

**Attraction of birds to salt licks placed for mammals.**—On July 16, 1956, in a small meadow at 8000 feet elevation in Yosemite National Park, California, I flushed a group of about 20 Cassin's Finches (*Carpodacus cassinii*) from a block of salt that had been placed for the use of deer. I retired a short distance to watch the salt, and found that the Cassin's Finches alighted on and beside the salt cake and picked at it with their bills, removing and swallowing small pieces of salt. I suspended my mist nets near the salt, and on six days, July 16, July 18 to 22, captured and banded some of the birds that were attracted to the salt. Eight of the 642 Cassin's Finches banded had their legs and feet heavily parasitized by the scaly leg mite (*Cnemidocoptes mutans*), and the legs of 18 more were so swollen and encrusted that I could not band them. Two of the 32 Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*) banded were infested with this same parasite. I also captured two Evening Grosbeaks (*Hesperiphona vespertina*) and 71 Pine Siskins (*Spinus pinus*) at the salt block. No individuals of the last two species showed signs of mite infestations of the tarsi.—DON BLEITZ, *Bleitz Wildlife Foundation, 1001 North McCadden Place, Los Angeles 38, California, November 7, 1956.*

**Patterns in the use of left and right limbs in vertebrates.**—Fisher's paper (1957) on the average preference of Domestic Pigeons (*Columba livia*) for landing on the right foot is especially interesting in demonstrating that the pattern is apparently not the same as in humans, and may vary with a number of factors. One would expect habit to determine one or the other usage in a set of actions, and thus avoid the necessity of choice. This one might expect to be more important in the more highly evolved animals. Since the small body of information that has been recorded about such patterns in vertebrates, other than man, is apparently little-known, the following notes that have come my way may be of interest.

Parrots tend to be left-footed in holding food (Friedmann and Davis, 1938); birds of prey tend to hold and carry food in the left foot (Lane); lions and tigers are either right- or left-pawed, and gorillas tend to be left-handed and with a more developed left arm (Lane, 1946); the rhesus monkey may be right- or left-handed and this is easily altered by training (Lashley, 1917).

Although elephants being right-tusked, mountain goats right- or left-hipped in sliding down mountains, Spanish fighting bulls having a master horn, and Texas longhorns a less-regular-shaped right horn (Lane, *op. cit.*), may not be quite the same type of phenomena, they are certainly collateral.

The asymmetrical condition in the skull of certain whales, notably sperm whales, is probably correlated with bone changes in phylogeny and not with behavior. But the crossing of the mandibles in crossbills (*Loxia*), the upper to the left predominating in the New World, crossing to the right in the Old World (Southern, 1957:125) seems to affect behavior in feeding—a "right-handed" bird holding the cone in one direction, a "left-handed" in the opposite way.

It has been held that puffins, which may carry up to 28 little fishes in their bills at one time, arrange the fish with the heads all to one side of the mouth, but this is erroneous, as they actually are held at random (Fisher and Lockley, 1954:287). Terns, however, are said to carry fish hanging down the left side of the bill (Fisher and Lockley, *loc. cit.*). Palmer (1941:98) has made an illuminating observation on this: a feeding flock of terns tends to rotate, birds diving from one side and then coming up and going to the other side of the flock. When a bird carrying a fish leaves the flock the fish always hangs down the same side of the bill. This is a natural result of the birds' swooping down from one side of the rotating flock only, while the school of fish is travelling in one direction.

Students interested further in the subject should consult Ludwig's 500 pages dealing with the question of left and right in both animals and plants, a volume not available to me.

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**Nesting of the Cattle Egret in the Virgin Islands.**—The first specimen of the Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) from the American Virgin Islands was taken on St. Croix on February 21, 1955 (Seaman, 1955. *Wilson Bull.*, 67:304-305). No evidence of breeding of this egret was found in 1955.

On May 29, 1956, while banding White-crowned Pigeons (*Columba leucocephala*) at Krause Lagoon, St. Croix, a small breeding colony of Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea*) and Snowy Egrets (*Leucophoyx thula*) was visited. Several Cattle Egrets were identified at this site immediately and their bright plumage, guttural cries and agitated behavior left no doubt that they were sharing the mangroves (*Rhizophora mangle*) with their companion herons in breeding activities. There were about 30 breeding herons on this mangrove island on this date. All young were about two weeks old, and mixed up helter-skelter through their many-limbed home. Although I felt very sure that some of the young observed belonged to the newly-arrived Cattle Egrets, no report was made, since none of the nests or eggs found was identified positively.

On February 26, 1957, 10 Cattle Egrets were observed at the heronry at Krause Lagoon. There were no nests on this date but breeding behavior was evident. On April 23, three nests containing two pale, blue-green eggs each were identified at the old site. They were typical heron nests, loosely constructed of twigs and placed on the western or lee side of the mangrove clump or "island."

On April 30, four nests of the Cattle Egret were found; these contained 2, 2, 1, and 3 eggs, respectively. Hatching was in progress in one nest on this date, and it was completed in three by May 7. On the latter date the bills of the nestlings that had