

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Tennessee Warblers in Marin County, California.—An unusually heavy migration of warblers occurred during the fall of 1944 through Marin County, California, and the water traps nearest our warbler aviary at Manor produced a number of surprises, not the least of which were four examples of the Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*). The first bird was taken on the morning of September 16, 1944. Not being familiar with this eastern species, it was banded and placed in a holding cage pending identification, which was subsequently accomplished without difficulty. Other Tennessee Warblers were seen in shrubbery adjacent to the aviaries on the same and subsequent days, and another individual was trapped on September 19. A third Tennessee Warbler was taken on September 24, and although others were occasionally seen on the grounds in the following fortnight, the fourth individual was not caught until October 15.

Because of the rarity of the species in California, it was determined to keep all four birds for aviary purposes. Much to our surprise, we found this species to be among the easiest of the whole warbler group to "break off," a term used for the technique of weaning captive birds from a natural to an artificial diet.

These warblers were carried over the winter in a separate aviary compartment in the large heated shelter and were not released into the warbler aviary proper until late April of this year. At the date of this writing they are showing signs of an early summer molt, not an unusual occurrence with adult migrants trapped in the preceding fall and wintered over in heated quarters. They are very much like our Orange-crowned Warblers (*Vermivora celata*) both in action and behavior, and this is particularly noticeable under the conditions imposed by the aviary.

Upon death, they will be made into skins to complete the record.—ERIC CAMPBELL KINSEY, Manor, Marin County, California, June 6, 1945.

Nesting of the Goshawk in Sequoia National Park, California.—On June 20, 1945, Ranger Clarence Fry told me about a Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) that had that morning swooped at his car when he parked near the government corrals near Giant Forest, Sequoia National Park. The place is in the upper Transition life-zone. The next morning Fry and I visited the corrals and were again attacked by a female Goshawk that charged savagely near us several times before she flew away. I soon discovered the nest about 60 feet up and 6 feet out on a limb of a white fir. By going up the side of the mountain one could almost see into the nest but could not quite do so because of some fresh fir twigs on the edge of the platform. Neither eggs nor young birds could be seen.

On June 27, when I again visited the nest, three downy young birds of noticeably different sizes could be seen wabbling about on the platform. The parents were calling near-by and the female parent was seen to fly away with unidentified prey in her talons. The nest was visited almost daily for short periods thereafter until July 12, when most of the day was spent observing it. On these visits the identified prey brought to the nest comprised a golden-mantled ground squirrel (*Citellus lateralis*), a Red-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes cafer*), and a Steller Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*). Once as the female was perched about 30 feet above me she was seen to fly swiftly into the thick branches of a near-by fir about 40 feet above the ground. After a few seconds, during which her wings could be heard beating against the small branches, she emerged with a squirming Sierra chipmunk (*Eutamias speciosus*) dangling from her talons. Twenty minutes later she brought the prey to the nest. She made no sound as she tore the chipmunk into pieces for the squealing young birds as they avidly pecked at the mother's beak for bits of the freshly killed mammal. The old bird was not frightened and did not stop feeding the young birds as I walked or stood in plain sight less than 75 feet away. The meal lasted for 35 minutes, after which the old bird flew away and perched in the top of a dead tree. After the meal each of the young birds was seen to back to the edge of the platform and forcefully defecate beyond the edge of the nest.

The two largest of the young birds left the nest some time between July 26 and July 28. Mr. Wayne Trimm, who made a study and several paintings of this Goshawk family, found the smallest of the young birds dead beneath the tree on July 29.

This nest is a new southern record for the Goshawk in California. The most southerly nesting station recorded heretofore was found in Whitaker's Forest, Tulare County, according to Grinnell and Miller (*The Distribution of the Birds of California, 1944:97*). The nest described here is some 10 miles south of Whitaker's Forest.—LLOYD G. INGLES, Fresno State College, Fresno, California, August 2, 1945.

Land Birds at Sea.—In the late autumn of 1943 I saw four species of North American land birds at unusual distances from land. I was aboard a ship steaming northward along the Pacific coast.

A Cooper Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) was seen at 4:25 p.m. on September 21, flying near the ship at 35° 13' N, 122° 06' W. Nearest land was Point Piedras Blancas, California, out of sight 48 miles northeast. The hawk seemed tired and once alighted in the ship's rigging. Later it was flying near five Sooty Shearwaters. Sunset this day occurred about 2½ hours later. The weather was clear and warm with no wind.

Two Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) were seen at 57° 24' N, 150° 10' W. From this position the nearest land was Kodiak Island, 70 miles northwest. The owls were sighted at dawn on October 13 in an overcast sky with occasional mists. They stayed with the ship, occasionally alighting on deck, and did not leave until long after we had sighted land. I was able to walk up to one and to handle it, during which process it did not offer resistance or make any noise.

A flock of about eight Audubon Warblers (*Dendroica auduboni*) accompanied the ship northward for about half an hour at 8:30 a.m. on October 8 at 44° 10' N, 124° 40' W. Occasionally they alighted on deck. Nearest land was Cape Perpetua, Oregon, out of sight 25 miles east. Weather was foggy and windless, with a glassy sea.

With the flock of warblers were two Oregon Juncos (*Junco oreganus*). They were comparatively tame, permitting me within 3 feet; they foraged within 5 feet of passers-by. They remained in the vicinity of sacks of coal and potatoes, in the lee of the amidships superstructure. They were fed bread crumbs and water by the crew, but they also foraged on the sacks and drank condensed water vapor drops from the breather-pipes of the sanitary system. They remained aboard the next day, although land was clearly visible about 10 miles away. One was roosting that night in a crevice between sacks. It was seen the next morning in the same place until 6 a.m. That day the wind blew strongly all day and we were 60 miles south of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

On October 11 one was seen for the last time at the sack pile, its feathers fluffed in the rain. We were at the time 50 miles west of Graham Island. I believe that this bird was the same one which boarded us three days before; it rode northward 557 miles at a time when it should have been migrating southward.—JOHN A. GRAY, JR., Lt. (j.g.), U.S.N.R., June 14, 1945.

Does the Russet-backed Thrush Have Defective Eyesight?—When, during migration seasons, reports have been received of birds killing or maiming themselves by flying against glass windows or doors, at least 90 per cent of the victims identified by me have proved to be Russet-backed Thrushes (*Hylocichla ustulata ustulata*). As this species is by no means our most common migrant in southern California, some physiological deficiency appears to be indicated. The most natural assumption would be that the eyesight of the bird functions inefficiently, but that, of course, cannot be proved without further study.—G. WILLETT, Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles, California, June 16, 1945.

California Gulls Feeding on Midges.—Though the California Gull (*Larus californicus*) has almost the status of a State bird in Utah in return for its help to Mormon pioneers in controlling the cricket plague of 1848, the bird is becoming over-abundant in Salt Lake and Utah valleys, where it is a menace to certain types of agricultural pursuits. This gull is well known as an omnivorous feeder: the greater the competition for food, the greater becomes the range of foods consumed. Cherry growers have complained that the gulls, knocking the cherries off the trees, destroy a good portion of the crop. On the other hand, where ground squirrels and prairie dogs are abundant, these birds are frequently observed following the road, feeding on animals hit by speeding motorists. On June 17, 1945, a California Gull picked up and swallowed a crippled chipmunk on the road near the divide of the Wasatch Mountains between Logan and Brigham.

Although the California Gull is well known to be a scavenger, it is a common experience in the West to see flocks of these birds following the plow and avidly consuming insect larvae, earthworms and other animal life that is exposed. They also commonly feed on the immature or emerging adult salt flies (*Ephidra*) that occur in great numbers in the salty waters of Great Salt Lake. Crippled ducks or other birds, especially those incapacitated by botulism, are readily preyed upon.

On June 19, 1945, some 2500 of these gulls fed in a flock following a 50- to 70-yard swath in the sagebrush and grass on the north end of Strawberry Lake, Wasatch County, Utah. Close observation revealed that they were feeding almost entirely on a large species of midge (chironomid) that had just emerged from the lake. In the areas where the birds had been feeding, fully 95 per cent of the insects had been consumed; on adjacent areas where the birds had not yet foraged, the insects were so thick as to form a cloud. Many of the insects were in the air; many more were attached to blades of grass and sagebrush. This emergence of the chironomid insects also caused a large concentration of Brewer Blackbirds (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) and Vesper Sparrows (*Pooecetes gramineus*).—CLARENCE COTTAM, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago, Illinois, August 10, 1945.