

If we accept this theory, two possibilities exist: either the American population of the Ruff is frequently restocked via the tropical Atlantic crossing, or else the stock is maintained by breeding in North America. There are two pieces of evidence to support the latter. First it can be seen from Table 1 that there are more fall occurrences than spring. The reverse would be expected if the stock came solely from fall or wintering crossing of the tropical Atlantic. In Europe, the Pectoral Sandpiper (*Erolia melanotos*) occurs annually in the fall but few survive to reappear in the spring (Nisbet, loc. cit.). Second, there are a few records of immatures in the fall; these could only occur from breeding in the north or by the unlikely North Atlantic crossing. There are only a few recent specimens of fall birds in the major collections, and none of these are immatures. Two records of immatures have been reported in *Audubon Field Notes*: East Hampton, Long Island on 16 August 1955 (Shephard fide Nichols) and Chincoteague, Virginia, 19 July 1963 (Dyke and Scheider). On 9 July 1964, I saw an immature at Onondaga Lake, New York. Careful checking of fall birds to determine the number of immatures would add considerably to our knowledge of the status of this species.

The author is grateful to Dr. R. F. Andrlle, Mr. Aaron Bagg, Mr. John Bull, Dr. T. Cade, Dr. F. Scheider, and Dr. Walter Spofford for information and advice in the preparation of this note.—DAVID B. PEAKALL, *Upstate Medical Center, 766 Irving Avenue, Syracuse, New York, 16 October 1964.*

**Common Crows catching European chafers on the wing.**—At 8:00 PM on 30 June 1964, I noticed a large flock (250–300 birds) of Common Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) perching in and flying from a dead American elm (*Ulmus americanus*) which overlooked a treeless plot of the Mount Hope Cemetery in Rochester, New York. The flights of single birds to and from the tree seemed at first to be the normal activity of pre-roosting crows, but closer scrutiny revealed these crows to be in aerial pursuit of countless swarming brown insects. These were later identified by Dr. Edward Boardman, of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, as European chafers (*Amphimallon majalis* Raz.)

The adult chafers are flying beetles which swarm about foliage at dusk, humming like bees. The crows, in spite of their large size, were very dexterous in catching the chafers on the wing. The birds flew from the base perch, pursued the quarry, caught it while hovering, and returned to the perch, all with the finesse of a flycatcher.

The European chafer, a beetle of the family Scarabaeidae, was introduced into this country about 25 years ago. It is a close relative of many native species of "June Bug," as well as the Japanese beetle, Oriental beetle, and Asiatic garden beetle. The larval stage of the chafer is injurious to the roots of most grasses.

*Acknowledgment.*—I am most grateful to Dr. Foster Gambrell of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva, N.Y. for his assistance in supplying information about the European chafer.—DWIGHT R. CHAMBERLAIN, *School of Forestry and Wildlife, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia, 22 August 1964.*

**An observation of heavy predation by Pearly-eyed Thrasher.**—On numerous occasions I have seen Pearly-eyed Thrashers (*Margarops fuscatus*) eating small birds and house mice (*Mus musculus*), and occasionally have seen them feeding upon rats (*Rattus*). The prey is usually impaled on a wire or thorn and at times is even lodged in a crotch



FIG. 1. One whole and one partially consumed body of *Rattus* sp. in a growth of *Heliconia caribea* and *Alamanda cathartica*.

of a tree or shrub, similar to the custom of shrikes (*Lanius*). A thrasher may return to its cache for a second or even third morsel, for it by no means always consumes its prey at the first feeding. Some food may even be eaten over a lapse of two consecutive days.

The most interesting example of the predatory habits in this species was an occurrence on the campus of the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, where the whole or partially consumed bodies of 13 rats were found in a small area covered with a growth of *Alamanda cathartica* and *Heliconia caribea*. The rats were all of the albino laboratory variety, which presumably had escaped from cages. Observations over a period of several hours on three consecutive days indicated that only one thrasher was involved in this predation.—FRANCIS J. ROLLE, *Museum of Biology, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, 24 September 1964.*

**Range extension of the Fish Crow in Missouri.**—On 30 March 1964, at Big Oak Tree State Park, Mississippi County, in the boot-heel of Missouri, Dennis Marquis and writer observed and heard calling two Fish Crows (*Corvus ossifragus*). The writer is familiar with this species in Florida and the earliness of the season eliminated any confusion with young Common Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*).

This seems to have been the first observation for Missouri, although the species has been reported by several members of the St. Louis Audubon Society during the last three summers along the Mississippi River south of St. Louis, Illinois (1962. *Bluebird*, 29:27).