

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Bald Eagle captures Ring-billed Gull: On 2 April 1989 I was watching two adult Bald Eagles through a 30x Bausch & Lomb spotting scope from my home. Temperatures were in the 30's. The weather was sunny and beautiful. Ice covered Raquette Pond and Tupper Lake marsh but the Raquette River channel was open. I saw one of the eagles chasing a Ring-billed Gull. They flew in many swoops and turns with the eagle in hot pursuit and the gull in full flight. The first eagle gave up the case and the second eagle took over. Again there were many aerial maneuvers as the gull tried to escape. The second eagle finally forced the gull down into the open water but was unable to get it out of the water. Suddenly a third eagle, a dark immature, appeared. It dove on the gull, pulled it from the water and consumed the prey on the ice shelf. There was no attempt by the two adult eagles to retrieve the prey, even though they sat on the ice near the feeding immature. In the past fifteen years I have seen eagles pursue ducks, and once I watched as a Bald Eagle dove repeatedly on an injured diving duck, but each time the eagle neared the duck, the duck submerged. This is the first time I have seen a Bald Eagle take live prey, but it took three of them to succeed.

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