

GENERAL NOTES

Red-tailed Hawk attacks Long-eared Owl.—On 8 November 1960, I found four Long-eared Owls (*Asio otus*) roosting in brushy second growth, mainly *Crataegus*, four miles south and one mile west of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan. This brushy area is bordered by a mature woodlot on the north and cultivated fields on the other sides. On 12 November the owls were observed roosting as before in two adjacent *Crataegus* trees. As I approached, one owl flushed and flew northward over an open area, where the owl was attacked by a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). Although I could see that the hawk dived at the owl, intervening brush prevented me from seeing the actual contact. I went to the point of attack and flushed the hawk from the ground in a loose clump of *Crataegus*. The owl was on the ground about ten feet away in the same clump of trees, dazed and helpless. The hawk first landed in a large tree some 120 yards away and flew away when I approached it. The owl, an adult female, soon recovered from its dazed condition and was kept in captivity for several weeks following the incident. Apparent damage resulting from the attack consisted of a slash in the skin of the upper surface of the left wing and a puncture injury to the left eye resulting in blindness in that eye. The Red-tailed Hawk has been recorded as a predator of Screech Owls (*Otus asio*) but I find no previous record of its attacking a Long-eared Owl.—CHARLES T. COLLINS, *The University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 30 December 1960.*

Red-winged Blackbird killing a Sharp-tailed Sparrow.—In late May 1958, several foraging groups of Sharp-tailed Sparrows (*Ammospiza caudacuta caudacuta* and *A. c. nelsoni*) were feeding on the mud flats and along the dikes of impoundments of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge on Plum Island, a barrier island off the north shore of Massachusetts near the towns of Newburyport, Newbury, and Rowley. Mr. Murray Gardler and I were banding in the "Hellcat Swamp" area of the refuge during this period. On 1 June, we erected two Japanese mist-nets on a dike to capture several of these sparrows.

These nets were checked at 1000. Two *A. c. caudacuta* were removed and banded (an *A. c. nelsoni* had been captured earlier on the mud flats). Upon approaching the nets at 1100, we noted several captured birds: one Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) and three *A. c. caudacuta*. A male Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) appeared to be caught in the net near one of the Sharp-tailed Sparrows. However, the blackbird flew off at our approach, dropping an object about one meter from the net. This object subsequently proved to be the head of a Sharp-tailed Sparrow. The body of the dead sparrow was in the third bag, about eight-tenths of a meter from the ground. There was no evidence to indicate that any portion of the dead sparrow had been eaten.

It seemed possible, at first, that the blackbird might have been poorly bagged on the outside of the net near the sparrow, turning upon it aggressively, killing it, and then escaping upon our approach. However, in my experience with such closely bagged birds, attacks have taken the form of random pecks, rather than the purposeful and somewhat laborious effort required to completely sever the neck of a nearby bird. The body of the sparrow showed no signs of other pecks, and the head was not badly damaged. Red-winged Blackbirds have powerful jaw musculature, sharp mandibles, and a willingness to bite when captured. However, the badly torn skin and muscles of the neck of the sparrow indicated that repeated biting and tearing movements had been necessary to



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