

Attack bird dive-bombs students during nesting

Several pedestrians crossing the Alder St. and 13th Ave. intersection in the spring received an unwelcome surprise

BY AMIRA DUGHRI
FREELANCE REPORTER

A number of unsuspecting students were subjected to a bird dive-bombing their heads as they crossed 13th Avenue and Alder Street intersection next to Starbucks during spring term.

Many other students seemed to be entertained by the plight of those caught in the bird's crosshairs.

The two birds, who set up a nest in the yellow traffic light at the intersection, were probably protecting their nest.

Not unlike a scene from the Alfred Hitchcock movie "The Birds," a birds would swiftly descend from above, swoop in on its target and then proceed to peck at the clueless pedestrian.

"The bird grabbed ahold of my head with its claws and started pecking my head," said University graduate Eric Wise, who was dive-bombed while walking home from campus in the middle of the day. "I smacked the bird and kept on walking."

But many students did not react in such a composed manner. A few screamed and ran, while others ducked and flailed their arms. Some students protected themselves from the manic birds with

their backpacks.

"I was really confused at the time, I didn't realize what was going on," senior journalism major Jen Kane said.

Part of her confusion was due to the flock of students at Starbucks that had assembled to watch the bird dive-bombings. Previous victims of the dive-bombs composed much of the audience and offered no warning to unsuspecting students crossing the intersection.

Emily Rows, who was dive-bombed the previous year, said her and her friends "used to literally enjoy our morning coffee and sit and watch."

"The bird grabbed ahold of my head with its claws and started pecking my head."

ERIC WISE | University graduate

When Kane was dive-bombed, she estimates there were 30 people at Starbucks watching the attack, including people who were videotaping it. Kane said when she first noticed the Starbucks crowd on her way to campus she thought that the students "must be getting free coffee or something."

She soon realized that everyone

was staring.

"I turned behind me thinking it was something about the police department," she said.

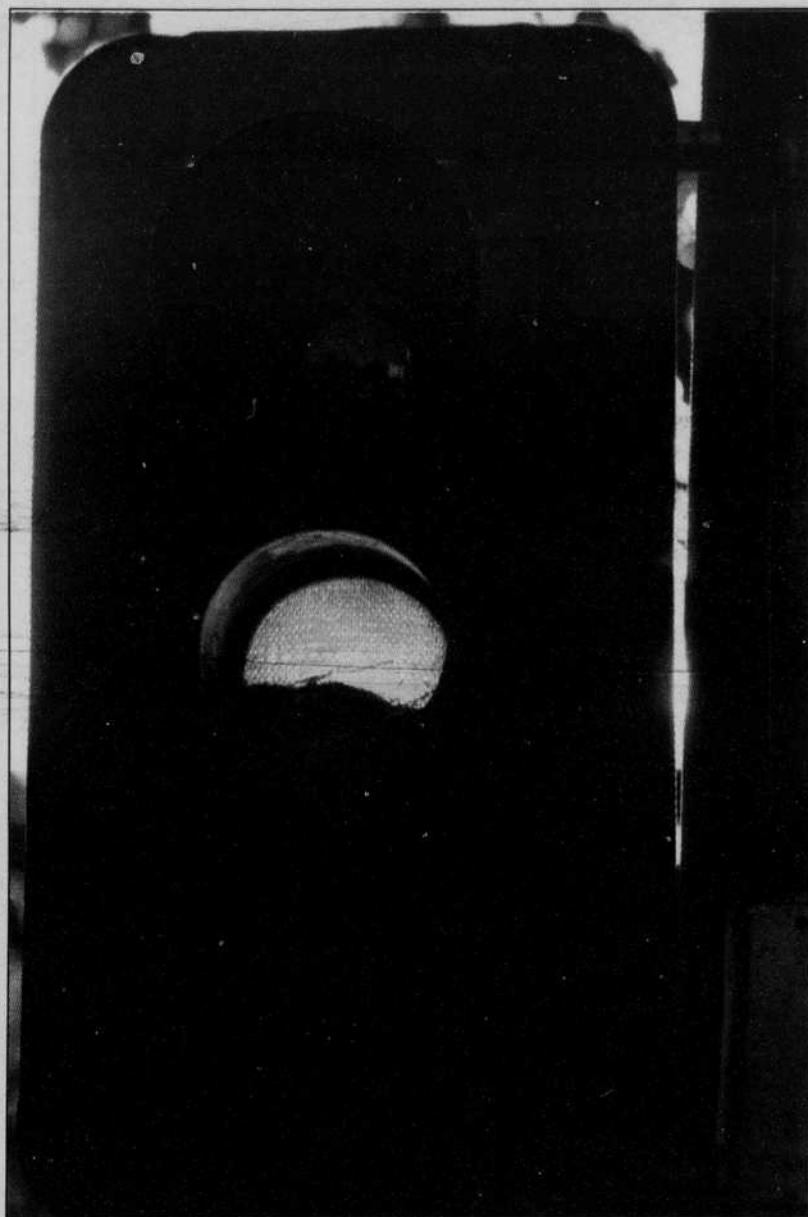
A few minutes after the bird attacked her, however, she figured out that they were actually watching and videotaping.

"I was so embarrassed," Kane said.

It is common for usually peaceful birds to commit inter-species violence during the spring nesting season, according to a fact sheet written by Dr. Barb Ogg of the University of Nebraska. When birds have a nest of babies they become very territorial and frequently dive-bomb animals who threaten their young by coming too close to the nest. From the birds' perspective, students crossing the intersection were potential predators.

So, should students attending the University in the fall avoid crossing the 13th Ave. and Alder intersection due to fears of unwarranted bird dive-bombings and their subsequent humiliation? No. With the nesting season over, the winged assailants have ditched the nest, according to Ogg. The dive-bombs may become an annual Spring term threat, however, because birds tend to nest in the same place year after year.

But for now, students may rest assured that they can get back to the books without fear of coming under attack by overprotective birds.



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

A bird that dive-bombed several students during the summer made a nest in the traffic signal at 13th Avenue and Alder Street.

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