

## GENERAL NOTES

**Notes on an epigamic display of the Catbird.**—Although a general description of the courtship (heterosexual reproductive communication system leading to consummation sexual act) behavior of the Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) is to be found in Bent (1948. "Life Histories of North American Nuthatches, Wrens, Thrashers and Their Allies," *Smith. Inst. U.S. Natl. Mus., Bull.* 195:1-475) neither detailed observations on specific displays nor their correlation with distinct phases of the breeding cycle seems to be on record. Between 6:00 AM and 6:05 AM on 2 July 1962, on the Charles C. Barlow farm one mile north of Roodhouse, Greene County, Illinois, I observed an epigamic "dance" performed by a male Catbird.

The male had alighted upon a stone bench approximately 3 feet from a lilac (*Syringa*) in which sat a second Catbird, presumably a female. The male assumed a semicrouching posture with the crown and back feathers ruffled, the head bowed—the bill pointing downward—and the tail quarter-fanned and depressed so as to drag on the surface of the bench. In this attitude the bird then began a shuffling "dance," at the same time rocking slightly from side to side. The male moved along a circular path and paused six times to flick his tail upward, thus displaying the chestnut patch on the under tail coverts. The patch could have been observed by the other bird during only three of the flicks.

This part of the display lasted three minutes, during which time the male emitted a faint catlike mewing note. The other bird remained on its perch and appeared to be intently watching the actions of the male.

The male then assumed an erect posture with the tail cocked and the feathers of the thorax seemingly adpressed. Such an attitude recalls the "hostile dancing" posture described by Hailman (1960. *Condor*, 5:464-468) for the Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*). The male hopped in an exaggerated manner around the periphery of the surface of the bench and emitted a louder, more intense mewing note. At this juncture the other bird flew to the surface of the bench and began to hop around the periphery. The male, maintaining the posture described above, chased the other bird over the surface of the bench. The latter then flew to the ground and began to forage. The male also flew to the ground. There he continued to hop in an exaggerated manner for another minute before both birds departed.

At the time that these displays were observed, the above pair of Catbirds was known to have a nest in a nearby mulberry (*Morus*), containing three feathered young with eyes open, just beginning to venture to the edge of the nest. Saunders (*in Bent*, op. cit.) indicates that second or third nests may be built before the young leave the first nest; thus, courtship behavior, as described above, would be expected at this juncture as a prelude to another brood.—JON C. BARLOW, *Department of Mammalogy, American Museum of Natural History, New York 24, New York, 3 December 1962.*

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Ohio.**—Records of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora forficata*) in the eastern United States are not uncommon, but to our knowledge none has been reported from Ohio. On 18 May 1962, Mr. Orval Crates, who lives on a farm 2 miles south of Jenera, Ohio, reported that he had seen a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that morning and on the preceding day. With my son, Thomas Phillips, I drove to the Crates farm and picked up Mark Crates, son of Orval Crates, and his friend, John Spaeth. We drove a mile south to Hancock County Road 28, turned east for one-half mile, and then north on to Van Buren Township Road 61. Two hundred yards down the road we

came upon the bird sitting on the top wire of a fence. We watched it for 15 minutes from a distance of 50 feet. Several times it dropped into the grass and picked up insects. For a few minutes it sat on the topmost branch of a *Crataegus*, then returned to its perch on the wire.

In Northern Ohio in 1962 the first three weeks of May were unseasonably warm. We had severe electrical storms accompanied by violent winds from the southwest. Perhaps this contributed to the appearance of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. During the afternoon of 18 May this bird was observed by at least 30 people from Findlay, Arlington, and Jenera, Ohio. By the morning following it had disappeared.—RICHARD S. PHILLIPS, 834 Liberty St., Findlay, Ohio, 5 February 1963.

**Two observations of avian predation.**—On 12 January 1963, I observed the display flight of a male Anna's Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) above a dense growth of *Baccharis* one-half mile east of Berkeley. After the flight the bird perched on a dead branch protruding above one of the bushes and began to preen. At the same time I noticed a Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), judged by its size to be a male, flying rapidly along the *Baccharis* toward the hummingbird. The hawk dashed along about one foot above the ground, apparently using the brush as a screen; when it was approximately opposite the hummingbird, it suddenly swooped up and over the bushes and seized the Anna's. In doing so, the hawk barely checked its flight and continued to a stand of Baytrees (*Umbellularia californica*), where it disappeared.

On 17 April 1961, I visited the nest of a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) seven miles southeast of Danville, Alameda County, California. Approximately 30 feet from the nest, which held two half-grown young and was located in an oak, I found a pellet containing an entire, undigested tarsometatarsus and foot of a small owl as well as other avian and mammalian remains. Upon comparison at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, the foot proved to be that of a Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*).

I have not been able to locate in the literature other reports of avian predation on either the Anna's Hummingbird or the Burrowing Owl. Apparently the only other known capture of a hummingbird by a hawk is one reported by G. H. Lowery, Jr. (1938. *Auk*, 55:280), who found the remains of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) in the stomach of a female Pigeon Hawk (*Falco columbarius*).—HANS J. PEETERS, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, 1 February 1963.*

**Ruff observed in Missouri.**—On 28 April 1962, Walter George and I were observing shorebirds at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Mound City, Missouri. At 7:00 AM we arrived at the northern part of the refuge where mud flats were most extensive and shorebirds were numerous. While driving on a dike and stopping every few feet for observation, our attention was suddenly focused on an unusual-looking shorebird next to the dike. It was observed with 8 × 40 binoculars at 50 feet for about five minutes before it flew away from the dike to join the multitude of shorebirds on the far-out mud flats. Following both Peterson's and Pough's descriptions as given in their eastern field guides (which we had at the time), the bird was identified as a female Ruff, or Reeve (*Philomachus pugnax*).

This seems to be the first recorded observation of the Ruff in Missouri, as Widmann (1907. "Birds of Missouri," *Trans. Acad. of Sci., St. Louis*, 17:1-296) and Bennett (1932. "Check-list of the Birds of Missouri," *Univ. of Mo. Studies, Col.*, 7:1-81) fail to mention this species. A review of *The Bluebird*, quarterly publication of The Audubon Society of Missouri, also failed to reveal any records.