

## ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

of food such as Delphinium nelsoni, Ipomopsis aggregata, Castilleja miniata and Delphinium barbeyi

### Acknowledgements

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### OSPREY (PANDION HALIAETUS) FEEDS ON CARRION

#### WITH TURKEY VULTURES (CATHARTES AURA)

Julian L. Dusi

On 28 July 1994, while driving north on highway 39, Stewart Co., Georgia, with a van-load of ornithology students, six turkey vultures were observed on the road opposite the entrance to the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Bradley Unit. As we approached, some of the vultures flew, exposing a light-colored bird feeding among them. An approaching car from the north caused all of the vultures to fly, leaving the light-colored bird, that we identified as an Osprey in sole possession of the remains of a badly decomposed opossum (Didelphis virginiana). The Osprey flew off with the opossum, but dropped it.

Although the osprey is known to eat dead fish, it does not usually feed

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on carrion or road kills (Bent, A.C. 1937, *Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey, Part One*). Neither do they usually feed in associations, but only solitarily. **Julian L. Dusi**, Department of Zoology and Wildlife Science, Auburn University, AL 36849.

### **RING-BILLED GULLS (LARUS DELAWARENSIS) FEEDING ON MUSSELS**

Daniel J. Drennen

In this note I document Ring-Billed Gulls feeding on three different species of mussels, describe aspects of their feeding behavior and gauge the lake water level necessary for it to occur.

On 6 January and 10 January 1994, I observed Ring-Billed Gulls picking up mussels from the shoreline with their beaks and dropping them on the asphalt parking lot (approximately 0.5 acre, 0.2 hectare; rectangular in shape) immediately adjacent to Lake Eufaula at Lake Point State Park (Barbour Co., Alabama). Most of the mussels were exposed to the air in the mud shoreline and were readily available to gulls. Some mussels were covered with < 1 foot ( 0.3 m) of water. Lake water levels during the observations were 185.08 msl (mean sea level) and 185.13 msl, respectively. Full pool for the lake is 190.0 msl. Normal msl for the lake in January is 3-4 feet (0.9-1.2 m) below this stage.

The gulls would carry the mussels to an estimated height of 10-30 feet (3.0-9.1 m) and drop them on the asphalt parking lot. If the mussel missed the asphalt or did not open on impact, the gulls would pick it up and drop it again.