

# AN UNUSUAL TRAP RESPONSE OF TWO DIURNAL RAPTORS

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While banding raptors on a study area in the lower piedmont, about 3 km north of Auburn, Alabama, an unusual interspecific behavior occurred between a Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis) and an American Kestrel (Falco sparverius)

On 5 January 1980, at 1500 hours, I attempted to capture an adult Red-tailed Hawk with a bal-chatri trap baited with a white mouse. The weather was cloudy with a slight drizzle. I was located in a car 45 m from the roadside trap. The Red-tailed Hawk was perched on a telephone pole and was about 7 m above the trap. The hawk immediately became interested with the mouse's activity inside the bal-chatri and began to strike. Unexpectedly, an American Kestrel (male adult) flew from an adjacent tree and struck the Red-tailed Hawk, foiling its attempt to grasp the trap. A few minutes later the Kestrel began to strike the bal-chatri and was intercepted by the Red-tailed Hawk. Finally, the birds perched about 9 m from each other on a telephone wire that crossed the road. They were almost equidistant (15 m) from the trap. Each time the Red-tailed or Kestrel dove toward the bal-chatri, the action was blocked by the other bird. This "stalemate behavior" occurred five times and continued for 45 minutes. It finally ended when a passing truck scared the birds from the immediate area. The Red-tailed Hawk flew the furthest from the site (90 m), while the Kestrel landed about 25 m away. Two minutes after the truck passed, the Kestrel was captured. The Red-tailed remained perched, still interested in the activities around the bal-chatri.

I found this to be an isolated incident throughout my study of raptors on the area. Interspecific and intraspecific interactions between raptors were few

and they mainly involved "territorial" conflicts of some kind (Drennen 1982, unpublished M.S. Thesis, Auburn University).

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#### YELLOW RAIL SPECIMEN

Julian L. Dusi and Mark Brown

An adult female Yellow Rail, Coturnicops noveboracensis, was captured in Tates Cove of the Skyline Wildlife Management Area, Jackson County, Alabama by area personnel, 29 September 1981.

The rail was flushed while a food plot in the cove was being mowed by a bush hog. The bird flushed and the worker ran after it and caught it. Mark Brown was called to make the identification and he brought the bird to Auburn for a museum specimen.

The bird was in good physical condition at the time of its capture. It has a total length of 160 mm and a wing chord of 76 mm. It is now specimen A-335 in the Auburn University Vertebrate Museum.

It seems odd for a rare rail to be found quite far from marsh habitat and for a poor flier to appear in the roughly dissected coves of this management area rather than in a river bottom.

Wade Manning, Manager of Skyline Wildlife Management Area, told Brown that he sees Yellow Rails each year when he mows the food plots in Tates Cove and that