Reprinted from the JAMAICA NATURALIST

CITATION:

Lev, Catherine. Bird-wasp Nesting Associations. Jamaica Naturalist, Vol. 1, 37. 1991.

Published by the

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF JAMAICA

http://naturalhistorysocietyjamaica.org/

NHSJ

Bird-wasp Nesting Associations

by Catherine Levy

Bananaquits are found all over the Caribbean (except Cuba) and in Central and South America. It is an abundant species all through its range and is known to nest near to wasp nests. Between 1975 and 1981 on the island of Grenada three plots in different habitats were studied to examine the relationship between Bananaquits *Coereba flaveola* and wasps *Polybia occidentalis*.

No benefit appears to accure to the wasps in this association, but other effects discussed are the shape of the nest (domed), the location and the success rate of nests. When a branch with a wasp nest was disturbed the wasps swarmed and made a buzzing noise; this was presumed to deter predators and afforded protection; greater success was observed if the nests were within 1 m of the wasp.

When the Bananaquit nest was preyed upon, the female abandoned both nest and mate, but she did not necessarily re-nest in proximity to a wasp nest. This observation indicates that there must be other factors that are important in nest site selection. However, trees containing nests of both were found to be more frequent than was expected by chance selection. Further, nesting success usually encouraged the bird to remain and they had been known to produce up to four clutches in a predator "free" site. The rate of success of nests located near to wasp nests was significant. It was suggested that the choice of nest site together with increased success for nests placed close to wasp nests can produce a bird-wasp nesting association.

The authors propose a random choice model for the probability of a bird nesting near a wasp nest on successive trials. They ignore the role of learning, suggesting that "random choice could start and initially maintain the nesting association until the more powerful mechanism of behavioural choice finally controls nest selection."

Wunderle, J. M. and K. H. Pollock. The Banaquit -wasp nesting association and a random choice of model. In Neotropical Ornithology, Ed. P.A. Buckley, et al. American Ornithologists' Union, 1985. (Orinthological Monographs No. 36).