

nest parasites actually consumed most of the food brought by the parent birds, which resulted in death of the original brood." At 0900 hrs on 5 January 1978 such a juvenile arrived at the nest box, and, although vigorously chased by the parents, returned and entered a few minutes later (Fig. 1). It took up a position at the entrance, but the resident chicks, now 19 days old, attacked from the rear and bundled it out. The same juvenile (unbanded, so not from a local nest box, but recognisable by the single feather of the autumn plumage on its breast) returned almost at once and repeated its entry and ignominious exit. Neither parent arrived with food while the scrounger was at the entrance, but it might well have been fed if the nestlings had been smaller. Similar well-fledged juvenile strangers were seen trying to enter other occupied boxes on 10 and 26 December 1977 but were chased off by the adults. Scrounging may be more effective at isolated, dark nest sites than in my nest boxes, and its incidence in different populations and its evolutionary implications would be a fascinating study.

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GOLFING GULLS

Some years ago, when the only golfer in our district lived nearly 5 km away across a river, I was puzzled to find the occasional golf ball on my farm paddocks. It was only when I became a golfer and began hitting practice balls in the paddocks and not always recovering them, that I discovered that the culprits were Black-backed Gulls (*Larus dominicanus*).

Several times I have watched these gulls pick up a ball, fly about 40 m above the ground and drop it, repeating this several times. It is not uncommon to find golf balls in the stock water-troughs when I clean them out annually and I presume the gulls have dropped them there. A neighbour 1.5 km away finds balls which the gulls have carried from my practice area to his farm.

So far, the gulls have not obliged by picking up my ball on the golf course and dropping it in the hole!

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Corrigendum:

Would members please alter the transposed captions which appeared on pages 207 and 208 of the last issue (Vol. 25, part 3; September 1978). We apologise to Mr Fox for this unfortunate error. — Ed.