

ATTEMPTED KLEPTOPARASITISM OF A KELP GULL *LARUS DOMINICANUS* BY A REED
CORMORANT *PHALACROCORAX AFRICANUS*

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Received 27 April 1988, accepted 13 May 1988

On 17 April 1988 in the canalized Black River which runs into Table Bay, Cape Town, South Africa, I observed an adult Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* standing on an exposed ridge manipulating a dead frog, preparatory to eating it. Within a few minutes an adult Reed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus* in nonbreeding plumage made two attempts to seize the frog from the gull by rushing out of the nearby water with wings flapping. After the first attack the gull flew with its food for a few metres, landing further along the same ridge. After the second attack the gull carried its food out of my sight and was not followed by the cormorant.

Kleptoparasitism, whether successful or unsuccessful, is not mentioned as a foraging technique of the Reed Cormorant or any cormorant in the standard handbooks or in the review of kleptoparasitism by Brockmann & Barnard (1979 *Animal Behaviour* 27: 487-514). This is not surprising, as the latter authors point out, since cormorants lack the agility on land or in the air that characterizes successful kleptoparasites. It is, however, possible that the Kelp Gull had kleptoparasitized the frog from the Reed Cormorant just before I arrived and that the apparent reversal of accepted kleptoparasitic behaviour was induced by prior aggression.