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UNUSUAL FEEDING BEHAVIOUR OF THE HOUSE SPARROW *PASSER DOMESTICUS* IN SLOWINSKI NATIONAL PARK, POLAND

The House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* is a granivorous but opportunistic and adaptable member of the family Passeridae. Sparrows feed on wide variety of items, use many foraging techniques, and even feed nocturnally (Anderson 2006). In general, the species is most active during the day and typically rests at night (Beer 1961) but nocturnal behaviour has been reported (Anderson 2006). In this note we report two infrequent predatory behaviour patterns of the House Sparrow, both diurnal and nocturnal.

In April 2019, near the Slowinski National Park Office, we observed three cases of House Sparrows attacking a Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis*, all between noon and 3:00 p.m. On 25th April, on a small rockery, an adult male House Sparrow attacked a lizard which after shortly being handled by the sparrow threw off its tail. The sparrow grabbed it and flew away with its capture. On 27th April, on a small stony fence, an adult female House Sparrow attacked and after a short fight caught another Sand Lizard. On 28th April, again on a rockery, an adult male House Sparrow attacked a tailless lizard. On 19th July 2019 at 11:00 p.m. another unusual foraging technique was observed. A moulting female House Sparrow hunted on moths attracted by bright artificial light. The sparrow beat maple tree leaves and successfully caught the flushed moths.

The House Sparrow feeds mainly on seeds and weeds but can also use many other types of food, like anthropogenic leftovers, or catch small animals, like arthropods and molluscs (Anderson 2006, Tryjanowski *et al.* 2009). On rare occasions, it can catch lizards and frogs (Anderson 2006). High-protein diet is especially important during the breeding season (Anderson 1977, Ivanov 1990) and moulting (Murphy 1996), periods in which our observations were made. House Sparrows can use innovative techniques to obtain food, for example flutter in front of an electronic sensor to open doors of, e.g., grocery stores and bus stations (Breitwisch & Breitiwisch 1991, Hubregste 1992). Sparrows usually feed during the day but under certain favourite conditions can also forage at night. Broun (1971) reported sparrows feeding on insects attracted to lights at an airport. A similar observation was made at the Empire State Building in New York

by Brooke (1973). Haftorn (1994) observed sparrows at feeding stations during the arctic night in Norway. This remarkable adaptability in foraging behaviour has played a major role in the House Sparrow's success as a commensal in urban and agricultural environments (Anderson 2006).

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