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NEST PREDATION BY THE PIED CROW *CORVUS ALBUS* - The term "nest predation" is normally used, not literally, but to mean predation of nest contents. The Pied Crow *Corvus albus* is known as a nest predator in this sense (e.g. Bannerman 1930-1951), but few birds actually take the whole nest as well as its contents. Hence the following observation may be of interest.

On 3 November 1982, near Freetown, Sierra Leone, a pair of Pied Crows was seen clinging to the outer branches of a tree (*Cassia* sp.) in which several Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata* pairs were nesting. The crows spent two minutes flapping from twig to twig, hanging onto twigs and leaves with beak and feet. The reason for this behaviour was obscure, until one of the pair was seen tugging at a Bronze Mannikin nest, which it eventually detached. It then flew away with the nest held in its bill. The other bird also succeeded in detaching a nest and flew away with it, in the same manner.

Presumably, the crows were taking the nests for the eggs or young within but they flew out of sight before this could be ascertained. They could conceivably have taken the nests as lining material for their own nests, but this would seem unlikely in view of the effort and difficulty involved, and this observation falls outside the normal breeding season of the species in Sierra Leone.

Mannikins' nests are often situated in places relatively inaccessible to an animal the size of a Pied Crow, and the nest has only a small opening. Presumably, the easiest way for a Pied Crow to deal with such a nest is to detach the whole thing and extract the contents by destroying the nest in a more convenient place than the nest-site.

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