

CANADA GOOSE ATTACKS OSPREY

On Tuesday 20 Apr 1999 at about 5:30 PM I stopped at the parking lot of the Tschache Pool of the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Seneca County. I climbed up onto the viewing platform and, using the spotting scope there, searched for the Bald Eagle nest in the distance. As I looked for the eagles, I also noticed an Osprey begin to hover over the pool about 50-75 yards from me. The Osprey plunged into the pool, apparently after a fish in the shallows. Upon striking the water, the Osprey was instantly attacked by a gander Canada Goose about 10 feet distant. With its bill the gander grabbed the Osprey and held it under water. For a moment it seemed that the Osprey was in danger of being drowned. However the Osprey quickly resurfaced, freed itself from the gander's grasp and took off in flight pursued by the gander. The gander after an aerial pursuit for about 100 yards returned in a great swoop to the pool in the vicinity of a Canada Goose, certainly its mate, nesting on a muskrat "push-up" (lodge), putting on a show of loud honking and head bowing, part of the "triumph ceremony". Within 5 minutes the same Osprey was once again hovering over the pool, apparently unperturbed and fishing again.

Jean Gawalt, Biologist NYSDEC 108 Game Farm Rd. Delmar, NY 12054