

On 21 July 1990, I found a second nest of similar construction, approximately 1 km to the NW. It was located on a tree fern (*Cyathea* sp., ca 8.8 cm dbh and 3.5 m in height). The tree fern was densely covered by bromeliads (*Guzmania* sp.), aroids (*Anthurium* sp.), and small ferns. I found this nest on a trail at ca 1700 m. Both nest sites were in deep shade under a closed canopy. The shape, color, and markings of the eggs were similar to those described for the first nest, except that they were finely speckled with brown at the smaller end, with the spotting becoming heavier and blotched at the larger end, rather than randomly speckled. The average measurements and weight of the four eggs were 27.6 ± 0.4 mm \times 19.3 ± 0.6 mm and 4.9 ± 0.4 g, respectively. On 7 August both nests were empty and the adults were not seen. The eggs in the first nest, and possibly an adult bird, were lost to predation between 23 July and 7 August, because I found numerous small body feathers scattered around the nest. The fate of the eggs in the second nest is unknown.

The nest of the Black Solitaire resembles those described for the Black-faced Solitaire (*Myadestes melanops*) (Skutch 1972, Stiles and Skutch 1989) and the Andean Solitaire (*M. ralloides*) (Miller 1963, Wallace 1965), which are bulky open cups composed largely of mosses, lined with dark fibrous rootlets and similar materials. The eggs differ from those of *Myadestes* in their greenish ground color and sparser spotting which is less concentrated toward the thick end.

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American Coot kills Yellow-headed Blackbird nestlings.—I know of only one witnessed predation event by an American Coot (*Fulica americana*) on a vertebrate—a nestling Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) (pers. comm. cited in Burger, *Auk* 85:449–451, 1973). While making observations at the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area in

Creston, British Columbia, I witnessed coot predation of Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthrocephalus xanthrocephalus*) nestlings. The observations were made from a blind 130 m from a bullrush clump containing a monitored coot nest.

At 12:40 on 29 May 1991, I observed an adult coot repeatedly shaking, dropping, and retrieving something in its beak. These behaviors lasted for a few minutes until the coot lowered its head to the "Charge" posture (Gullion, Wilson Bull. 64:83-97, 1952) and very slowly paddled into a bullrush clump. It approached the bullrushes from the side opposite to an active coot nest (P4N41, presumably its own) and was moving much more slowly than when the Charge display is used in aggressive interactions. It reappeared a second later in a rushing flap, closely followed by a pair of Yellow-headed Blackbirds. The blackbirds physically attacked the coot until it was a meter or two from the bullrushes. The coot made five or more forays into the bullrushes, returning either in a flap, with the blackbirds in pursuit, or resurfacing from a dive. These forays were separated by short bouts of sitting in the water facing the clump, occasionally preening or picking at the object. Finally the coot emerged with a beak full of brown cattail leaves, which it dropped to the water. The only cattail leaves in the bullrush clumps were the nests of Yellow-headed Blackbirds. I then began to approach the scene by canoe; two or three more coot forays into the clump occurred before the birds were frightened off. At the site, I discovered an empty, tipped-over, Yellow-headed Blackbird nest about 30 cm from the water surface where the coot had been entering the clump. A brief search of the area where the coot had been sitting revealed the remains of two blackbird chicks, one almost whole but mangled and the other little more than a single leg. These remains were the only obvious objects I could find that the coot could have been shaking. Tarsal lengths and general appearance indicated that the nestlings were about five days old.

While the evidence is circumstantial, three points lead me to believe that this was a predation event and not scavenging. First, the coot deliberately tore the nest apart and there was no other source of cattail leaves. Second, the parental defense was active and physical (pecking and clawing at the coot), suggesting that the nestlings were very recently removed from the nest. Third, the coot was clearly tearing up and eating the nestlings, which were recently killed when I found them.

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