

1983). If mayflies are natural prey of Green-backed Herons, our observations carry intriguing implications regarding optimal foraging theory. Theorists predict that, when prey densities are high, a predator will usually select the more profitable of 2 prey when given a choice between them (see Krebs et al. 1983 for review). In the present case, the Green-backed Heron risked one potential prey item in an attempt to secure larger, presumably more profitable prey. Mayflies were widespread and abundant during our observation period, and baiting with mayflies was probably a "low-cost" behavior.

Acknowledgments.—We thank K. L. Bildstein, W. E. Davis, Jr., and J. A. Kushlan for their helpful comments.

LITERATURE CITED

- HANCOCK, J. AND J. A. KUSHLAN. 1984. The herons handbook. Harper and Row, New York, New York.
- KREBS, J. R., D. W. STEPHENS, AND W. J. SUTHERLAND. 1983. Perspectives in optimal foraging. Pp. 165–216 in Perspectives in ornithology (A. H. Brush and G. A. Clark, Jr., eds.). Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, England.
- KUSHLAN, J. A. 1978. Feeding ecology of wading birds. Pp. 249–297 in Wading birds (A. Sprunt, IV, J. C. Ogden, and S. Winckler, eds.). Natl. Audubon Soc. Res. Rep. 7.
- LOVELL, H. B. 1958. Baiting of fish by a Green Heron. *Wilson Bull.* 70:280–281.
- NIETHAMMER, K. R. AND M. S. KAISER. 1983. Late summer food habits of three heron species in northeastern Louisiana. *Colonial Waterbirds* 6:148–153.
- NORRIS, D. 1975. Green Heron goes fishing. *Fla. Wildl.* 29:16–17.
- SISSON, R. F. 1974. Aha! It really works. *Natl. Geogr. Mag.* 145(1):142–147.
- CHARLES R. PRESTON, *Dept. Biology, Univ. Arkansas at Little Rock, Little Rock, Arkansas 72204*; HERSHEL MOSELEY AND CAROLYN MOSELEY, *11123 Shannon Hills Dr., Mabelvale, Arkansas 72103*. Received 31 Jan. 1986, accepted 1 May 1986.

Wilson Bull., 98(4), 1986, pp. 614–615

Great-tailed Grackle kills Barn Swallow in flight.—On the causeway from Port Isabel to South Padre Island, Cameron County, Texas, at dusk on 9 April 1985 I noticed a flock of 8–12 Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) flying 1–4 m above the mudflats near the end of the bridge and just south of it. As I watched, two female Great-tailed Grackles (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) flew up behind this flock. One of the grackles struck one of the swallows and drove it to the ground. The grackle then pecked the swallow and dragged it by one wing for ca 0.5 m as the other grackle watched. Both grackles then flew away.

After the grackles departed, 6 swallows remained flying over the mudflat at 18:00 h. I then retrieved the dead swallow (USNM 599917) which was autopsied and prepared by Joe T. Marshall. The bird was a male. A hemorrhage was present on the left frontal bone but the skull was unbroken in this area. There was a gaping hole behind the left ear. Although the grackle had pecked at the breast several times there was no obvious injury in this area.

Grackles (*Quiscalus*) are frequent predators of other bird's eggs and young (Bent 1958), but rarely have been reported killing adults. Great-tailed Grackles have killed adult House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) (Hansen 1976), and Common Grackles (*Q. quiscula*) have frequently been reported killing this species (Poor 1946, Mayfield 1954, Taylor 1958). Common Grackles have been reported killing a Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) (Baird and

Smith 1965), an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), and a Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) (Townsend in Bent 1958).

Resting swallows have been killed by both Boat-tailed Grackles (*Q. major*) (McIlhenny 1937) and Common Grackles (LaPorte 1974), and a foraging Barn Swallow was taken in flight by a California Gull (*Larus californicus*) (Laymon 1983). At least 2 similar acts of predation have been reported for Common Grackles. One grackle was seen killing an immature Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) as the latter fed in flight (Fisk 1970); another killed an immature Cedar Waxwing that had just been released by a bander (Ritchison 1982).

LITERATURE CITED

- BAIRD, J. AND C. E. SMITH. 1965. Common Grackle attacks Dickcissel. *Wilson Bull.* 77: 195.
- BENT, A. C. 1958. Life histories of North American blackbirds, orioles, tanagers and allies. *U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull.* 211.
- FISK, E. J. 1970. Common Grackle kills Cedar Waxwing in air. *Wilson Bull.* 82:465.
- HANSEN, M. T. 1976. A Great-tailed Grackle captures and kills a House Sparrow. *Southwest. Nat.* 21:240-241.
- LAPORTE, P. 1974. Common Grackle kills a Barn Swallow. *Wilson Bull.* 86:477-478.
- LAYMON, S. A. 1983. California Gull captures flying Barn Swallow with its bill. *Wilson Bull.* 95:296-297.
- MCILHENNY, E. A. 1937. Life history of the Boat-tailed Grackle in Louisiana. *Auk* 54: 274-295.
- MAYFIELD, H. 1954. Grackle kills English Sparrow. *Wilson Bull.* 66:271.
- POOR, H. H. 1946. Predation by Grackles. *Proc. Linnaean Soc. N. Y.* 54-57:54-55.
- RITCHISON, G. 1982. Common Grackle kills Cedar Waxwing. *Kentucky Warbler* 58: 91-92.
- TAYLOR, K. 1958. Common Grackle kills and eats House Sparrow. *Auk* 75:222-223.
- ROGER B. CLAPP, *Biological Survey Section, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. 20560. Received 8 Mar. 1986, accepted 6 May 1986.*