

mal range. The Mingan Terraces were thought to be inhabited primarily by Boreal Owls, although, both Boreal and Northern Saw-whet owls use coastal areas and even nest in similar habitats. Each fall, however, southern movements of Northern Saw-whet Owls are observed along the north shore of the St. Lawrence, whereas southern movements by Boreal Owls occur only about every 4 years (Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac: http://www.explos-nature.qc.ca/ooot/index_f.htm).

In North America, the breeding ranges of Northern Saw-whet and Boreal owls overlap broadly in western mountain ranges, although Boreal Owls tend to occupy the higher elevations (Palmer 1986, Cannings 1993). In some years, Northern Saw-whet Owls establish territories adjacent to those of Boreal Owls at higher elevations in British Columbia (R. J. Cannings pers. comm.), and territorial overlap between the two species has been documented along the southern edge of the boreal forest in Minnesota (Lane and McKeown 1991). Clearly, the cohabitation of these closely related species in Quebec deserves further study.

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Carolina Wren Nest Successfully Parasitized by House Finch

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ABSTRACT.—We report the first observation of a House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) successfully parasitizing a Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) nest. On 24 May 2005, we found a Carolina Wren nest in south-central Oklahoma containing four Carolina Wren eggs and two House Finch eggs.

The House Finch eggs hatched and nestlings grew rapidly. The Carolina Wren eggs hatched but the young did not survive. We observed a House Finch fledgling with the adult Carolina Wrens the day after fledging. *Received 29 August 2005, accepted 14 March 2006.*

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House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) expanded their range into central Oklahoma by the 1990s (Reinking 2004). Typically,

House Finches nest near human habitation and lay an average of four eggs; the incubation period is 13–14 days, and young fledge 11–14 days after hatching. This species has been documented as an occasional interspecific brood parasite; however, there are no records of House Finches successfully parasitizing another species (i.e., a host species fledging House Finch young; Shepardson 1915, Holland 1923, Woods 1968). Therefore, our observation of a Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) pair successfully fledging two House Finch young is noteworthy.

The Carolina Wren is a regular breeding species in south-central Oklahoma (Reinking 2004) and builds a nest of various materials in a wide variety of nest sites. Typically, Carolina Wrens lay four eggs that hatch in approximately 15 days (Haggerty and Morton 1995). Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) occasionally parasitize Carolina Wrens in Oklahoma (Bent 1948), and Carolina Wrens have successfully incubated cowbird eggs and fledged cowbird young (Grzybowski 1995, Haggerty and Morton 1995).

On 24 May 2005 at 16:15 CST, we flushed a Carolina Wren from a nest located northeast of Ada, Pontotoc County, Oklahoma (34° 49' N, 96° 36' W). The nest was 1.87 m above the ground, nestled between a branch and the wall of a chimney, semi-domed, and constructed of twigs, leaves, and grass. In 2003 and 2004, the same nest site was used by a pair of Carolina Wrens that were banded in 2003. The nest contained four Carolina Wren eggs (mean size = 19.5×15 mm) and two House Finch eggs (23×16 mm and 21×16 mm). We determined that they were House Finch eggs based on size, blue color, and maculation pattern (Baicich and Harrison 1997). One desiccated Carolina Wren egg was found just outside the nest and was not present the following day.

The House Finch eggs hatched on 3 June and two Carolina Wren eggs hatched on 6 June. By 7 June, a third Carolina Wren egg had hatched and, on 8 June, only two House Finch nestlings and one unhatched Carolina Wren egg remained in the nest. We removed the remaining unhatched wren egg and determined that it was infertile; we found no embryo in the contents. Prior to banding the nestlings, we definitively identified them as House

Finches based on size, plumage, bill shape, and general morphology (Hill 1993).

We observed the adult wrens feeding insects and insect larvae to the finch nestlings. We did not observe adult House Finches feeding the nestlings, although adult finches used nearby feeders with black oil sunflower seeds. Typically, House Finch nestlings are raised on a diet composed of seeds (Beal 1907); however, our observation suggests that House Finch nestlings can be raised on a diet of primarily soft-bodied insects and insect larvae. On 13 June, both House Finch nestlings fledged and remained within 10 m of the nest. We observed the adult wrens feed the fledglings and give alarm calls when we approached. On 14 June, we observed the adult wrens foraging and feeding one House Finch fledgling 50 m from the nest site; we did not observe the House Finch fledglings after that day.

House Finches have been documented as interspecific brood parasites of Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*), and Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*) (Shepardson 1915, Holland 1923); to our knowledge, however, our report is the first to document House Finch nestlings fledging from a host species' nest. Although House Finches intentionally parasitize and usurp the nests of other species, we cannot exclude the possibility that egg dumping may be an alternate explanation for our observation. Interspecific egg dumping has been documented for a variety of passerines. Wiens (1971) reported egg dumping by a Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) in a Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) nest, and Sealy (1989) documented egg dumping by a House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) in a Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) nest. Hamilton and Orians (1965) speculated that egg dumping is the first step towards facultative brood parasitism and, eventually, obligate brood parasitism.

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American Coot Parasitism on Least Bitterns

Brian D. Peer¹

ABSTRACT.—American Coots (*Fulica americana*) are known for laying eggs in the nests of conspecifics, but there is little evidence that they regularly parasitize the nests of other species. I found 13 Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) nests, 2 of which were parasitized by coots. These are the first records of coots parasitizing Least Bitterns, and the first records of any form of brood parasitism on Least Bitterns. Nests of Least Bitterns also were parasitized experimentally with a variety of nonmimetic eggs and 27% were rejected ($n = 11$ nests). This indicates that Least Bitterns may possess some egg recognition abilities. *Received 15 August 2005, accepted 21 March 2006.*

Facultative avian brood parasites build nests and raise their own young, but they also lay eggs in the nests of conspecifics (conspecific brood parasitism; CBP) and sometimes in the nests of other species (interspecific brood parasitism; IBP). CBP has been documented in at least 236 bird species (Yom-Tov 2001) and appears to be relatively common in

colonial birds, waterfowl, and cavity-nesters (MacWhirter 1989, Rohwer and Freeman 1989, Yom-Tov 2001). One of the best-studied conspecific brood parasites is the American Coot (*Fulica americana*; Arnold 1987; Lyon 1993a, 1993b, 2003). CBP appears to be a relatively common reproductive strategy among coots. For example, Lyon (1993a) found that 13% of all coot eggs over a 4-year period were laid parasitically and more than 40% of nests were parasitized by conspecifics. The parasites are females with nesting territories that lay parasitically prior to laying eggs in their own nests, and floater females that are unable to acquire nesting territories of their own (Lyon 1993a).

On rare occasions, coots have been known to lay eggs in the nests of other species. To date, three host species have been recorded: Franklin's Gull, (*Larus pipixcan*; Burger and Gochfeld 1994), and Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*) and Redhead (*Aythya americana*) (Joyner 1973). It is unknown whether any of these cases of parasitism were successful, although coot chicks are dependent on their par-

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