

Arctic Fox Attacks on Molting Canada Geese

At 20:25, 18 July 1968, I watched from a distance of 100 yards an Arctic Fox (*Alopex lagopus*) attack and kill a molting adult female Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) on a peninsula in the Thelon River, N.W.T. (64°37'N, 100°10'W). The fox, which was seen from a canoe, ran down a hillside and attacked the lone goose 130 yards from shore. The fox, making no sound, repeatedly circled the goose, charging and retreating but always remaining one to three feet from it. The goose defended itself by keeping its head high, neck arched, wings outstretched and turning to face the fox at all times. It charged the fox six times during the 15 minute ordeal. The goose did not attempt to reach the safety of the water even though the fox did not appear to prevent this from happening. Eventually the fox killed the goose by breaking its neck and ate the bird's head before leaving.

J. P. Ryder (pers. comm.) observed an Arctic Fox attack a flock of 60 molting adult geese and 24 flightless juvenile Canada Geese on 31 July 1966 on the Pitok River, N.W.T. (67°40' N, 101°15' W). The fox ran over a hill and attacked the young geese only. It broke the necks of four young geese before they could reach the shore several yards away. At the approach of the canoe the fox ran away.

The distribution of many arctic nesting birds is related to their adaptation to Arctic Fox predation (Larson, 1960. *Oikos*, 11:276-305). Snow Geese (*Chen caerulescens*) and Ross' Geese (*Chen rossii*) nest primarily on islands in the central Arctic, an adaptation that limits Arctic Fox predation (Ryder, *Auk*, in press). During the molting period, geese range over wide areas of the tundra and are particularly susceptible to predation. Observations of Arctic Fox predation on arctic nesting birds are rare in inland

areas where lemmings constitute the major food item of foxes during the year (Larson, *op. cit.*).

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A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in British Columbia

ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1968, at approximately 11.30 A.M., Mr. Ron Walker of Cascade, British Columbia, called at my house in Grand Forks, B.C., and informed me that he had seen a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Muscivora forficata* beside the highway about three miles east of Grand Forks. My wife and I followed Mr. and Mrs. Walker in our car to the spot where they had first seen the flycatcher, and found that it was still in the vicinity.

The flycatcher was alone, but Mr. Walker had previously seen it in proximity to several Audubon Warbler's, *Dendroica auduboni*. The four of us kept the flycatcher under close observation for fifteen or twenty minutes, the bird showing no apparent concern at our presence or that of the two parked cars. During the time we had the bird under observation it flew around and above us, thereby affording an opportunity to note the spreading and closing of the long, strangely marked tail, as the bird perched occasionally on a fence wire beside the road, or on the top of some small bushes, and once on the tip of a mullein plant, *Verbascum thapsis*, about fifty feet from where we were standing. The flycatcher was not seen to take any food, but there may be some significance in the fact that grasshoppers were very numerous and active in the locality where this flycatcher was observed. Finally, the bird flew off in a southerly direction and disappeared.

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