Florida Field Naturalist

Volume 12 | Issue 2 Article 10

January 1984

Revision of Flock Movement Rate Table

Florida Field Naturalist

of the adult kite and that the following kite was a short-tailed juvenile. About 100 m from the nest the kingbird ceased calling and diving on the lead kite, and the kite began soaring upward while plucking feathers from its prey. With binoculars, we identified the prey as a well-feathered nestling Eastern Kingbird with a short tail, because it had a distinct bicolored appearance with no trace of wing patches or any distinctive markings elsewhere on the body. As we watched the high-soaring adult kite, it made a steep stoop almost to the ground, and at the bottom of the stoop another kite flashed by from the opposite direction. This pattern was repeated twice, but we did not see the kites transfer prey. The kites eventually drifted out of sight. About 15 min after the initial sighting and soon after we lost sight of the kites, two kites appeared from the direction in which the first two departed. They flew close to the ground in flapping flight directly to the kingbird nest tree, a 13 m slash pine (*Pinus elliotti*) about 8 m from a house. When one of the kites approached the nest tree it swooped high over the tree and dove straight down among the branches to pause briefly at the kingbird nest on the lowest branch. The kite flew away rapidly carrying a nestling with only a brief chase and little scolding by the kingbird. The other kite (age undetermined) followed closely almost as if it were trying to steal the prey. About 1 min later a juvenile kite flew to the kingbird nest and then flew toward the other kites.

About 30 min later an adult kite flew leisurely toward the kingbird nest where it was met by a scolding kingbird. The kite swerved off and spent the next 15 min slowly gliding back and forth below the canopy in a nearby grove of slash pines and cabbage palms (*Sabal palmetto*) among some houses, as if it was searching for birds' nests. The next day no kingbirds were seen in the area, suggesting that the kites took all the nestlings. For several days thereafter we saw one or two kites within 1-2 km of the area and once we saw a juvenile kite perched in a snag while an adult kite flew low over the nearby trees.

These observations suggest the following: adult kites with fledglings carefully hunt over the same area probably searching for birds' nests; once they find a nest the kites return until it is emptied; close proximity to residential areas is no deterrent to kite predation. Kermott (1981, Raptor Res. 15:94-95) described a similar situation of persistent predation by Merlins (*Falco columbarius*) on nestling American Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) in suburban Big Sky, Montana.—**Charlotte E. Lohrer** and **Fred E. Lohrer**, Archbold Biological Station, Route 2, Box 180, Lake Placid, Florida 33852.

Florida Field Naturalist 12: 42-43, 1984.

Revision of flock movement rate table.—In a recent paper (Gaddis 1983, Fla. Field Nat. 11:25-34) Table 3 was found to be incorrectly presented. I have revised the table and present it here (Table 1).

The revised table shows the overall daily trend (a reduced flock movement rate at midday) to be more consistently manifested in the monthly categories than they were in the unrevised table. Only in the month of February do the movement rates depart from this pattern to show the slowest rate in the morning. The sample sizes for the individual time periods in March, however, are probably not large enough for reliable comparison. The seasonal increase

TABLE. 1. Flock movement rates (m/h) ± SD by month and by times of day.

Time of day	Dec.-Jan.	February	March	Total
0700-1000	362.5±118.6 N=8	273.3±131.04 N=11	604.9±195.3 N=4	362.03±179.3 N=23
1000-1400	267.5±122.5 N=17	303.1±148.01 N=10	234.7±166.1 N=4	274.8±133.6 N=31
1400-1800	355.6±62.2 N=4	453.7±191.4 N=5	280.0±147.7 N=3	377.6±154.1 N=12
Total	305.9±121.1 N=29	319.5±159.0 N=26	381.7±236.2 N=11	323.9±159.2 N=66

in movement rate, as shown in the unrevised table, is unchanged in the revised form. Other conclusions and speculations based on the movement rates also are unchanged.—**Philip K. Gaddis**, 52 Lakeview Ave., Piedmont, California 94611.

Florida Field Naturalist 12: 43-44, 1984.

Dangle feeding by the Green-backed Heron.—In his paper "Feeding behavior of North American herons," Kushlan (1976, Auk 93:86-94) did not mention a method of feeding observed being used by a Green-backed Heron (*Butorides striatus*). While visiting the late Eleanor J. Brumbaugh in Jacksonville Beach, Duval County, Florida, 28 July 1976, I watched a Green-backed Heron feeding from a rope extending between shore and Mrs. Brumbaugh's dock on a canal intersecting the intracoastal waterway. The bird moved slowly along the rope until it was about one meter from shore, then leaned forward and after a brief waiting period, rapidly extended full length into the water. The bird's legs, though fully extended, never left the rope. The bird regained its position on the rope without using its wings. This behavior was repeated three times within ten minutes. On the second attempt, a fish approximately ten centimeters long was secured. Mrs. Brumbaugh said she'd seen the bird doing this a number of times before. Using Kushlan's classification system, this feeding technique might be classified as an incomplete "dive" (Meyerriecks 1960, Publ. Nuttall Ornithol. Club 2) or a combination of the "stand and wait" and "dive" techniques. In a natural situation, the technique could be employed from an overhanging limb or vine. Though this behavior probably represents a point on a continuum between standing and diving it seems unique enough among heron feeding strategies to warrant comment.—**Stephen A. Nesbitt**, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, 4005 South Main Street, Gainesville, Florida 32601.

Florida Field Naturalist 12: 44, 1984.