

the National Audubon Society can not be persuaded to give Mr. Horner some kind of aid or at least moral support.—CLELL T. PETERSON, *Murray State College, Murray, Kentucky, 21 February 1964.*

Stylized behavior in the Turkey Vulture's courtship dance.—Mating among Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) is often preceded by a gregarious "dance." V. Coles (1938, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University) has described such a dance: a number of vultures gather on a cleared area where they go through a series of hops with wings outstretched; one bird hops toward its neighbor, which in turn hops until it approaches a third, etc. E. L. Tyson (MS.) has described this act as one bird lowering its head and chasing another, which in turn goes through the same actions to chase a third, etc.; meanwhile, other vultures perched in nearby trees drop down to join the dance, while some dancers break away.

In early March 1961, the authors came upon such a gregarious dance of the Turkey Vulture on a sandbar in a small Florida Panhandle river. The birds flew away immediately as we approached them. However, we examined the "dancing ground" and discovered evidence that these dances may be much more elaborately stylized than had been suspected.

Examination of the vultures' well-marked tracks on the sand disclosed two discrete, contiguous circles which formed a figure eight. One of the circles was about 6 feet in diameter, the other about 8 feet in diameter. They were well defined, with marks of trailing wings at the periphery. Each trail was approximately 15 inches wide. There were no tracks visible within the circles and very few at the outer margins. The general impression was that vultures participating in the dance obviously performed within the 15-inch width of these contiguous circles, neither breaking into the center nor standing close to the sidelines.—HORACE LOFTIN, *Florida State University Canal Zone Program, Ft. Clayton, C.Z.*; AND E. L. TYSON, *Dept. Biological Sciences, Florida State University, Tallahassee, 4 June 1964.*

American Oystercatcher and Black Skimmer nesting on salt marsh.—On 30 June 1963, my wife and I discovered a pair of American Oystercatchers (*Haematopus palliatus*) nesting on a salt-marsh island that was devoid of the sand substrate usually associated with this species. The island, called locally Ham Island, is located in Little Egg Harbor Bay, Ocean County, New Jersey. The nest was found in the upper driftline of dead grasses and eelgrass about 15 feet from the western edge of the island. The drift was situated atop *Spartina* grasses, which in turn, were growing in salt-marsh peat. There was no sand or similar material anywhere in the area. The nest itself consisted of a very slight depression in the drift grasses and contained two eggs. Common Terns were nesting in similar situations about 35 feet away.

We returned to the island on 14 July. The birds were stationed about 100 feet north of the nest location and were very agitated at our presence. The nest was empty. Despite considerable searching, we were unable to locate any young birds.

During June and July, we visited most of the islands between Barnegat and Beach Haven Inlets. At a number of these we discovered Black Skimmers (*Rynchops nigra*) also nesting in the driftline over salt-marsh grasses without association with sand. The nests were slight depressions in the drift material. This type of nest site was even used on islands which contained some areas of sand beach in addition to the salt marsh. It was also used on islands composed entirely of salt marsh. The skimmers were successful in hatching and raising young in these locations.