

THE AMERICAN BIOLOGY TEACHER



About Our Cover

The primary rationale we apply when selecting a cover photo for *The American Biology Teacher* is that it offers a small teachable moment. However, that goal was secondary this month, in favor of this image of a visually striking but very common African bird, the lilac-breasted roller (*Coracias caudatus*). These are Old World birds in the family Coraciidae, a name derived from the Latin for “raven-like.” The name “roller” refers to their aerial acrobatics. The genus *Coracias* is widely found in sub-Saharan Africa. This individual was photographed in Chobe National Park, in northern Botswana, with a majestic baobab tree (*Adansonia* sp.) in soft focus in the background.

These birds are typically about 37 cm in length, with wing spans of about 55 cm. They eat a variety of creatures, primarily insects but also other arthropods, small vertebrates such as rodents, and even other birds. They prefer open areas of savanna and woodland, where they survey possible food sources from high perches. They are solitary nesters, typically in natural holes in trees. They are monogamous, with clutches of two to four eggs that are incubated by both parents. They defend the nest aggressively with swooping behaviors and their namesake rolling to distract predators. They exhibit few distinctions between the sexes in form and behavior.

This digital image was recorded with a Nikon D850 camera using a 28–300 mm image-stabilized zoom lens. The photographer is William F. McComas, editor of the *American Biology Teacher* and Parks Family Professor of Science Education and director of the Project to Advance Science Education at the University of Arkansas (mccomas@uark.edu).

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Available online at <https://www.nabt.org/ABT-Online-Current-Issue>

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In our April 2019 issue, we incorrectly spelled Carolina Biological Supply Company in our Buyers' Guide Listing Information. We apologize for this error.

