

one of these footprints and performed somewhat awkward but very recognizable nest-building movements, kicking back with the feet and pressing the breast against the side of the depression in a "smoothing" motion. The bird also picked up a small piece of dried grass and tucked it beneath the body.

This observation lends support to Dilger's statement that "the innate releasing mechanisms responsible for reacting to nest-building stimuli must be present at an early age."—SALLY F. HOYT, *Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 19 October 1960.*

Notes on nesting of the Caracara.—Bent (1938. *U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull.*, 170 (2):127-135) listed the range of the Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) in central Texas as Sheffield, San Angelo, Mason, Waco, and probably Houston. While working in Brazoria County, Texas, I had occasion to observe the nesting success of this interesting bird each year from 1955 through 1959. The location of the nesting site was 1 mile south of Danberry, Brazoria County, Texas. Danberry is 43 miles south of Houston. The general agriculture of the area is rice farming and cattle grazing.

The birds were seen each year close to the same nesting site in late January. They are known to nest earlier in Florida and south Texas. However, waterfowl hunting is common in this area and shooting may keep these shy birds away until the waterfowl season closes.

The nest was located about 15 feet high in a clump of live oak trees (*Quercus virginiana*), a common nesting plant for the caracara. The clump of trees was in an open pasture surrounded by rice fields. Its location enabled the birds to view the surrounding country with ease. The birds were observed at a distance, for they flush while the intruder is some distance away. Only the sentinel bird would be seen during the period they were incubating. The family group was seen in June but the nest itself was not examined during the nesting season because the landowner had asked that it not be disturbed.

Because the family group remained together in the general vicinity of the nest for some time after the young left it, the nesting success was easy to determine. Two young were raised each year in 1955, 1956, 1957, and 1959. Only one young bird was raised in 1958. The family could be seen until late June or July. It would then leave the area and would not be seen again until the nesting pair returned in January of the following year. The young evidently left the area for good, for none of them was seen again.—OLAN W. DILLON, JR., *Soil Conservation Service, Ithaca, New York, 1 November 1960.*

Distraction display of the Common Gallinule.—Common Gallinules (*Gallinula chloropus*) at Lake Alice, University of Florida Campus, Gainesville, Florida, most commonly build platform nests on small floating islands, but sometimes build floating nests in water pennywort (*Hydrocotyle umbellata*). Alexander Sprunt, Jr. (Bent, 1926. *U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull.*, 135: 349 pp.) describes the reaction of incubating birds to his presence at the nest: ". . . the adults within a few feet of me while photographing the nest and examining the eggs. . . ." He comments on the "utter unconcern on the part of the bird. Walking about . . . picking up food . . . within 6 and 8 feet . . . they stroll about as if there was no enemy . . . within miles." Although this behavior is well recorded, I have not seen it at Lake Alice.

Two types of behavior are exhibited by Common Gallinules when they are flushed from their nests at Lake Alice. Most of the birds walk or spatter rapidly away from the immediate nest site and do not return until the intruder leaves. Some individuals

exhibit an unusual distraction display from nearby floating pennywort or in very shallow water. They retreat 20 to 30 feet from the nest, face the intruder, half extend both wings, and stamp their feet alternately on the water. The alternate stamping of the feet results in much splashing and in general creates a noisy disturbance. The wing extension more than doubles the bird's apparent bulk. *Kuk* calls are given during the display and while the bird moves about between displays. One bird which was observed daily during the 1960 season performed on low, horizontal limbs of nearby willow (*Salix* sp.) when a combination of pennywort growth and high water level made the display impossible at its usual locale. The display lost much of its effectiveness, but the slapping on the bark was still distinctly audible at more than 30 feet. Some stamping was done using alternate feet, but the bird appeared to have some difficulty maintaining its perch, and most of the stamping was done repetitively with one foot. Although this stamping was done with the right foot, it was probably because the left foot was at a slightly higher elevation rather than because of any "footedness" on the part of the bird.

These observations clarify a discrepancy in the literature. Bent leaves the impression that incubating birds respond by moving a very few feet away and otherwise ignoring the intruder. Miller (1946. *Cassinia*, 36:14) describes what must be this same distraction display, ". . . jumped about excitedly. She splashed and displayed upon the water and pecked frequently at the duck weed which covered her. Her cries . . . attracted her mate. . . . He behaved just as excitedly, as he jumped up and down on the water feigning a broken wing." Miller labels this injury feigning. Gullion (1952. *Wilson Bull.*, 64:83-93) refers to Miller's work. He concludes that the elements of this display closely resemble churning and swanning by the American Coot (*Fulica americana*). Churning is a displacement activity in which the coot backpaddles so rapidly that it lifts its body out of the water. Swanning, partial extension and arching of the wings, is used in nest defense. Swanning in the American Coot resembles wing extension in the Common Gallinule. Stamping in the gallinule is not the same thing as churning in the coot. These coot and gallinule displays do have some elements in common, but they play different roles in the behavior patterns of these two birds. Gullion was correct in questioning the classification of these gallinule displays by Miller as injury feigning. The gallinule's partial wing extension crudely resembles the familiar broken-wing feint, but apparently only serves the function of increasing apparent bulk. The total display makes the adult bird more conspicuous, and it should be considered a distraction display.—DONALD A. JENNI, *Department of Biology, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 2 November 1960.*

A Hoary Redpoll specimen for New Jersey.—During the winter of 1959-1960, there was a major invasion of Common Redpolls (*Acanthis flammea*) in the northeast, the fourth such occurrence in the United States in the past 14 years (*Audubon Field Notes*, 14:284). Hoary Redpolls (*A. hornemanni*) were frequently reported in the flocks of Common Redpolls, several "lighter" redpolls being reported from the New York City region and Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

On 1 April 1960, I noticed one pale individual in a flock of 14 redpolls at a feeding station in West Englewood, Bergen County, New Jersey. It was frequently involved in threat displays and chase flights with other members of the flock. The bird was taken as a specimen and subsequently identified as *Acanthis hornemanni exilipes* by Harrison B. Tordoff. The specimen has been deposited in The University of Michigan Museum of