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An Usual American Kestrel with Growth "on Toenail"

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Stewart (1982) offered several explanations for the movements he noted in Blue Jays. Stewart felt that movement, especially migration, of Blue Jays was influenced by the orientation of mountains and streams. He also concluded that dispersal by jays was a vestigial behavior pattern no longer serving the needs once served. Because individuals in the same area were both sedentary and migratory, he discounted environmental influences as the cause of jay movement.

Until further research is conducted, we will refrain from adding to or commenting on Stewart's (1982) speculations. It is interesting, however, that both species of *Cyanocitta* at least superficially exhibit similar patterns of movement.

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An Usual American Kestrel With "Growth" On Toenail

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While trapping Kestrel's at an active garbage dump, south-east of Chicago, Illinois, on 29, January 1983, I captured an unusual AHY male American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*). The bird had an apparent growth on its center toe of the right leg. The growth? was one inch in diameter. It was all black and was almost round.

Upon close examination I could see it was not attached to the flesh, but to the center toe nail only. I assumed it could not be nail growth, so I tried to break it with my finger nails, which was fruitless, because it was too hard. I then got out a large pliers and started to crush it. It took a great amount of pressure, but I finally crushed it. The inside was white so I (assumed?) it must have been plaster of paris, or something of that consistency.

How a thing like that could become attached to a toe nail is uncertain. If the bird picked it up at the dump, it must have been soft enough for the toe nail to embed in it, and promptly the bird could have removed it.

The solution as I see it, the bird was trapped by someone, who then attached this object to the birds toe as a lark, and held it on until it becomes hard? The bird was then released.

Have other hawk banders run into hawks that had an object like this on their toes? There was no hair or feathers within the object, thus it was not a build-up of what the Kestrel had been eating.

Anyway the bird should be happy now with that weight off it's right foot, and the left leg sporting a F & W band #1333-56303.

I planned to record the bird as status (615), but changed that to (300) status, since the bird is now normal.