

however, that the limits of the human eye and of the vernier scale will not be the only goal of the ornithologist, for true science does not receive much uplifting from the mere renaming of a few handfuls of skin and feathers. How well revision and renaming have worked in the past, when species were the units, is shown by the long array of synonyms that burden many a page. Synonymy might fittingly be called the science of the blunders of our predecessors, and we ourselves shall need deliverance from an intolerable load of names unless our fragile subspecific refinements are woven of stronger threads. We discover and name trivialities because we like to do it, and new names loom very large even if they mean little. We confuse nomenclature and ornithology, forgetful that names which should be the tools of the ornithologist may easily become the playthings of the systematist. If the subspecies be relegated to its proper place and held in proper perspective, we shall neither flounder in a flood of names nor fail to perceive the opportunities which lie open before us. There is more serious work on hand than the naming of subspecies if the advance of ornithology is to keep pace with that of kindred sciences.

YOSEMITE VALLEY BIRDS.

BY O. WIDMANN.

To demonstrate the efficacy of bird protection by exclusion of firearms the Yosemite Valley is an excellent example. During a short stay of three and a half days, from noon of May 21 to early morning of May 25, 1903, fifty-seven species were noticed. The valley is seven miles long by a width of one half to one mile, but only a part of this area in the vicinity of the so-called village was subjected to a close scrutiny, and no attempt was made to investigate the bird fauna of the surrounding higher regions.

Discovered in 1851, the valley with its enclosing peaks was granted by Congress in 1864 to the State of California on condition that it should be held as a "State Park for public use, resort

and recreation for all times." This carries with it the prohibition of introducing firearms. From November till April shootists are kept out by the deep snows, which make access to the valley difficult. When the season opens in spring a detachment of U. S. cavalry assists the State guardian in the work of policing the park, and the great number of birds speaks well for their efficiency. It is not only the comparatively large number of species that surprises the visitor, but still more so the great number of individuals of many of these species, and their extraordinary tameness. From the veranda, there called piazza, of the Sentinel Hotel annex I could easily count from one to two dozen species any time of the day, and among them such woodland birds as the Pileated Woodpecker and Hermit Thrush. The Ruby-crowned Kinglet had its bulky nest on the very next tree, an old incense-cedar (*Libocedrus decurrens*), not more than thirty-five feet from the veranda and on the side of the tree nearest to the house.

Not far from it a pair of Brown Creepers went in and out feeding young in a nest only six feet from the ground under the bark of another old *Libocedrus*. At one time a Green Towhee, a Spurred Towhee, a White-crowned Sparrow and a Thick-billed Fox Sparrow were feeding peacefully together on one square yard of ground under the veranda, while half a dozen Juncos and Chipmunks were also hopping about.

Part of this richness of the ornithology may be attributable to weather conditions, in so far as some of the birds may have been driven down from the neighboring peaks by the snow which fell on the day of our arrival, May 21, 1903. In fact, all forenoon, from seven, when we started in the open stage from Wawona, till our arrival at the Sentinel Hotel at noon, snow fell continually, sometimes at a lively rate, and mixed with hail on the highest point of the stage route, said to be seven thousand feet above the sea. The valley itself is only four thousand feet high, but the enclosing peaks average four thousand feet higher and form with their nearly vertical walls and magnificent waterfalls the sublime grandeur for which the valley is deservedly world-renowned.

But while the lofty peaks and granite domes, the spiry pinnacles and roaring cataracts make it grand and glorious beyond description, it is the rich organic life, the great variety of beautiful forms

of trees and flowers, and the unusual tameness of the many birds, which make this paradisaic spot particularly dear to our heart. Those who expect to see only cold majestic grandeur are most agreeably surprised to find in the heart of the Sierra such a gentle garden spot, full of mellow sunshine, benevolent quiet, and blissful joy.

It took only one hour of sunshine to melt most of the snow in the valley on the afternoon of May 21, and though the nights during our stay were frosty, the days were mild and pleasant with a maximum temperature of 60° in the shade.

LIST OF BIRDS OBSERVED IN YOSEMITE VALLEY.

1. *Actitis macularia*. SPOTTED SANDPIPER.—Though the swift-running water of Merced River was of icy coldness, four Spotted Sandpipers were busily engaged feeding at favorable spots along its banks.
2. *Oreortyx pictus plumiferus*. MOUNTAIN PARTRIDGE.—Seen only in two places, but feathers found on the ground and some interwoven in birds' nests show that they may be more numerous than it seems.
3. *Columba fasciata*. BAND-TAILED PIGEON.—Daily seen on wing or resting in high trees (yellow pines) in parties of 2 to 5. A flock of about 30 were disturbed at their roost near the Bridal Falls early on May 25.
4. *Zenaidura macroura*. MOURNING DOVE.—Only one seen, May 21.
5. *Elanus leucurus*. WHITE-TAILED KITE.—About 9 A. M. on May 24 a great commotion was heard in a clump of trees near the Yosemite Falls, and presently a White-tailed Kite, chased by two Vireos, flew out and across an opening into a tall yellow pine.
6. *Accipiter velox rufilatus*. WESTERN SHARP-SHINNED HAWK.—One (female) going slowly over the valley, 6.15 P. M. May 23.
7. *Falco sparverius deserticolus*. DESERT SPARROW HAWK.—Twice seen May 23, and again on the 25th.
8. *Dryobates villosus hyloscopus*. CABANIS WOODPECKER.—Two males seen May 22 and 24.
9. *Dryobates pubescens turati*. WILLOW WOODPECKER.—Male and female in two localities along Merced River, May 23.
10. *Xenopicus albolarvatus*. WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKER.—Only one seen in the valley near Camp Currie, but several crossed our way between the Yosemite and Wawona on the 25th.
11. *Ceophloeus pileatus abieticola*. NORTHERN PILEATED WOODPECKER.—Males and females seen in different localities.
12. *Melanerpes formicivorus bairdi*. CALIFORNIA WOODPECKER.—One pair stationed not far from hotel.

13. *Colaptes cafer collaris*. RED-SHAFTED FLICKER.— Often heard; several present but rather shy.

14. *Aëronautes melanoleucus*. WHITE-THROATED SWIFT.— Only two seen; flying together over valley, May 24.

15. *Stellula caliope*. CALIOPE HUMMINGBIRD.— Quite numerous in the valley; conspicuous and excited; on two occasions males went straight up some sixty feet, there remained suspended at the same place for half a minute, dropped down and rose again to repeat the performance; also seen to dart up from prominent station into the air, catch an insect and return to same perch like a flycatcher.

16. *Sayornis nigricans semiatra*. BLACK PHOEBE.— Only once met with, near Pohono Bridge.

17. *Contopus richardsoni richardsoni*. WESTERN WOOD PEWEE.— One of the common sounds heard in the valley was the note of this bird, perched high up in trees; while feeding they were often low down near the ground. A nest in a California black oak was nearly fifty feet above the ground.

18. *Empidonax difficilis*. WESTERN FLYCATCHER.— Among several *Empidonaces* seen, this is the only one identified with certainty, while among the others were probably Wright's Flycatcher.

19. *Empidonax wrighti*. WRIGHT'S FLYCATCHER.— Identification open to doubt.

20. *Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis*. BLUE-FRONTED JAY.— Pretty common, but rather quiet and retiring.

21. *Scolecophagus cyanocephalus*. BREWER BLACKBIRD.— A small troop was always on the meadow near the village.

22. *Coccothraustes vespertinus montanus*. WESTERN EVENING GROSBEAK.— One pair near hotel.

23. *Carpodacus purpureus californicus*. CALIFORNIA PURPLE FINCH.

24. *Carpodacus cassini*. CASSIN PURPLE FINCH.

25. *Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*. HOUSE FINCH.

This being my first acquaintance with the western *Carpodaci* the identification of the different species gave me considerable trouble and my notes on this genus are somewhat clouded, but it appeared to me that all three species were present. On the 24th a female House Finch was busily engaged building a nest in a maple near the hotel, while the mate indulged in song flights.

26. *Astragalinus tristis salicamans*. WILLOW GOLDFINCH.— Only once seen, May 21.

27. *Astragalinus psaltria psaltria*. ARKANSAS GOLDFINCH.— Four together on the 21st.

28. *Spinus pinus*. PINE SISKIN.— Several pairs in immediate vicinity of the hotel doing much singing and often hopping on the ground in the street, so tame that they could almost be touched with the foot.

29. *Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys*. WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW.— Single individuals in half a dozen places, often in song, which does not at all differ from that heard in the Mississippi Valley.

30. *Spizella socialis arizonæ*. WESTERN CHIPPING SPARROW.— Like the Robin, generally distributed and numerous.

31. *Junco hyemalis thurberi*. SIERRA JUNCO.— Very numerous; always a few together, sometimes as many as 20 to 30 on the ground feeding in openings and on meadows.

32. *Passerella iliaca megarhyncha*. THICK-BILLED FOX SPARROW.— Only once seen, May 21.

33. *Pipilo maculatus megalonyx*. SPURRED TOWHEE.— Apparently a common breeder; several males singing all day at their stands.

34. *Oreospiza chlorura*. GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE.— In 6 or 7 places, a diligent musician whose song reminded me strongly of *Chondestes grammacus*.

35. *Zamelodia melanocephala*. BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK.— The most prominent of all songsters in the valley, where at least fifty individuals were present, and females as well as males everywhere in sight; two males found singing on nests less than eight feet from ground.

36. *Cyanospiza amœna*. LAZULI FINCH.— Three pairs were located; song differed much individually; one's song was remarkably like that of the Indigo Bird, another's more like a Goldfinch's.

37. *Piranga ludoviciana*. WESTERN Tanager.— Quite abundant after the 22d; not only old males as before, but females and young of last year of different patterns of coloration in small troops, singing and mating.

38. *Tachycineta lepida*. VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW.— When after the frosty mornings the sun began to warm the valley half a dozen swallows were hunting over the meadow behind the village or resting on the fence wires for an hour or two. On the afternoon of the 24th a large number of swallows was seen, perhaps fifteen hundred feet above the valley, hunting on the sunny side between Union and Glacier Points.

39. *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*. ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW.— Two (probably a pair) hunting with *Tachycineta* over meadow, May 22.

40. *Vireo gilvus swainsoni*. WESTERN WARBLING VIREO.— One of the common songsters, heard everywhere and often seen.

41. *Vireo solitarius cassini*. CASSIN VIREO.— Almost as numerous as the Warbling Vireo and nearly as musical; their pleasing song one of the common sounds in the valley and the musicians themselves easily detected.

42. *Helminthophila rubricapilla gutturalis*. CALAVERAS WARBLER.— With the Vireos and Yellow Warbler, one of the common songsters.

43. *Dendroica æstiva morcomi*. WESTERN YELLOW WARBLER.— Generally distributed and an industrious songster.

44. *Dendroica auduboni*. AUDUBON WARBLER.— This is the only warbler yet in troops of twenty and more, while single individuals and pairs were scattered all over the valley. Two individuals were noticed in which it required a good light to discover yellow traces on the white throat, and thus could easily have been mistaken for *D. coronata*.

45. *Dendroica nigrescens*. BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER.—

Quite a number of this beautiful warbler were at home in the valley; they were often seen, and their song, which varies much, was freely given.

46. *Dendroica occidentalis*. HERMIT WARBLER. — Only in two localities; a singing male and a female.

47. *Geothlypis tolmiei*. TOLMIE WARBLER. — The interesting song of this warbler was heard at several places along Merced River and it did not take long to see the bird itself, as it was not at all shy; sometimes their sharp alarm note betrayed them.

48. *Wilsonia pusilla pileolata*. PILEOLATED WARBLER. — One of the birds often seen and heard; their song contributed not a little to the general concert of the morning hours.

49. *Cinclus mexicanus*. AMERICAN DIPPER. — Returning from a visit to the beautiful Cascade Falls at the lower end of the valley Dr. J. A. Allen saw a dipper fly across Merced River and immediately thereafter Mrs. Allen discovered the mossy nest on a big boulder in the river. No others were noticed.

50. *Catherpes mexicanus punctulatus*. DOTTED CAÑON WREN. — At the foot of the Yosemite Falls, where giant boulders are piled mountain high, a Cañon Wren had his home and gave a performance in play and song; another was heard on Coulterville Road near Pohona bridge.

51. *Certhia familiaris zelotes*. SIERRA CREEPER. — Often heard and seen. Feeding young in nest under bark of *Libocedrus*.

52. *Parus gambeli*. MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE. — Generally distributed, but rather quiet.

53. *Regulus satrapa olivaceus*. WESTERN GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET. — In two localities; one at the foot of Eagle Peak had so much black on its forehead, through and behind the eye, that it reminded me of pictures of Audubon's *cuvieri*.

54. *Regulus calendula calendula*. RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET. — A breeder, and one of the most industrious songsters; its song louder, but less sweet, than in the Mississippi Valley. From a distance some of its notes resembled the whistle of the Tufted Tit.

55. *Hylocichla aonalaschkæ sequoiensis*. SIERRA HERMIT THRUSH. — Numerous and singing toward evening. An imitation of its peculiar whistling call-note never failed to attract one or more individuals, who came within a few yards and remained there in plain view for a long while.

56. *Merula migratoria propinqua*. WESTERN ROBIN. — One of the most conspicuous birds, not only near the village, but also in the forest far from human habitations.

57. *Sialia arctica*. MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD. — At one place only; near village on way to Mirror Lake.

In Wawona, where we made a halt of one day and from where we visited the famous Mariposa Grove of Big Trees, the following

species were noted, some of them not found in the Yosemite Valley. Wawona is twenty-six miles south of the Yosemite on the south branch of Merced River in the high forest region. It lies in the National Park and would be an excellent place for birdlovers to stay a week or more; it has a very good hotel, in fact a better one than the Sentinel Hotel in the Yosemite Valley.

BIRDS OBSERVED MAY 20 AT WAWONA.¹

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| 1. <i>Zenaidura macroura</i> , one. | 15. <i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i> , male in song. |
| *2. <i>Ceryle alcyon</i> , one. | 16. <i>Spizella socialis arizonæ</i> , several. |
| 3. <i>Ceophlœus pileatus abieticola</i> , one. | *17. <i>Melospiza cinerea heermanni</i> , male in song. |
| *4. <i>Sphyrapicus varius daggetti</i> , male. | *18. <i>Melospiza lincolni</i> , male in song. |
| 5. <i>Colaptes cafer collaris</i> , one. | 19. <i>Zamelodia melanocephala</i> , several in song; also female. |
| 6. <i>Sayornis nigricans semiatra</i> , two. | 20. <i>Vireo gilvus swainsoni</i> , male in song. |
| *7. <i>Contopus borealis</i> , one. (Also at Maimi Mill.) | 21. <i>Helminthophila rubricapilla gutturalis</i> , male singing. |
| 8. <i>Contopus richardsoni</i> , several. | 22. <i>Dendroica æstiva morcomi</i> , male singing. |
| 9. <i>Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis</i> , several. | 23. <i>Dendroica auduboni</i> , male. |
| 10. <i>Scolecophagus cyanocephalus</i> , several. | *24. <i>Troglodytes aëdon aztecus</i> , male in song. |
| 11. <i>Carpodacus cassini</i> , 2 troops of 10 and 12 birds. | 25. <i>Certhia familiaris zelotes</i> , singing. |
| 12. <i>Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis</i> , one. | 26. <i>Merula migratoria propinqua</i> , several. |
| 13. <i>Astragalinus psaltria</i> , one. | |
| *14. <i>Ammodramus savanna alaudinus</i> , two. | |

BIRDS SEEN IN MARIPOSA GROVE,² MAY 20.

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| *1. <i>Empidonax hammondi</i> , one. | 5. <i>Dendroica occidentalis</i> , male in song. |
| 2. <i>Junco hyemalis thurberi</i> , a few. | 6. <i>Parus gambeli</i> , one. |
| 3. <i>Vireo solitarius cassini</i> , one in song. | 7. <i>Regulus calendula</i> , singing. |
| 4. <i>Dendroica auduboni</i> , male and female. | 8. <i>Hylocichla sequoiensis</i> , very tame. |
| | 9. <i>Merula migr. propinqua</i> , one. |

¹Those marked * not seen in Yosemite.²Eight miles southeast of Wawona.

In descending from Wawona into the San Joaquin basin, by way of Awahnee, the change in the flora and fauna from the forest region through the arid chaparral into the cultivated land at the base of the foothills is extremely interesting and would be well worth a detailed description, but when traveling in the stage one can only enjoy the most salient points, and much is lost through unnecessary haste on the part of the driver.

Half way between Wawona and Raymond there lies in the valley of the Fresno River, Awahnee, one of the stage company's stopping stations, with a good hotel. Situated near the chaparral region, but itself surrounded by cultivated fields and woodlands, it seems to be a fine place for a few days of birding, but unfortunately our time-table allowed only a short hour for dinner, May 25. On the barn of the hotel was a lively colony of *Petrochelidon lunifrons*, with fifty finished nests. A Screech owl, *Megascops asio bendirei*, flew up from the ground and disappeared in a treehole by the wayside.

In the brushy foothills a number of birds not seen in the high forest region were more or less common, among them :

- Lophortyx californicus valicolus*. VALLEY PARTRIDGE. Very common.
Buteo borealis calurus. WESTERN REDTAIL. Three on wing.
Tyrannus verticalis. ARKANSAS FLYCATCHER. Several.
Myiarchus cinerascens. ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER. Several.
Aphelocoma californica. CALIFORNIA JAY. Very common.
Melanerpes formicivorus bairdii. CALIFORNIA WOODPECKER. Very common.
Frogne subis. Several at Grub Gulch and along Fresno River.
Pipilo crissalis. CALIFORNIA TOWHEE. A few.
Toxostoma redivivum. CALIFORNIA THRASHER. A few.

AT RAYMOND, MAY 25, 6. P. M.

Icterus bullocki.
Sturnella neglecta.
Astragalinus lawrenci.
} In song.