

Sparrow Hawk preys upon American Robin.—On July 16, 1955, while driving north on Dale Drive near Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland, I saw a male Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*) fly low across the road in front of me carrying in its talons, gripped by the anterior part of the breast, an adult American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*).

The screaming hawk was pursued closely by two adult robins which called excitedly and, at one time, pulled up parallel with it, without venturing to attack the small raptor. The hawk and its pursuers went out of sight behind an evergreen tree.

I had parked my car and was walking back to investigate when the hawk, which had doubled back on its path, crossed the road again still carrying its prey with the two protesting robins close behind. The hawk was not more than 10 feet above the ground, and its flight was labored from the weight of its prey. This group of three birds swerved behind another evergreen, and I could not locate them again.

The literature shows that robins are among the heaviest birds taken by Sparrow Hawks. John B. May (1935. "The Hawks of North America") recorded meadowlarks (*Sturnella neglecta*) and Brewer's Blackbirds (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) as the largest birds taken by Sparrow Hawks in the western United States. A. K. Fisher (1893. *Bull. No. 3, U. S. Dept. Agric., Div. Ornith. and Mammal.*) listed the Bobwhite Quail (*Colinus virginianus*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), and Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) among the small birds identified in stomach content examinations of these hawks.

However, the identification of the prey is often based upon stomach content remains or else the observation does not indicate that the hawk was seen in flight carrying its prey. More rarely, records of the hawk apparently carrying its prey are published. May (*op. cit.*) stated that "John Steidl (1928) saw a Sparrow Hawk several times with two-weeks-old chickens in its talons."

Use of some of the data from the bird weight files of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service makes it possible to compare approximate weight relationships of the Sparrow Hawk and its avian prey: Sparrow Hawk, 83 to 140 grams; Bob-white, 195 to 198 grams; Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), 145 grams; Robin, 74 to 85 grams; Starling, 84 grams; and Red-winged Blackbird, 70 to 73 grams. I was informed at the Poultry Department of the University of Maryland that for rapidly-growing breeds of chickens, a two-weeks-old bird would probably weigh between 140 and 160 grams, as compared to 130 to 140 grams for a two-weeks-old bird of a breed that grows slowly. Sparrow Hawks have not been seen carrying prey species appreciably heavier than themselves, even though they are known to feed on larger birds.—DONALD LAMORE, 2C Garden Way, Greenbelt, Maryland, August 16, 1955.

Preening and other behavior of a captive Horned Grebe.—On March 20, 1955, I captured a molting Horned Grebe (*Colymbus auritus cornutus*) at Island Beach State Park, Ocean County, New Jersey. The breast feathers were soaked with oil which I removed with a detergent and mineral oil. The bird lived for eight days; the following observations were made in this period.

Preening.—After the oil was removed, the grebe was placed on the floor where it immediately began to preen. The tameness of the bird allowed close observation. The grebe preened for 40 minutes without interruption, slept for 10 minutes, and then preened for 20 minutes more before it went to sleep for a more extended period. Preening began with the feathers of the back and wings. First the grebe removed the water from these feathers. This was done by manipulating the bill along small bunches