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Attempted Kleptoparasitism of Ospreys by Great Blue Herons

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ABSTRACT.—Two attempts of kleptoparasitism of Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) by Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) were observed in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming. Two herons vocalized and bill thrust at Ospreys as they emerged from the water following dives for fish. Although both attempts were unsuccessful (the Ospreys failed to capture a fish), the intensity of the attacks suggest that Great Blue Herons may be capable of taking fish from Ospreys. Received 12 Nov. 1997, accepted 2 June 1998.

On 25 April, 1989, while observing Trumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*) on the Snake River in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming, I observed kleptoparasitism attempts of Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) by Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*). Great Blue Herons take prey from gulls and shorebirds and fish from Osprey nests [Butler, R. W. 1992. Great Blue Heron. In *The birds of North America*, no. 25. (A. Poole, P. Stettenheim, and F. Gill, Eds.). The Academy of Nat. Sci., Philadelphia; The American Ornitholo-

gists' Union, Washington D.C.]. However, observations of direct kleptoparasitism on Ospreys by Great Blue Herons have not been reported. On 25 April, I observed two Ospreys hunting behind Jackson Lake Dam on the Snake River. As one Osprey dove into the water, a Great Blue Heron that was perched in a nearby tall conifer flew to the spot where the Osprey was briefly submerged. As the Osprey emerged from the water and tried to become airborne, the heron briefly hovered (similar to landing on nests) within 0.5 m of the hawk while vocalizing and thrusting its bill presumably in an attempt to force the hawk to drop any prey it may have captured. The Osprey, unsuccessful in catching a fish, flew rapidly in a zigzagged pattern down the river to evade the heron. The heron followed the Osprey for approximately 5 m before both birds left the area in different directions. Within a few minutes, a second Osprey plunged into the water in the same general area and a second heron, which was perched in a different conifer along the river, tried to force the Osprey to drop prey as described above. Although both attempts were unsuccessful, the intensity of attacks by these herons suggests that sometimes they are successful in taking prey from Ospreys.

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