

## INSECTIVORY BY THE BLACK-HOODED PARAKEET IN SOUTHERN NEW YORK

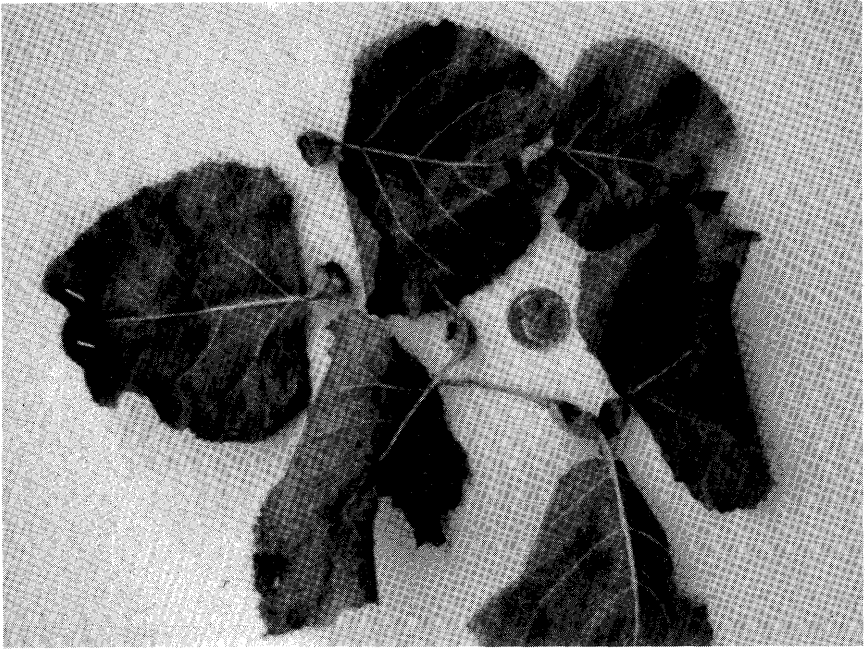
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The Black-hooded Parakeet or Nanday Conure (*Nandayus nenday*) is native to Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay (Forshaw, 1978, p. 407) but it has escaped into the wild in the New York metropolitan area over the last 20 years (Bull, 1973 and Roscoe, *et al.*, 1976). Bull (1973) reported nesting attempts in New Jersey and a fledgling was seen in Westchester Co., New York, in May 1980 (T. Burke, pers. comm.).

We observed a flock of seven individuals on several occasions during early morning and late afternoon in September 1980 in the town of Buchanan, Westchester County. The parakeets occupied Eastern Cottonwoods (*Populus deltoides*) where they actively climbed or flew from branch to branch or tree to tree. The birds cut leaves off at the base of the petiole, manipulated the leaves briefly, and then dropped them. We could not observe this activity in detail because the birds would not allow us to approach within 20 m and we were without binoculars. However, the fresh-fallen cottonwood leaves either had the petiole chewed off or an intact petiole with an aphid gall (*Pemphigus populitransversus*) attached. The leaves themselves were not chewed. Each gall was sliced open, we presume by the birds (Fig. 1), and the insects completely or partially removed.

Black-hooded Parakeets are primarily herbivores, feeding on palm nuts (Wetmore, 1926, p. 198) and other seeds, fruits, nuts, and berries (Forshaw, loc. cit.). In their native range they can be agricultural pests (Steinbacher, 1962) which has caused concern about possible economic damage in the United States. Its insectivorous habits, documented here, suggest that it might also be at least marginally beneficial.

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*Fig. 1. Eastern Cottonwood leaves with aphid galls sliced open by foraging Black-hooded Parakeets. Leaves collected in Buchanan, New York, September 1980.*

#### LITERATURE CITED

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