

Unusual feeding behavior of three species of birds.—On 25 May 1958 I was attracted to a noisy Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) outside my window in Irving, Dallas County, Texas. Upon investigation, a jay was seen flying away from an eave of the house where a number of wasps were angrily buzzing around a partially destroyed "live" nest. Although the jay was not seen actually feeding, the fact that it was seen flying away from the wasp nest, of which some of the cells showed the work of a bird's bill and removal of larvae, gave evidence of the jay's predation.

Summer Tanagers (*Piranga rubra*) have been frequently recorded preying on wasps (Hamaker, Auk, 53:220–221, 1936; Rau, Canadian Entomol., 73:196, 1941; Alvarez del Toro, Auk, 67:395, 1950), yet I know of no instances of Blue Jays doing so. Richard M. Bohart, Professor of Entomology at the University of California Agricultural Experiment Station, Davis, California, kindly identified the wasps in question as *Polistes exclamans*.

On 26 January 1959 I observed a number of meadowlarks (*Sturnella* sp.) feeding alongside the highway near the Irving city limits. The birds were confined to the edge of the road because of snow, although it is not unusual for this species to feed in this manner. One meadowlark was seen to walk up to a badly smashed dead striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), peck at the animal and eat the flesh. Terres (Auk, 73:289–290, 1956) and Hubbard and Hubbard (Wilson Bull., 81:107–108, 1969) reported meadowlarks feeding on carrion including its own species.

Bent (U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull., 211, 1958) indicates that several races of the Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) soften dry food by soaking it in water, but there apparently are no observations of this behavior cited for the Boat-tailed Grackle (*Cassidix mexicanus*). During the early summer of 1967, female Boat-tailed Grackles came repeatedly to a bird bath at my home and soaked dry dog food. At this time of the year, few grackles feed or water in my yard, so only one bird may have been involved. The observations were made from 9 June to 16 June and again for several days about a week later.

Similar behavior was described in a letter to the editor of the Dallas Times Herald on 3 June 1968. Pertinent parts of the letter are quoted: "I threw some stale bread outside yesterday and immediately a large brownish bird swooped down on it. After pecking at it and turning it over a few times, he picked it up and hopped over to a pan of water and dropped it into the water, turned it over a couple of times, then ate it. He did this until all the bread was gone." Since Boat-tailed Grackles are very common in the Dallas area, this casual observation in all likelihood was of a female or an immature bird of this species.

On 8 July 1968 Rev. Timothy Gollob observed a female Boat-tailed Grackle pick up dry bread and soak it before eating. He indicated that insects and table scraps were likewise treated.

It appears unlikely that soaking is associated with the feeding of young birds since only one date falls within the period (4 May–3 June) in which I banded nestling boat-tails in the Dallas area.

Rand (Wilson Bull., 79:455–456, 1967) raises the question whether or not Common Grackles learn this unique feeding habit. My observations show that the habit may be more common than is realized. It is not a widespread behavior, however, as I have repeatedly put out dry dog food in the winter without obtaining evidence of soaking at this time of the year.—WARREN M. PULICH, *Department of Biology, University of Dallas Station, Texas, 75061. 6 November 1968.*