

field. E. Lindgren and A. W. Layton provided valuable information.—MICHAEL GOCHFELD, *Dept. of Biology, Queens College, Flushing, NY and Dept. of Ornithology, American Museum of Natural History, NY 10024. Accepted 8 May 1975.*

American Kestrel eating carrion.—On 8 February 1975 near Lebanon, Pennsylvania at approximately 16:00, my wife and I observed a male American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) eating a quite decomposed gray phase Screech Owl (*Otus asio*). We drove to within 6 m of the falcon at which time it attempted to carry the owl off, although it could only drag the carcass and after a few seconds' struggle, let go and flew to a small tree. We were road trapping at the time for kestrels, made a pass at the falcon and threw out a bal-chatri with a mouse. The kestrel struck the trap and was captured. The falcon appeared to be in good condition. His weight of 124 g is consistent with the range of male kestrel weights I have recorded in the same area. His crop was near empty.—G. ROBERT GANIS, *Route 5, Box 383, Lebanon, PA 17042. Accepted 28 Apr. 1975.*

House Sparrows usurp Hornero nests in Argentina.—The Hornero or Rufous Ovenbird, *Furnarius rufus*, is a very common bird in Argentina nesting in trees near houses and on fenceposts in the pampas (Olrog, *Las Aves Argentinas*, Inst. Miguel Lillo, Tucuman, 1959). Horneros construct dome-shaped nests of mud, rootlets, straw, and horsehair (MacDonagh, *El Hornero* 8:250-256) with a tunnel entrance leading to an inner chamber.

House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) were introduced into Argentina from Europe for agricultural purposes (Bibiloni and Baez, *El Hornero* 6:512-513, 1937). They nested for the first time in 1905, expanded into new areas in the 1910's, and became very abundant by the 1920's (Castellanos, *El Hornero* 5:307-338, 1934). House Sparrows were first reported using Hornero nests in the early 1920's (Castellanos, *El Hornero* 5:1-40, 1932). Little mention has been made of interactions between Horneros and House Sparrows since that time.

I observed the interactions and competition for Hornero nests between House Sparrows and Horneros on the ranches La Estanzuela, near Venado Tuerto, and San Jose, near Murphy in the province of Santa Fe, Argentina, from October through November 1972. I drilled holes in the sides of nests and inserted corks. Nesting birds were marked with paint at night by inserting a brush through the holes. This procedure was effective although some pairs repaired light leaks around the corks each day.

Hornero nests were censused between 20 and 30 October and 20 and 30 December 1972 to ascertain the extent of nest use by House Sparrows. Only new Hornero nests that appeared to be constructed in the current year were counted. Old nests usually began to break open in the rains the year after construction. Of 46 Hornero nests I located, 28 (60%) were used by Horneros, 11 (24%) were unused, and 7 (16%) were used by House Sparrows. If House Sparrows take over active Hornero nests, Horneros might selectively defend their nests against House Sparrows.

I made observations of bird behavior at Hornero nests from 20 to 30 October and from 10 to 20 November 1972. Any time any bird landed within 5 m of an Hornero's nest, I recorded the species of intruder, and the reaction of the resident Hornero. Twelve species landed near Hornero nests, *Columba picazuro*, *Columbina picua*, *Guira guira*, *Colaptes campestris*, *Pitangus sulphuratus*, *Muscivora tyrannus*, *Molothrus bonariensis*, *Passer domesticus*, *Sicalis flaveola*, *Poospiza nigrorufa*, *Embernagra platensis*, *Zonotrichia*