attacks on a bullsnake, and its apparently agonistic nature was especially interesting because the snake did not appear to be a threat to the pair of birds and there was not an observable nest in the nearby vicinity that they might have been defending.

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PITUOPHIS CATENIFER SAYI (Bullsnake). AGONISTIC MOBING ATTACK. Snakes have been observed as recipients of agonistic, non-predatory attacks by individuals from other taxa towards a presumed enemy (e.g., Engeman et al. 2009. Herpetol. Rev. 40:84–85; Kaiser et. al. 2013. Herpetol. Rev. 44:329). Mobbing, an attack involving multiple individuals, has been observed against many taxa of vertebrate predators (e.g., Altmann 1956. Condor 58:241–253; Owings and Coss 1977. Behaviour 62:50–69). Snakes appear to be frequent targets for this behavior and a variety of taxa have been documented to mob snakes (e.g., Owings and Coss 1976, op. cit.). Birds, probably more than any other taxa, have been commonly observed to mob snakes (e.g., Guthrie 1932. Wilson Bull. 44:88–113; Curio et al. 1978. Science 202:899–901), with mobbing sometimes simultaneously involving multiple bird species in the attack (e.g., Sieving et al. 2004. Auk 121:738–751; Suzuki 2016. J. Ethol. 34:79–84). Mobbing behavior can serve a variety of defensive purposes such as avoiding predation, drawing attention to the potential predator from others, defending a nest or young, and transmitting enemy recognition to others (e.g., Curio et al., op. cit.).

Here, we describe a mobbing attack by two Black-billed Magpies (Pica hudsonia) on a Pituophis catenifer sayi. The encounter between the two species was observed on 15 May 2017 at 1600 h on a warm, sunny day (26°C) near Berthoud, Colorado, USA (40.27178°N, 105.16736°W; WGS 84). A commotion from two magpies repeatedly diving from about 3 m above ground level into tall grass in an early growth hayfield was observed. After 3–5 min, the subject of the magpies’ attention was revealed when an individual P. c. sayi became visible as it moved into shorter vegetation while attempting to escape the magpie attacks. Observations of the magpies diving and hitting the snake continued for another 2 min until the attack broke off when JDL edged closer for a better vantage point to observe the attack. After the mobbing attack, closer inspection of the bullsnake (which had recently shed its skin, total length >150 cm) revealed no apparent bleeding wounds on the snake.

Magpies are known to mob potential predators (e.g., Stone and Trost 1991. Anim. Behav. 41:633–638), especially mammalian and avian predators like cats (Felis catus), coyotes (Canis latrans), dogs (Canis familiaris), and raptors. The nearest tree to the scene where the mobbing was initially observed was ~ 45 m away, and there was not a magpie nest in the tree. To our knowledge this was the first observation of a Black-billed Magpie mobbing...