AERIAL PREDATION OF A GREAT BLUE HERON BY A BALD EAGLE
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On 20 April 2007, I witnessed an encounter between an adult Bald Eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus) and a Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) at Stillwater Bay, near Powell River, BC. The event occurred at 0640 hrs on a clear, sunny, and calm day with a rising tide near its maximum height of 4.7 m (15.4 ft).

I had just started up my boat and was letting it warm up when I noticed an eagle flush a roosting heron into the air. The birds flew around, with the eagle in pursuit, for about four minutes gaining altitude and rising to a height of approximately 76-92 m (250-300 ft). The eagle then suddenly grabbed the heron, killed it in mid-air, and tumbled with its prey landing on a log boom where the eagle proceeded to eat the heron.

The heron was obviously too heavy to carry and it appeared that the eagle purposely maneuvered its position over the log booms before it killed the heron. For me, the event was an interesting early morning lesson in natural history - class had started!

The predatory behaviour that I observed was similar to that described by Campbell (1975) of a Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus) that flushed a Black Turnstone (Arenaria melanocephala) from Clover Point, BC. The falcon forced the turnstone high into the air, by flying beneath it, and then snatched its prey in mid-air. Bald Eagles usually soar overhead to visually locate prey before striking (Buehler 2000).

While the Bald Eagle is an opportunistic forager that eats a wide variety of animals; attacks on adult Great Blue Herons are rare (Buehler 2000). Forbes (1987), however, reported three attacks by Bald Eagles on adult and post-fledging Great Blue Herons foraging near Pender Harbour, BC, two of which were successful.

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW NESTING IN AN AMERICAN BEAVER LODGE
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Of the seven swallows found in British Columbia, the Northern Rough-winged Swallow (Stelgidopteryx serripennis) is the most overlooked species. Although fairly common throughout its breeding range across southern portions of the province, little is known about its nesting behaviour. In fact, much of the breeding information for this species is still derived from a detailed study in Michigan over 45 years ago (Lunk 1962).

The Northern Rough-winged Swallow is a burrow-nesting species that nests singly or in small groups and prefers vertical surfaces (Dejong 1996). In British Columbia, natural burrows may occur in cutbanks, gravel pits, and sea cliffs. It is also an
adaptable species and in recent years, nests have been found in crevices and cavities in human-made sites such as buildings, bridge abutments, rock walls, drainage pipes, abandoned blasting drill holes, sawdust piles, and occasionally nest boxes (Campbell et al. 1997).

While surveying nesting waterbirds near Ahbau Creek, British Columbia, on 3 July 2007 I noticed a Northern Rough-winged Swallow fly from the vicinity of an American Beaver (Castor canadensis) lodge with a fecal sac and drop it in the water about 20 m away. Since there were no vertical surfaces nearby that could contain a nesting burrow I decided to watch for additional swallow activity. Over the next 15 minutes I observed two adults flying and foraging over the marsh. One swallow soon returned with food and disappeared into the top of the beaver lodge (Figure 1). Shortly afterwards it flew out with another fecal sac and dropped it in the water some distance away.

Being curious I waded out to the beaver lodge and discovered a small burrow among sticks within 0.1 m (1 ft) from the top of the lodge and 1.8 m (6 ft) above the water. The burrow was excavated in a layer of soft, dry mud surrounded by dry Sphagnum moss that was packed between many overlapping sticks and twigs (Figure 2). I checked the burrow and found five nestlings, about four days old, resting on a small pad of dry grass stems and leaves. The burrow, about 0.3 m (14 in) long, angled slightly upward to end in the nest chamber.

It is not known if the swallows actually excavated the burrow, if some other animal was responsible, or if it was a natural structure that was created when the lodge was being built by the beavers. Lunk (1962) suggests that the Northern Rough-winged Swallow does not excavate its own burrow although recently Peck and James (1987) suggest that at times the species does excavate its nest burrow.

**Literature Cited**

NEW RECORDS OF BIRD MORTALITY AS A RESULT OF COLLISION WITH WIRE FENCING

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Reports of birds killed by becoming snagged on barbed-wire fences, trapped between wires of chain-link fencing, and colliding with wires on electric fences, are infrequent. This infrequency is likely a result of the difficulty in finding birds that have hit fences, and the potentially high scavenging rates that may occur shortly after mortality. In British Columbia and elsewhere, barbed-wire, chain-link, and electric fences are extensive, and while they may be less than an inch wide, they extend for thousands of kilometers across the landscape, bordering farms, schools, industrial buildings, ranches, private residences, grazing and pasturelands, and numerous other land units. The kinds of species, frequency of occurrence, and potential for serious impacts on local populations is poorly known. Of the scant information that is available, a review of birds killed on barbed-wire fences worldwide totaled only 40 species (Allen 1990), and most incidences were of only one individual. The purpose of this note is to describe, and put on record, the occurrence of three species not previously known to have died as a result of collision with a barbed-wire, chain-link, or electric fence anywhere in the world. This note also documents the first Canadian occurrence of a Great Horned Owl (Bubo virginianus) that died as a result of collision with a barbed-wire fence in Alberta.

Vesper Sparrow

On 7 August 2004, Joanna Preston and I located a recently fledged juvenile Vesper Sparrow (Pooecetes gramineus) hanging from the upper strand of a barbed-wire fence (Figure 1) along Douglas Lake Road, 400 m west of Pennask Lake Road near Minnie Lake, BC. It appeared that the bird became ensnared by catching the skin under its neck on one of the barbs, perhaps during preening or beak-cleaning, or perhaps by chance as it attempted to fly through or over the fence. Upon observation the bird was in

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