

great taxonomic and ecological differences, there is apparently enough similarity in habitat, body size, coloration and flight behaviour (Miller, 1966) to provoke an aggressive response from dragonflies. These observations demonstrate the relatively low level of similarity that is required for

aggressive interactions between species, in spite of natural selection for species differences that will contribute to reproductive isolation.

LITERATURE CITED

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RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH "HAWKING" INSECTS

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One of the aids in identifying many species of birds is their characteristic feeding behaviour. Nuthatches, for example, customarily feed on the trunks and limbs of trees, climbing about and searching for insects in nooks and crannies, often upside-down. Sometimes, in response to environmental influences such as food availability, or weather, species behave in unusual ways which attract our attention. Such an activity of nuthatches (and other birds) is "hawking", a term which is used to refer to birds capturing insects in flight by flying out from a perch. This is characteristic behaviour in flycatchers, which make their living in this fashion, but it is only infrequently seen in nuthatches.

On May 26, 1966 I watched a Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) hawking insects from a spruce tree in Brookside Cemetery in Winnipeg. The nuthatch pursued flying insects in the same manner as a flycatcher. Several times in the course of five minutes of observation time, the nuthatch flew out to capture insects, each time returning to perch again on the same tree. I could not identify the insects which attracted the nuthatch. Presumably these were small flies which were rising in some numbers.

A. C. Bent (1945) quotes E. A. Forbush (1929) and P. M. Silloway (1907) as saying that the Red-breasted Nuthatch occasionally engages in flycatching. The only other published reference to flycatching in this species appears to be by Aaron M. Bagg (1966); the latter cites obser-

vations on Monhegan Island, Maine, by Christopher M. Packard on September 4 to 6, 1965, and records of eight to 10 nuthatches seen in early September, 1965 by Richard L. Plunkett "launching themselves out to catch flies in mid-air" from the tips of spruce trees.

Hervey Brackbill (1950) records details of observations of at least two White-breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta carolinensis*) hawking for insects on August 13, 1949 about a white elm in Baltimore, Maryland. A European species, the Nuthatch (*Sitta europaea*), has also been known to "hawk" for insects in several instances (Cornish, 1949; Williams, 1949). The editors of *British Birds* (editorial comment in Williams, 1949) suggest that insect "hawking" may actually be quite frequent in the Nuthatch. It may be that this is also true for the Red-breasted and even the White-breasted nuthatches. For this reason, it would be of great interest to hear of similar observations by others.

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