

NOTE BREVI

1989 Avocetta 12: 63

Cleptoparassitismo di Nibbio bruno *Milvus migrans* su Cornacchia grigia *Corvus corone cornix* sui Monti della Tolfa

Il 23 aprile 1988, durante una giornata di attuazione del programma di aiuti alimentari in favore del Nibbio reale *Milvus milvus* sui Monti della Tolfa (Italia centrale), osservavamo un caso di cleptoparassitismo non ancora citato in letteratura, neppure nel lavoro riassuntivo di H. J. Brockmann e C. J. Barnard (1979) (Kleptoparasitism in Birds. Anim. Behav. 27: 487-514). Mentre una Cornacchia grigia *Corvus corone cornix* si allontanava dalla zona del carnaio con un pezzo di carne nel becco uno dei Nibbi bruni *Milvus migrans*, che regolarmente frequentano il sito, la attaccava in volo riuscendo a sottrarle il cibo.

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Record of Black Kite kleptoparasitizing Hooded Crow

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1989 Avocetta 13: 63-64

Il Piovanello Pancianera si alimenta di insetti sulle ragnatele

Il 18 settembre 1988 sulle rive del Lago di Fogliano nel Parco Nazionale del Circeo (Latina), osservammo circa 15 Piovanelli pancianera *Calidris alpina* posati su dei frangiflutti realizzati con rami intrecciati che si trovavano a circa 2 m dalla riva. Moltissimi maschi di ditteri Chironomidi volavano ovunque ed un gran numero di individui restava impigliato nelle ragnatele di ragni del genere *Tetragnatha* le quali coprivano buona parte della barriera frangiflutti e la vegetazione circostante.

I Piovanelli pancianera, camminando su queste barriere, si alimentavano di una grandissima quantità di Chironomidae impigliati nelle ragnatele. Tale tipo di comportamento é conosciuto per alcune specie di *Trochilidae* e per pochissime specie di *Passeriformes* (Brockmann, H.J. e Barnard, C.J. 1979. Kleptoparasitism in birds. Anim. Behav. 27:487-514) ma é totalmente sconosciuto per i *Charadriiformes*.

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Dunlin feeding on insects from spider webs

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A method for describing and classifying heron colonies

It has been suggested that while surveying heron colonies (Custer, T.W. & Osborn, R.G. 1977. Wading birds as biological indicators: 1975 colony survey. U.S. Fish Wildl. Surv., Spec. Sci. Rep. Wildl. No 206; Kushlan, A.J. & White, D.A. 1977. Nesting wading bird populations in southern Florida. Florida Sci. 40::65-72; Fasola, M., Barbieri, F., Prigioni C. & Bogliani, G. 1981. Le garzaie in Italia, 1981. Avocetta 5:107-131), it is pivotal to describe them (King, K.A. 1978. Colonial wading bird survey and census techniques. Nat. Aud. Soc. Res. Rep. 7:155-159). However such surveys seldom say anything, other than location, about the colonies. Singh (Singh, N. 1985. Breeding biology of the Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus itis coromandus* (Boddaert) alongwith some observations on its population. Unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Panjab Univ., India) described a method of classification of heron colonies, and I here present an improved version of Singh's method of heron colony classification, which considers the following characters (mnemonics):

Location

(H) Human associated colony: which is in or near human habitation. Many heron colonies are associated with human habitation for various reasons (see Singh, N., Sodhi, N.S. & Kheera, S. 1988. Biology of the Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus itis coromandus* (Boddaert). Rec. Zool. Surv. India, Occ. Paper: in press).

(U) Human unassociated colony: a colony which is more than 450 m from human habitation.

Nest spacing

(C) Compact colony: when mean inter-nest distance is less than 2 m. Inter-nest distance can be calculated between nests on a randomly selected line from the center to periphery of the colony.

(L) Loose colony: when mean inter-nest distance is more than 2 m.

Plant type

(T) Tree colony: a colony on trees. Number of trees can be registered as T₁₂.

(R or B) Reed or bush colony: on reeds or bushes.

(Tr or Tb) Tree and reed or bush colony: a colony is both on trees and reeds or bushes e.g., 50% of nests in a colony are on reeds or bushes and 50% on trees.

Plant species

(Ho) Homogenous colony: colony settled on monospecific vegetation.

(He) Heterogenous colony: colony settled on more than one species, the minority plant harbour > 5% of the total nests.

(In) Intermediate colony: colony settled on more than one species, but the minority plant species have < 5% of the total nests.

Heron species

(P) Pure colony: where only one heron species breeds. The abbreviated species can be mentioned e.g. pure colony of Little Egrets (1) as P₁.

(M) Mixed colony: where more than one species breed. The abbreviated names of species can be mentioned e.g., if Little Egrets (e), Cattle Egrets (c), and Black-crowned Night Herons (bn) breed in the same colony then it is-M_{e,c,bn}.

The combination of all the above characters can be used to designate a particular heron colony. For example, if only Cattle Egrets breed in a colony, which is in a city on three trees of *Acacia arabica* and mean inter-nest distance of < 2 m, then is H P_c T₃ Ho C.

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Un metodo per descrivere e classificare le colonie di Aironi

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Audouin's Gulls *Larus audouinii* taking offal

On 30th March 1986 we watched two adult Audouin's Gulls *Larus audouinii* that were swimming at about 100 m from the rocky shore of a bay in North-Eastern Sardinia. When we threw a piece of bone (a remnant of our meal) into the water at some 20 m from the shore, the Gulls immediately flew closer and picked up the item. We repeated the offer of food (bones, meat and bread) 10 times and the Audouin's Gulls continued to fly along the shore and to collect the items, by the dip-to surface action typical of gulls.

Throughout this interlude, two Yellow-legged Gulls *Larus cachinnans* tried to kleptoparasitize the birds by collecting the offal, but were unsuccessful as they did not dare to come as close to us as the Audouin's did.

One of us had already observed some Audouin's Gulls taking the offal that was thrown overboard by the passengers of a ferry near the Isle of Elba, Tuscany (Brichetti, P. & Cambi, D. 1979. Studio preliminare su di una colonia di *Larus audouinii* Payraudeau (Gabbiano corso) nell'Arcipelago Toscano. Riv. ital. Orn. 49:277-281, Cramp, S. & Simmons, K.E.L. 1983. The Birds of the Western Palearctic. Oxford Univ. Press) briefly state that this Gull was "Observed taking offal", but that it "does not normally take interest in passing wessels, or scavenge for fishermen's offal". Our observations suggest that the feeding repertoire of the Audouin's Gull frequently includes exploiting the food offered by man.

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Gabbiani corsi che si cibano di rifiuti

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