

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE TAKES PREY FROM FLOODWATER

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The rains of the week of 8 April 1979 brought the level of the Black Warrior River in Alabama to record levels. In the Demopolis-Greenesboro area, the river crested at more than 7 m above flood stage, covering much of the surrounding areas with water. On 13 April 1979, I witnessed a Loggerhead Shrike (Lanius ludovicianus) taking prey from this floodwater. This occurred approximately 4.7 km N of Greensboro, Alabama, in Hale County. At 0743, a Shrike was perched on a phone line 3 m above the water beside Alabama Highway 69. The Shrike dropped to the water creating a small splash, captured an insect approximately 2 cm in length, and immediately returned to the line.

According to Judd (1898. Food of Shrikes. Cuckoos and Shrikes in their relation to agriculture. U.S. Dept. Agr., Div. Biol. Surv., Bull. 9:15-26.), minnows made up the entire stomach contents of a Shrike in the Winter in Utah. However, there is no record in the literature of an actual observation of a Shrike taking prey from water. This behavior may have been a response to the flooding of most of the surrounding land, the Shrike's normal foraging area.

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