

populations fell mainly between 0800 hr and noon and generally follows another type of behaviour. French (1980) reported that the kiskadee calls at dawn, well before sunrise with its characteristic 3 or 4 syllables, "Qu'est-ce qu'il dit". Therefore, *P. sulphuratus* calls before dawn, but starts feeding after 0600 hr (local time). However it is possible that the behaviour of the fish (eg. by swimming to the surface) may have influenced the behaviour of the kiskadees but this aspect has not been investigated.

In Trinidad, *P. sulphuratus* is an omnivorous feeder, with insects (e.g. beetles, mole crickets), fruits (e.g. palms, peppers), lizards, fledgling birds and fish (collected from a seine) forming components of its diet (French 1980). However, it was previously felt that fish was not a common food item although since this study kiskadees have been observed at the San Fernando Wharves catching and feeding on fish (Chadee, unpublished data) and Stiles and Skutch (1989) report feeding on small fish in the way described above. Further studies on this interesting feeding behaviour should be conducted.

From this study in St. Joseph, it can be concluded that an effective way to observe feeding by *P. sulphuratus* in the field is to expose food or seek out appropriate feeding sites between

0600 and 1200 hr, and especially between 1000 - 1200 hr, after sunrise. Indeed, such information will be useful also to investigators or ornithologists wishing to witness feeding in nature.

### Acknowledgments

The authors thank Dr. R. Paul, Specialist Medical Officer, Insect Vector Control Division, Ministry of Health for valued help and Messrs. N. Boodoosingh, A. Lakhan, L. Fernando and N. Andalcio for field assistance. In addition, we thank Dr. E.S. Tikasingh (Honorary Consultant in Entomology and Parasitology at the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre) for critically reviewing a draft of the manuscript.

### References

- French, R. (1980). *A guide to the birds of Trinidad and Tobago*. Livingston Publishing Company, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania.
- Haddow, A.J. (1960). *Studies on the biting habits and medical importance of East African mosquitoes in the genus Aedes. I. Subgenera Aedimorphus, Banksinella, and Dunningia*. *Bull. ent. Res.*, 50: 759-779.
- Quesnel, V.C. (1956). *The density of the population of breeding kiskadees in Port of Spain*. *J. Trin. Field Nat. Club*. pp. 24-25.
- Stiles, F.G. and A.F. Skutch. 1989. *A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica*. Comstock Publ. Assoc., Ithaca, N.Y.

## Great Kiskadee preying on mouse

By LEONARD BENTLEY

At about 10.30 a.m. on 2nd June 1989 I was sitting on the verandah of my apartment in Flagstaff, Port of Spain, when a Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) flew up with a mouse in its beak. It flew on to a branch of a small ornamental tree only a few feet away and proceeded to bash the mouse against the branch it was perching on, kingfisher style. I was not able to identify the mouse, but it was probably a common house mouse, and it may not have been quite fully grown. I did not see the bird pick up the mouse, so it may or may not have been alive when the kiskadee seized it. However, long after the mouse was clearly dead the bashing continued.

For several seconds at a time the bird would stop and do nothing before resuming.

Suddenly it flew up on to an electricity wire, where it continued bashing but now made repeated attempts to swallow the mouse. It was joined by its mate. When the first bird dropped the mouse the mate retrieved it and it too tried to swallow it. Both birds flew into a nearby stand of bamboo and were lost to sight. It is therefore not known whether the mouse was eventually swallowed, but both birds clearly recognised it (when dead with the second bird) as a food item.