covering approximately 600 acres in Weld County, Colorado, three miles east of Longmont. On May 15 I saw six small curlews feeding along the south shore of the lake. Careful scrutiny revealed the characteristic markings of the Hudsonian Curlew (*Numenius phaeopus*), a species that, during more than twenty years of bird study, I had never before seen in either Colorado or Nebraska. One bird, a female, was collected and is in the skin collection of the Denver Museum of Natural History (No. 26738). Dr. A. M. Bailey, Director of the museum, confirmed my opinion as to the rarity of the species in Colorado, there being only one or two other records in the literature I have examined.

On May 18, 1953, a Knot (*Calidris canutus*) was collected at almost the same spot on the shore of Union Reservoir. Upon receipt of the specimen, a male, Dr. Bailey wrote, "So far as I can find, this is the first record of the Knot for Colorado." There is no record for Nebraska, but the species has been reported in Kansas. The skin (No. 26737) is now in the Denver Museum.—MRS. CARL N. COLLISTER, *Hover Road, Longmont, Colorado, April 14, 1954.*

**Fish Crows "de-lousing" cattle.**—Bent (1946. *U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull.* 191:279) in his account of the Fish Crow (*Corvus ossifragus*), citing N. B. Moore's notes, made many years ago, says that "these crows alight on the backs of cattle, to pick up the ticks that are burrowing into the skin and sucking the life blood from, as well as annoying, these animals; this may be an ancient habit, as it does not seem to have been recently observed."

Payne's Prairie, a 13,000 acre wet prairie south of Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida, supports many large herds of cattle. Fish Crows are common in this area. On the morning of 21 March 1954 we observed a Fish Crow perched on a cow's back; it was repeatedly pecking about the cow's pelvic region, near the base of the tail. Another crow, which was on the ground behind the cow, flew to the cow's back. After threats from both birds, the first bird left, and the second bird began pecking at the cow. It soon flew off, whereupon the first bird returned and continued pecking. The cow ignored the birds, except for once nuzzling its back, causing one of the crows to flutter up momentarily.

The crows were obviously picking ectoparasites from the cow; whether they were ticks, lice, or bots, we cannot say, since it was impracticable to examine the cow. A number of other species of birds, including the closely related Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*), have been observed "de-lousing" hoofed mammals (Rothschild and Clay, 1952. "Fleas, Flukes and Cuckoos").—DALE W. RICE AND EDWARD L. MOCKFORD, *Department of Biology, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, March 25, 1954.*