

point the snake withdrew into the hole (19:15) and did not emerge while it was still light enough to observe.

Black rat snakes are noted for their climbing ability (Johnston and Gaunt, *Kansas Ornithol. Soc. Bull.*, 12:22-23, 1961; Fitch, Copeia, 1963:649-658, 1963) and Surface (*Bull. Div. Zool., Pennsylvania State Dept. Agr.*, 4:113-208, 1906) found 30 per cent and Fitch (op. cit.) found 23 per cent of black rat snake food consists of birds or their eggs. Though normally adult birds would be difficult prey for a snake, an incubating or brooding adult, as well as nestlings and eggs, would be easier prey. A hole-nesting bird such as a woodpecker, while having a safer nest in many respects and an easier nest to defend, has no avenue for escape if surprised by an arboreal snake. Birds are not totally helpless in the face of such an adversary, and, may at times be successful in repelling the predator. Boone (1960, Masters Thesis, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas) observed a male Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Centurus carolinus*) defending its nest against a black rat snake. Nolan (op. cit.) and Noland (op. cit.) describe possibly fatal attacks on arboreal snakes by nesting Pileated Woodpeckers (*Dryocopus pileatus*). Fitch (op. cit.) mentions that Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) have also been seen attacking black rat snakes.

A second defense against arboreal snakes, or at least a distraction for the snake is a mobbing reaction by birds. Once a snake has been observed by a bird, cries of alarm generally attract other birds. Fitch (op. cit.) reported such aggregations involving several species.

In the case of the Yellow-shafted Flicker, there was no evidence of nest defense or mobbing, but either or both may have occurred before the snake reached the hole. Though the snake was completely hidden within the nest hole from 19:15 to dusk, knowledge of the snake's presence or fright from an earlier encounter with the snake apparently kept the flicker from returning to the nest to feed or brood its young.—JEROME A. JACKSON, *Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 5 May 1969.* (Present address: Dept. of Zoology, Mississippi State University, State College, Mississippi 39762.)

Wing flashing in a Brown Thrasher and Catbird.—Wing flashing has been frequently reported for Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*) and occasionally for other Mimidae (Whitaker, *Wilson Bull.*, 69:361, 1957; Batts, *Auk*, 79:112, 1962; Horwich, *Wilson Bull.*, 77:264, 1965; Ricklefs, *Wilson Bull.*, 78:47, 1966). Horwich stated that this behavior is a response to a strange situation or potential predator. This has been supported by Hicks (*Auk*, 72:296, 1955) who observed wing-flashing by a Mockingbird in response to a blacksnake (*Coluber constrictor*) and by Selander and Hunter (*Wilson Bull.*, 72:341, 1960) in response to a Screech Owl (*Otus asio*).

On 29 June 1969 a Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) was first seen as it scolded a 32-inch long buttermilk snake (*Coluber constrictor anthicus*) in Nacogdoches County, Texas. Within 3 minutes six Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*), three Cardinals (*Richmondia cardinalis*), two Catbirds (*Dumetella carolinensis*), and two Carolina Wrens (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) joined the Brown Thrasher. The Brown Thrasher extended its wings outward and slightly upward at the rate of once every 14 seconds. The extension was accomplished with a slight hitch when the wings were two-thirds extended. The tail was spread and held straight out behind.

The two Catbirds both spread their tail and extended their wings while hopping around excitedly near the Brown Thrasher. Both Catbirds extended their wings in a

single motion but held them out 4–5 seconds as compared to the Brown Thrasher which kept its extended only 1–2 seconds. None of the other birds present extended their wings. After 20 minutes the snake crawled out of sight in some dense bushes and all the birds left the immediate area.—EDWIN D. MICHAEL, *Biology Department, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas 75961 (Present address: Division of Forestry, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia 26506).* 28 July 1969.

Re-evaluation of two supposed hybrid birds.—In 1967 Keith L. Dixon requested information on a reported hybrid chickadee supposed to be in the U. S. National Museum. The specimen could not be found at that time but it was recently discovered in the course of routine expansion and rearrangement of the Paridae in the USNM collection. When I informed Dr. Dixon that in my opinion the bird was not a hybrid he urged preparation of a note indicating the apparent basis of the record. It seems appropriate to include comments on a White-crowned Sparrow specimen also misidentified as a hybrid, a situation of which I have been aware for some years.

Parus atricapillus × *P. gambeli*.—This hybrid combination was reported by Suchetet (1897) on the basis of a specimen in the U. S. National Museum about which Robert Ridgway had written him. Ridgway is quoted as saying that the bird was in every respect exactly intermediate between the two forms. No other information about the specimen is given. The record is repeated by Cockrum (1952) and Gray (1958) without comment.

Specimen No. 60433 in the U. S. National Museum almost certainly is the bird about which Ridgway wrote. The locality on the label is "Bitter Cottonwood;" the museum catalog expands this to Bitter Cottonwood Creek, Wyoming Territory. The bird, which is not sexed, was collected by H. D. Schmidt on 14 August 1870 and was originally identified as *Parus atricapillus*. The notation "& *P. montanus* (*Hybrid!*)" was later added to the label by Ridgway; the name *montanus* as used in that instance refers to the present *Parus gambeli*. The specimen is in fairly good condition, but the head is somewhat flattened.

Contrary to the remark attributed to Ridgway, this specimen appears to be typical of *P. atricapillus* in every respect of size, proportion, bill shape, and color, except that it possesses traces of white superciliary stripes. The feathers that make up these stripes are merely edged with white rather than fully white tipped as in *P. gambeli*, and the stripes do not join across the forehead as they do in that species. A relatively small number of feathers is involved in the stripes, which do not extend as far posteriorly as in typical *gambeli*. I believe that this bird is best considered an aberrant example of *Parus atricapillus* rather than a hybrid between that species and *P. gambeli*. Wetmore (1931) mentions examining "a number" of Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees (*P. carolinensis*) with one or more white feathers at the junction of the auricular and crown patches, where the stripe on *P. gambeli* occurs.

Zonotrichia leucophrys × *Z. albicollis*.—This hybrid combination was twice reported by Abbott (1958, 1959) on the basis of a single male bird taken at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, on 5 January 1958. The specimen is No. 468554 in the USNM.

James K. Lowther and I examined this specimen on separate occasions in 1962 and we independently concluded that it is an example of *Z. l. gambelii* and not a hybrid. The "very large and broad loreal area" cited by Abbott (1959) as a criterion for the hybrid determination results in large part from the make of the skin.