

Reef, New Caledonia, I watched a Brown Noddy alight in a small patch of *Boerhavia* and seize a live mouse in its beak. The tern lunged forward several times, getting a better purchase on the mouse and apparently attempting to swallow it. The action took place about 4 m from me. When I approached closer and attempted to take a photograph, the mouse either escaped or was released by the bird, which then flew away. I attempted to catch the mouse, but it escaped into the vegetation. The only species of mouse known from the island is the introduced *Mus musculus*.

During mouse plagues, mice have been taken by Whiskered Terns (*Chlidonias hybridae*) and Gull-billed Terns (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) (Hobbs, *Emu* 76:219–220, 1976); the latter species also preys on lizards (Rohwer and Woolfenden, *Wilson Bull.* 80:330–331, 1968; Frith, 1976), as do Grey-backed Terns (*Sterna lunata*) (Clapp, *Wilson Bull.* 88:354, 1976). I am unaware of any records of species of *Sterna* feeding on mammals.

Brown Noddies nest mainly on coral cays, where small mammals are not usually found. Historically, noddies would have had little opportunity to take such prey. The present observation indicates that they have sufficient behavioral flexibility to take prey other than marine organisms on an opportunistic basis, and it represents the only known predatory attack by terns of this genus on a mammal.—HAROLD HEATWOLE, *Dept. Zoology, Univ. New England, Armidale, New South Wales, 2351, Australia. Accepted 30 Apr. 1985.*

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Eastern Screech-Owl captures goldfish in patio pond.—A search of the literature reveals that fish are included as an uncommon source of food for the Eastern Screech-Owl (*Otus asio*). Chapman (*Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America*, D. Appleton-Century Co., New York, New York 1937:337) reported that of 255 stomach contents examined (presumably by Fisher) only one contained fish. Rising and Schueler (*Wilson Bull.* 92:250–51, 1980) found vertebrae and other parts of a 5–6-cm fish in the stomach contents of a screech owl. Cope and Barber (*Wilson Bull.* 90:450, 1978) referred to Frazar as having found 16 horned pouts (Pisces: *Ictalurus nebulosus*) in a screech owl nest cavity. Other authors include, but not frequently, fish in the diet of screech owls. I have not found reference to an observation of screech owls capturing fish, and the one observation of this species in water was by Crowe (*Wilson Bull.* 65:207, 1953), who saw a screech owl bathing in a puddle of water 2.5–5.0 cm deep.

Adjacent to a wing of our home is a small, ornamental, semicircular fish pond, approximately 4.5–2.1 m wide and 0.7 m deep at the center. The pond is clearly visible from our living room through large sliding glass doors. Hanging ceramic pots of plants suspended from the overhanging roof are frequently used as perches by birds. After dark, the pond is brightly illuminated. On several evenings, an Eastern Screech-Owl had been seen clinging to a swaying pot and peering down toward the 15–25 goldfish (*Carassius auratus*) that feed at the surface. The depth of the pond is such that mammalian predators move slowly and inadequately through the water, enabling the fish to take refuge under overhanging rocks and in protected caverns. I have watched raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) move with difficulty through the deep water, unable to capture the goldfish; yet, the number of fish slowly declined without visible remains of the fish in the area. On 26 January 1984, well after dark (ca. 22:30), I observed a screech owl flying apparently out of the pond, for the disturbed water surface indicated that something other than fish had been in the water. Within 15 min I saw a screech owl drop directly down from an overhanging limb and enter the water feet first. Its head was held above the water and its widely outstretched wings were beating the

surface. Within 3–5 sec it took off with a goldfish, approximately 15 cm long, in its talons. It flew easily and swiftly in the direction of a nest box used each year by screech owls located high in a tree approximately 30 m distant at the far end of the patio. The next day I looked inside the box. There were no fish remains in the box or at the base of the tree. To my knowledge, this is the only observation of a screech owl descending into the water and capturing a living fish.—KENNETH W. PRESCOTT, *Dept. Art, Univ. Texas, Austin, Texas* 78712. Accepted 8 Feb. 1985.