



The Katharine Ordway  
Natural History Study Area

Box 216  
Inver Grove Heights, Minn. 55075  
(612) 455-6204

ORDWAY BULLETIN  
No. 99

MACALESTER  
COLLEGE

located at 9550 Inver Grove Trail (Dakota County Road 77), Inver Grove Heights, Minn.


PREDATION at ORDWAY ..... An AFTER-THOUGHT.

Predation by domestic animals is a constant problem which was highlighted in the case of an unusual bird's death. I had been watching and studying an albino Rose-breasted Grosbeak for two seasons when its mauled body appeared one June morn in a mist-net (Ordway Bull. No. 92). Since it had been trapped high in the net there is good reason to suppose that a hawk or owl made the kill, attracted perhaps by the white color of the victim. Also, there was no tear in the net at the point where the killing took place. However, at the same time by coincidence there were two small dead birds and a huge rip in the lowest shelf of the net, much more obviously the work of a preying cat.

Certainly such predation is encouraged when we set up conditions for attracting birds to our feeders or confine them in mist-nets. Perhaps there is duplicity in my reasoning but I resent much less the probable fact that "Whitey" was killed by another wild bird than that the two smaller birds were killed by a cat; however, the one case is simple predation by a member of the natural community whereas the other is a case of an intrusion by a domestic creature which does not depend upon nor contribute to the natural scene. I prefer control rather than eradication of such animals and that is something which must be done by their owners. The sign on our property which says, "Please! No Cats or Dogs", is meaningless to the animals. Of course, it is also of no meaning to owners who do not like to read such things. We have one occasional visitor (with visibly-leashed dog-companion) who enters the property in such a way that she does not pass near the admonitory sign; this blissful ignorance of the sign permits the intrusion of her pet upon the property.

Such conduct does not palliate my annoyance at the owners of cats and other domestic animals who are inconsiderate of the rights of others. I know of several instances of ~~felicide~~ <sup>felinocide</sup> in the vicinity - an offsetting factor in the "balance of nature".

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rnc/

  
R.J. CHRISTMAN,  
Naturalist.