

# Agonistic interaction between a Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and a Red-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruficollis*

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*On 20th August 1989 we observed an agonistic interaction between a Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* and a Red-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruficollis* at l'Almadrava (Tarragona, NE Spain). This seems to be the first record of such behaviour between the two European species.*

Key words: Nightjar, *Caprimulgus europaeus*, Red-necked Nightjar, *Caprimulgus ruficollis*, agonistic interaction, NE Spain.

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The two European nightjars have distinct geographical distributions, the Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* displaying a Palearctic breeding range and the Red-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruficollis* occupying Mediterranean areas (Cramp 1985). Catalonia (NE Spain) is a contact area for these two species being at the northeastern limit of the Red-necked Nightjar's range and at the southwestern limit of that of the Nightjar (García Serrano 1984). In this area there are some localities (e.g. the Maresme) where both species occur together (Vilalta 1983). At such localities, territories of the two species can overlap, although mechanisms for limiting competition, if it occurs, are not known (Beven 1973, Cramp 1985).

On 20th August 1989 we set mist-nets and a tape lure to catch Red-necked Nightjars at l'Almadrava (Tarragona, NE Spain) where only this species occurs. A Red-

necked Nightjar was attracted to the tape and after a circular flight landed on the ground close to two mist-nets. Shortly afterwards, a Nightjar, presumably a migrant, also approached, giving its advertising call. When it flew over the Red-necked Nightjar the other bird took flight and pursued it for several metres until both birds hit a net. Neither bird was caught in the net.

Caccamise (1974) has recorded heterospecific encounters between *Caprimulgi-formes* for American species, the night hawks, *Chordeiles minor* and *C. acutipennis*. He noted an increase in the calls when an intruder was present in the territory, and pursuit seemed to be the most intense response. However, there are no similar records for European species. This behaviour is probably exceptional, but the crepuscular habits of nightjars, and the limited areas where the two species' breeding ran-

ges overlap (García Serrano 1984) could explain the previous absence of records. •

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#### RESUMEN

*Interacción agonística entre Chotacabras gris, Caprimulgus europaeus y Chotacabras pardo Caprimulgus ruficollis.*

*Cataluña se encuentra en el área de contacto de los chotacabras europeos (Cramp 1985). En algunas zonas de esta región existen áreas donde ambas especies coexisten, y sus territorios ocasionalmente pueden solaparse (García Serrano 1984, Vilalta 1983).*

*El 20 de agosto de 1989, mientras se trapeaba con la ayuda de una grabación de chotacabras pardo en l'Almadrava (Taragona), fue observada una interacción agonística de un chotacabras pardo (nidificante en la zona) dirigida hacia un chotacabras gris (presumiblemente un migrante).*

*Interacciones de este tipo se han descrito para los Caprimulgiformes americanos*

*(Chordeiles minor y C. acutipennis, Caccamise 1974), pero aún no habían sido observadas para las aves europeas (Cramp 1985). Probablemente este comportamiento es excepcional, aunque los hábitos crepusculares de los chotacabras así como las escasas áreas donde ambos coexisten podrían explicar la ausencia de registros.*

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