KLEPTOPARASITISM - ENVIRONMENT

Researchers suggest that kleptoparasitism, or food theft, among seabirds leads to transmission of the H5N1 avian influenza virus, leading to its rapid global spread.

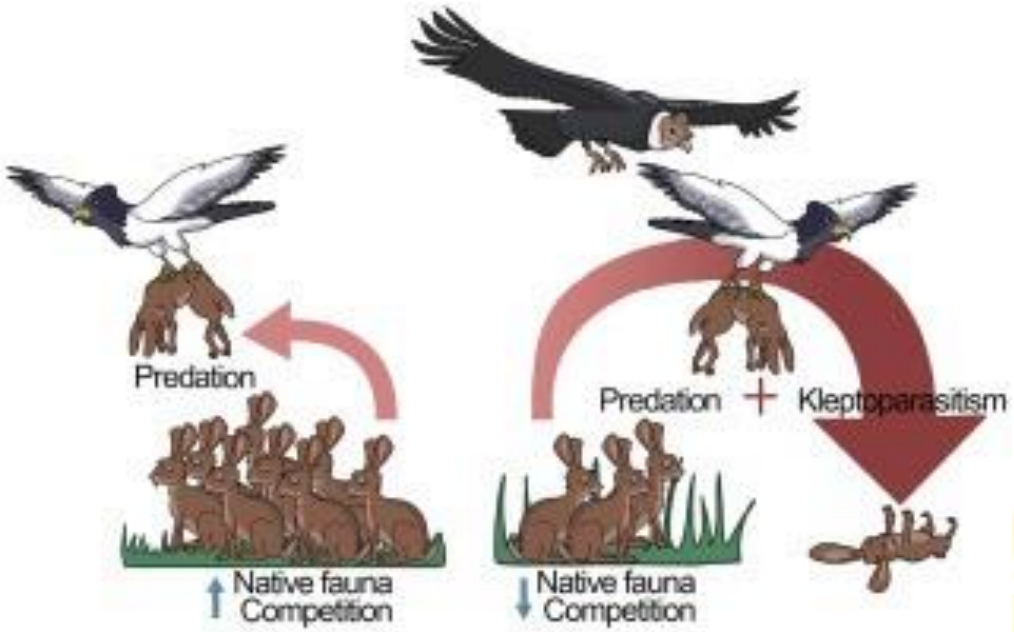
Kleptoparasitism

About	It is a type of parasitism **where one animal steals food or other resources from another animal.** It's a common type of exploitation among animals and can be stealthy or aggressive.
Evolutionary strategy	It **prevents another animal from using a resource, without removing it from the environment.** It can be an effective way to obtain food when it's scarce or when there are many potential victims.
Animals exhibiting Kleptoparasitism	Kleptoparasitism has been **observed in birds, mammals, insects, spiders, and even humans.** Birds have been the focus of much research on kleptoparasitism, with **gulls being identified as the most common kleptoparasitic bird.**
Types	Kleptoparasitism may be **intraspecific, that is between the same species as the victim, or interspecific, that is between a different species.** In interspecies, the **parasites are commonly close relatives of the organisms they parasitize as per the "Emery's Rule"** which states that **social parasites are more closely related to their hosts than to other species.**
Examples	**Skua birds** chase other seabirds until they regurgitate food, while **spotted hyenas and lions** are examples of carnivorous mammals that engage in kleptoparasitism. **Cuckoo bees** are specialized kleptoparasites that lay their eggs on other bees' pollen masses.

Parasitism:

It is a relationship between two species of plants or animals in which one benefits at the expense of the other, sometimes without killing the host organism.

Example: Varroa mites on honey bees: These mites attach to worker bees, enter the hive, and lay eggs on bee larvae. The mites feed on the bee's blood, which weakens its immune system and can transmit disease.



Source: https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/sep/17/deadly-avian-flu-strain-could-enter-australia-via-thieving-migratory-birds-scientists-warn