

kindly allowed us to examine specimens in their care. John P. O'Neill and Lester L. Short reviewed the manuscript and suggested several useful improvements. Support and travel during these observations came from a Univ. of Arizona-Peace Corps Graduate Research Program and Bird Bonanzas Inc., (Hilty), the LSU Museum of Zoology (Parker), and the Peace Corps (Silliman).—STEVEN L. HILTY, *Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721*; THEODORE A. PARKER III, *Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge, LA 70893*; and JAMES SILLIMAN, *Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721*. Accepted 8 Dec. 1977.

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An observation of stick presentation by the Swallow-tailed Kite.—On 26 January 1977, while conducting field research in Saül, French Guiana, we observed a Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) circling over the forest holding a long, narrow stick in its bill. The flight was maintained for several minutes, whereupon the individual, bird *A*, landed about 2 m from another kite, bird *B*, at the top of a 30 m dead tree. Keeping its head lowered, body flattened, and wings extended, *A* approached *B* along a horizontal branch. This was followed by both up and down and side to side movements of *A* during presentation of the stick to *B*. After about 30 sec posturing, *A* dropped the stick and flew off. The other bird remained impassive throughout the performance; preening after *A* had left. We observed *Elanoides* carrying sticks in their bills and noted chases and agonistic encounters numerous times in the ensuing weeks. Instances of males feeding females have been documented for the Swallow-tailed Kite during both nest-building and incubation (Snyder, *Living Bird* 13:73-97, 1974). In such instances, the male usually approached the perched female.

A nesting date in mid-March has been given for Swallow-tailed Kites in Surinam (Haverschmidt, *The Birds of Surinam*, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1968). As kites in Saül were still in flocks of up to 10 individuals in late January, we interpreted our observations as ritualized nest-building, serving in the formation rather than intensification of the pair bond.

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Record of Puerto Rican Screech Owl, Turkey Vulture and Osprey from St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.—The continued existence of the Puerto Rican Screech Owl (*Otus nudipes*) on St. Croix has been in question for some time although there have been reports of its calls (Leck, *Condor* 77:107, 1975). While attempting to capture deer at night on 21 January 1971 I observed a Puerto Rican Screech Owl on the ground in open pasture. It allowed approach within 10 m and was illuminated by a 100,000

candlepower spotlight while being observed through 7×50 binoculars. It flew to a fence post and was again approached with a spotlight before departing to dense forest. On 14 November 1972 I found a Screech Owl standing on a road; it allowed close approach while being illuminated by the headlights. Both sightings were in a sparsely inhabited area northeast of Frederiksted.

In July 1972 I observed a Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) feeding on a dead mongoose (*Herpestes auropunctatus*) on a rural road near Annaly Bay. I made 2 additional sightings on 21 and 22 April 1975 of a Turkey Vulture soaring above Davis Bay. Both sightings were from a steep hill overlooking the bay which allowed close views of the vulture.

Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) have not been recorded nesting on St. Croix, but Leck (op. cit.) records a summer pair. In May 1974 I saw a pair of Ospreys building a nest in a mahogany tree (*Swietenia* sp.) at the top of a hill near the sea west of Christiansted. I heard much calling at 2 other sites within 0.5 km but did not confirm additional nests or pairs.—DAVID W. NELLIS, *Virgin Islands Dept. Conservation and Cultural Affairs, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Is. 00801. Accepted 30 Jan. 1978.*

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Chestnut-colored Woodpeckers feeding as a pair on ants.—The Chestnut-colored Woodpecker (*Ceileus castaneus*), which Slud (Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. 128:1–430, 1964) describes as a “seldom-seen” bird, is difficult to follow for any length of time in Caribbean lowlands of Central America. When I succeeded in watching 1 individual for 30 min on 9 January 1977 at Tikal, Peten, Guatemala, it made rapid glancing blows on a branch, nearly all of them too weak to be audible. The woodpecker seemed to find much to feed on in some places, and I noticed that all of the trees that it worked on had termite tunnels running up them. The same was true on other days when I had briefer views. At no time did I have a clear view of what the woodpecker was feeding on nor have I been able to find any accounts in the literature.

On 7 January I noticed 2 of these woodpeckers feeding on a palm tree 8 m above the ground. One bird pecked at the dry, loose dead bracts at the base of an arching stem from which hung a large flower. As it pulled fluffy material from among the bracts, small black ants, more than it could consume with rapid feeding motions of bill and tongue, ran or fell down onto the flower cluster. Here they were picked up by the second Chestnut-colored Woodpecker perched 30 cm below the 1st one. The ants were clearly seen with an 8×40 field glass and I watched for 15 min.

An interesting feature of the feeding was the way 1 woodpecker took advantage of the other's pecking and disturbing the ants in the bracts above, the 2 being thus enabled to feed together. Feeding as a pair has been noted for *C. brachyurus*, an Asian species, by Short (Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. 152: 292, 1973).

Although he gives no accounts of feeding habits, Wetmore (Smithson. Misc. Coll. 150(2):541, 1968) states of *C. castaneus* that “The salivary glands—were large, extending the full length of the mandibular rami. As I skinned the heads the mucous secretion adhered like a gum to my fingers.” Secretions of this type would seem to place *C. castaneus* in a group with other ant-eating species such as the Common Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) and the European Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*) that have