

Behavioral Notes on Mockingbirds And Black Rat Snakes

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The recent report of wing flashing by a Catbird in response to a Black Rat Snake (E.F. Potter, *Chat*, 32:103) prompts me to report a similar incident. On 17 May 1969 I observed unusual behavior by a Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottus*) about 100 yards E of Sandy Point on the Patuxent River, Calvert County, Maryland. The Mockingbird was wing flashing and fluttering a few feet off the ground and rapidly approaching me. At a distance of perhaps 50 feet I could discern the object of the bird's attention, an adult Black Rat Snake (*Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta*). I detected no vocalization on the part of the Mockingbird. A Purple Martin (*Progne subis*) from a nearby housebox was attracted by the commotion, but did not take part in the wing flashing. The birds broke off the engagement as the snake continued towards me.

It is of interest that Potter observed this type of behavior by the Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) and what might be called "incipient" behavior by a Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*). The present observation represents a third species of the Mimidae.

A second point of interest is that the Black Rat Snake harassed by the Mockingbird was the third I had observed that morning and each, insofar as I could tell, followed the same path from a low, swampy area through a lawn (recently converted from a cornfield). This is strong circumstantial evidence for "tracking," presumably by olfaction, of the first snake by the latter two. A previous observation of this type was made by Stupka (J.E. Huheey and A. Stupka, *Amphibians and Reptiles of Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, Univ. of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1967, p. 64). Stupka's observation was on 15 May 1953 coinciding remarkably with mine and with the known breeding season of this species (K.P. Schmidt and D.D. Davis, *Field Book of Snakes*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1941, p. 150, give May 25 and June 19; A.H. Wright and A.A. Wright, *Handbook of Snakes of the United States and Canada*, Vol. I, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y., 1957, p. 233, state "May 25 . . . to June 12 . . ."). The snakes were collected, preserved, and examined internally. The first snake was a female and the following two were males, consistent with the trailing hypothesis.

Spring Movement and Behavior Of Loggerhead Shrikes at Raleigh, N.C.

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For a number of permanent resident species that do not congregate during migration, and are generally thinly distributed at all times of year, it is difficult to ascertain migratory movements except in closely monitored areas. The Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) is such a species.

During the winter 1968-1969, I was conducting a study of the bird populations of a suburban area of Raleigh. Observation and mist-netting failed to reveal the presence of any shrikes in my study area (about 65 acres).

On 3 and 4 March five Loggerhead Shrikes appeared in the area. The first, a single bird, suddenly appeared in my yard on 3 March. I was banding birds and had one 12 m net open. I left the net for about 10 minutes. On returning, I discovered the shrike perched on top of the net. I watched it while it then made an attack on a Slate-colored