

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*

capensis. Usually there was no reaction by the resident pair of Horneros unless the visitor was a House Sparrow. These were recorded more frequently than any other species (32 times) and when one landed in the same tree, the resident pair of Horneros usually flew to the nest and vocalized (93%), often chasing the House Sparrows (53% of the time). Thus, Horneros are selectively defending their nests against House Sparrows. In all but one case the Horneros were successful in driving away the intruders.

One Hornero nest was built in a tree on the marshes of the San Jose estancia. The nest and a pair of Horneros were present on 13 October. The Horneros carried bits of grass into the nest on 13, 14, and 15 October, and were near the nest nearly all day. On 16 October at 11:00 a pair of House Sparrows landed near the nest. The resident Hornero flew to the nest, vocalized, and chased the sparrows. During the next 2 hours the sequence was repeated 11 times. From 17:00 to 19:00 that same day, the sequence was repeated 6 times. On 17 October from 21:00 to 22:00 House Sparrows landed near the nest 6 times but were chased away only 5 times. On 18 October during an hour observation period, the House Sparrows landed at the nest 7 times and were chased away 4 times. The sparrows were unmolested for longer periods of time before the Horneros came to chase them away. The Horneros no longer vocalized and only chased the intruders. On 19 October the Horneros were seen in the vicinity of the nest, but did not chase away the sparrows. The Horneros were not seen after 19 October. The House Sparrows subsequently added nest material and laid eggs.

My research in Argentina would have been impossible without the constant help and encouragement of Peter and Martha Miles of the estancia La Estanzuela. I thank Carlos Itturalde for the unrestricted use of the marshes on the San Jose estancia.—JOANNA BURGER, *Dept. of Biology, Livingston-Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, NJ 08903. Accepted 10 Mar. 1975.*

A westward extension in the breeding range of the Mountain Plover.—The Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*) is typically a breeding species of the Great Plains of North America, with the westward limits of its breeding range in Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico (A.O.U. Check-list, 1957). In New Mexico, the species extends as a breeder to the vicinity of or slightly beyond the Continental Divide in the central-west and southwest, but it has not previously been found breeding in the northwest (Hubbard, Check-list of the birds of New Mexico, New Mexico Ornithol. Soc. Publ. 3, 1970). On 1-3 June 1974, Alan P. Nelson and I found up to 3 adult Plovers and a nest with eggs in the latter region, specifically in San Juan Co., about 5 km NNW of Burnham Trading Post, on the Navajo Indian Reservation. This is an area where animals typical of the grassland and basin sagebrush biocinations (as defined by Kendeigh, Animal Ecology, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1961) intermix. The record is particularly interesting (1) because it appears to be the first documented breeding record of this species in an area influenced by animals associated with the basin sagebrush biocination, and (2) because this species is included on the "status undetermined" list of the U. S. Department of the Interior (Threatened wildlife of the United States, Fish and Wildl. Serv. Resour. Publ. 114, 1973).

The nest was a slight depression in mixed sand-and-gravel soil, with a lining of a few small twigs. It contained 3 extremely light-buffy-brown eggs that were flecked with dark brown (one measured 37 x 28 mm). These egg colorations contrast with the typical colors of an olive background with black spots (Bent, U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull.