

NOTES

CALIFORNIA SCRUB JAY FORAGES ON MULE DEER

IRENE CAMPBELL, 444 N. Alta Vista, Monrovia, California 91016

ROBERT W. DICKERMAN, Museum of Southwestern Biology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131

Two reports exist in the literature of oxpecker-like behavior in the Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens sensu lato*), one with Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) in California (Dixon 1944) and one with feral hogs in Florida (Barber and Morris 1980). In 1944 Dixon queried, "have other[s] . . . observed this habit in our California [Scrub] Jays?" We here report an observation made 45 years later!

One of us, Campbell, lives near the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, at the northern edge of the Los Angeles basin. The house is on a knoll, surrounded by gardens with abundant shrubs and pine and juniper trees 40 years old. It lies adjacent to chaparral-covered slopes.

About 09:00 on 17 August 1987, Campbell was observing two Mule Deer on her back lawn leisurely eating ivy and pyracantha berries and leaves. Then a Scrub Jay hopped onto the larger deer's back and started pecking into its fur, eating whatever it found there. This deer stood still for 10 or 15 minutes while the jay foraged. The jay then repeated the procedure on the back of the smaller deer.

This observation and the previous one made in California involved a single jay feeding at a leisurely pace. This is in contrast to the Florida report, which involved a group of excited jays of which apparently only a single member repeatedly made forays of a few seconds onto the backs of feral hogs.

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LITERATURE CITED

- Barber, D. W., and Morris, J. G. 1980. Florida Scrub Jays foraging on feral hogs. *Auk* 97:202.
- Dixon, J. S. 1944. California Jay picks ticks from Mule Deer. *Condor* 46:204.

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