



Cooper's Hawk chick at Jackson Park, Chicago, Cook County, 20 June 1994. A pair of immature Cooper's Hawks nested at the park. Photo by Thomas Jackman.

birds, ranging from nestling European Starlings to adult Northern Flickers. Foraging was observed over the entire 2-mile stretch of Jackson Park, but some prey was taken within 300 feet of the nest, especially by the female. Over and above the damage done to bird populations by predation, the mere presence of Cooper's Hawks appeared to selectively dissuade nesting by medium-sized birds. Common Grackles and American Robins showed the most visible reduction, with summering pairs at as much as 40% below par. Other species with nesting pairs below normal included Northern Flicker, American Crow, Gray Catbird, and Brown Thrasher.

These reduced populations were especially striking when contrasted with nesting populations for smaller passerines, such as swallows, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Indigo Bunting, and Song Sparrow, which showed healthy numbers of summering pairs. Nesting populations of Green Herons and waterfowl (Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard) were also stable to high. Northern Cardinals showed a sound population of summering adults, but young were not discerned until the first week of July, a month later than expected.

Few prey items were identified to species, but field tallies suggest

that American Robins may have suffered the greatest measurable losses, even given their under-par nesting population with post-breeding (mid-July) tallies about 65% below normal. Starlings were doubtless another major food source, but their breeding population was large enough to absorb the losses with little discernible reduction in numbers. One pair of nesting Eastern Kingbirds had at least three altercations with the hawks and eventually abandoned their territory, or were devoured.

The Cooper's Hawks aggressively defended their territory within a radius of about 200 feet from Black-crowned Night-Herons and Great

Blue Herons. American Crows seen very frequently within 100-200 feet of the nest site were surprisingly tolerant of the hawks, with very few confrontations. Unexpected convivality was noted 1 August, when a juvenile male hawk was seen keeping company with a flock of five crows on a grassy game field. Neither species attempted to drive the other away, but the hawk periodically engaged one of the crows in a brief bout of wrestling, the whole affair being quite reminiscent of rough housing among a den of puppies.



Literature Cited

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