

Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). On San Clemente Island, Cal., they make free use of the sheep sheds. In others parts of California nests are commonly placed in the flowering vines over the doorway or in some choice flowering shrub, the birds amassing an unsightly bunch of rags, twine and hair. In Phoenix, Ariz., they are persistent in using the arc lights in various parts of the city. This species adapts itself admirably to changed conditions, adopting these by choice, not by need.

A THIRD TRIP TO THE HIGH SIERRAS.

BY MILTON S. RAY.

My brother, William R. Ray, and I, with our double team and camping rig, which has seen a thousand miles of service, departed at noon June 6, 1903, on the steamer which takes one as far as Eagle Point on the Sacramento River. The wealth of lower zone bird life here, in the lowlands along the river, must be seen to be appreciated, and the morning chorus from the willow thickets and marshy meadows is a revelation, imparting to the region a certain attractiveness which it lacks in most other respects.

June 7.— We arrived at Eagle Point at 5 o'clock A. M. and started immediately on going ashore. The weather had been extremely warm and the temperature was 106° in the shade at 8 o'clock this morning. We followed the level valley road through Sacramento to Folsom, which lies in the foothills on the American River, and halted five miles east of the latter town.

June 8.— In order to avoid the scorching heat we resumed our journey in the early hours this morning and traveled by the light of a full moon. Several miles from the starting place we discovered what appeared, in the uncertain light, to be a coiled rattlesnake. On nearer approach, however, the object took flight disclosing two small young, and proved to be a Dusky Poor-will

(*Phalacroptilus nuttallii californicus*). The nearly full-fledged young were on the bare ground and only two feet from the road over which much teaming is done. Between Folsom and Placerville we found the Yellow-billed Magpie (*Pica nuttalli*) very abundant and noticed many nests, all placed near the top of tall oak trees. Eleven o'clock brought us to Placerville and ended the day's travel.

June 9.— To-day we journeyed as far as Slippery Ford, on the headwaters of the American River. The drive was through a continuous woodland, uniform in character and beauty, and quite unlike the stern, rocky, precipitous country of the higher altitudes.

June 10.— Our experience to-day will be long remembered. Thinking that even if snow should cover the road, we could reach Forni's, at the base of Pyramid Peak, we left the main highway at Georgetown Junction at noon and began the ascent by a steep road used only by dairymen in the late summer. Many fallen trees, the work of winter storms, lay across the road, and much accumulated brush impeded our progress, which even at the best was slow. We felt rewarded for our efforts, however, when we reached the summit, where the willows were only in bud and the grass on the meadows just peeping out. Numberless Chickadees were flitting about, besides various other species of bird life. Our elation was short-lived, however, for a blinding rain-storm, ushered in with terrific thunder and lightning, soon made dismal the merry sun-lit woods. Indeed, what is more cheerless than a cold, dripping forest? After a while the rain ceased and we proceeded on our way, but soon the deep snow made the road impassable, and we were compelled to unharness the horses, packing only the necessities on their backs, in order to continue. In places small streams had undermined the snow, in which the horses would sink deep, shifting the pack in their efforts to right themselves. Half a mile of this disheartened us and we turned back; but when we reached our wagon we found we were unable to turn it on the narrow road-bed. Not having eaten since breakfast, and being wet and cold, we were indeed in a sorry plight. After unloading the wagon we finally succeeded, inch by inch, in turning it around, and a mad ride down the grade brought us again to Georgetown Junction; and a few miles further on we reached Echo, where we built a

roaring camp fire and dried our outfit. Echo lies at the foot of the high granite cliffs of the summit, a vast area of virgin forest, full of surprises for the ornithologist.

June 11.— After due deliberation, this morning, we decided to press on to Lake Tahoe, and so began to climb up the winding road that leads to Phillip's Station, which came in sight at noon. We flushed a Sooty Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus sierræ*) along the road, and in a pine stump, ten feet up, I found a nest of the Red-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes cafer collaris*) with six nearly fresh eggs. Near camp I also found a nest of the Sierra Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla aonalaschkæ sequoiensis*) in a tamarack, six feet up, with four fresh eggs. The nest is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches across by 2 inches deep, composed externally of moss, grass and weed stems and lined with fine dry grass and leaves.

June 12.— This morning I located a nest of the Cabanis Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus hyloscopus*) in a tamarack stump, six feet up. Fine bits of wood, dislodged in excavating, were the only lining for the four eggs, in which incubation had begun. One of the parents was collected with this set. I also discovered to-day two more nests of the Hermit Thrush; one, in a small tamarack, held two fresh eggs, and the other, also in a tamarack, eight feet up, held three fresh eggs. The latter was at the head of a narrow cañon. Near by a brook of snow water flowed past, and below the nest the snow was three feet deep. The nest itself was a very beautiful one, being outwardly made of a very bright yellowish green moss which clings to the bark of the older trees in these high altitudes. I closed the day with a find, ten feet up, in a small tamarack by the roadside. The compact, well-feathered nest contained five richly marked and nearly fresh eggs, and on the return of the anxious, but gayly attired owners, I entered *Dendroica auduboni* in my note-book.

While on the summit, where both the Sierra Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla aonalaschkæ sequoiensis*) and the Russet-backed Thrush (*Hylocichla ustulata ustulata*) occur, although the latter but sparingly, I had the first opportunity for a comparison of their songs. That of the Hermit Thrush is clear and ringing, like a merry brook of snow-water in the open; that of the Russet-back, indistinct yet sweet, like some whispering stream overhung

with heavy foliage. Almost everyone remarks the song of the Hermit,—gay, loud and far reaching; only an ornithologist, perhaps, would hear that of the Russet-back,—sad, subdued and mysterious. While the song of the Russet-back is far less loud than that of its rival yet, being more ventriloquial, it can be heard equally as far away. In the fading light, when most other birds are silent, these two peerless singers hold forth, and the effect is further enhanced by the beauty of the Sierran woodland and the stillness of the twilight hour.

During my stay at Phillip's Station I made the following list of species, which refers *to this trip only. The summit here is not very extensive, being walled to the north and south by the higher mountain ridges. The elevation, 7500 feet, is about the same as that of the great Pyramid Peak Plateau.

List of Species.

1. *Oreortyx pictus plumiferus*. MOUNTAIN PARTRIDGE.—Common, breeding, but no nests were located.
2. *Dendragapus obscurus sierræ*. SIERRA GROUSE.—One seen, as noted above, and a few heard.
3. *Accipiter velox rufilatus*. WESTERN SHARP-SHINNED HAWK.—Seen several times.
4. *Dryobates villosus hyloscopus*. CABANIS WOODPECKER.—Rather abundant; one nest found, as previously stated.
5. *Colaptes cafer collaris*. RED-SHAFTED FLICKER.—Rather abundant; one nest found, as already noted.
6. *Selasphorus rufus*. RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD.—A few seen.
7. *Nuttallornis borealis*. OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER.—More often heard than seen.
8. *Contopus richardsoni richardsoni*. WESTERN WOOD PEWEE.—Rather common.
9. *Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis*. BLUE-FRONTED JAY.—Very scarce this year, for some reason.
10. *Carpodacus cassini*. CASSIN PURPLE FINCH.—Common.
11. *Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys*. WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW.—Common; one newly built nest found on the ground in a meadow.
12. *Spizella socialis arizonæ*. WESTERN CHIPPING SPARROW.—Common; just beginning to build; one nest with one egg noted.
13. *Junco hyemalis thurberi*. SIERRA JUNCO.—Common.
14. *Passerella iliaca megarhyncha*. THICK-BILLED SPARROW.—A few heard on the western edge of the summit.

15. *Piranga ludoviciana*. WESTERN TANAGER.— Abundant.
16. *Dendroica æstiva morcomi*. WESTERN YELLOW WARBLER.
17. *Dendroica auduboni*. AUDUBON WARBLER.
18. *Wilsonia pusilla pileolata*. PILEOLATED WARBLER.— All three species were noted.
19. *Sitta carolinensis aculeata*. SLENDER-BILLED NUTHATCH.
20. *Parus gambeli*. MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE.— Both seen and rather common.
21. *Hylocichla ustulata ustulata*. RUSSET-BACKED THRUSH.— A few heard and fewer seen.
22. *Hylocichla aonalaschkæ sequoiensis*. SIERRA HERMIT THRUSH.— Common; three nests with eggs found, as above noted.
23. *Merula migratoria propinqua*. WESTERN ROBIN.— Common as usual.

June 13.— We left Phillips Station at half past seven this morning and arrived at Bijou, on Lake Tahoe, at one o'clock in the afternoon. On the way, near the Sierra House, four feet up in a small tamarack by the roadside, I found another nest of *Dendroica auduboni*. The four eggs were well along in incubation and save for a few sparse blotches of deep lilac-gray, were unmarked.

June 14.— This morning I found near camp a third nest of the Audubon Warbler (*Dendroica auduboni*), fifteen feet up in a small pine. Incubation had just begun in the four eggs, which were typical. Of all the nests I have found of this warbler in this section none have been over twenty-five feet above the ground and most were under fifteen feet.

I took a ramble to-day along the edge of the marsh at Rowlands. The usual species were in evidence, and I noted the following nests: *Spizella socialis arizonæ*, three eggs, incubation begun; *Actitis macularia*, three eggs, fresh; *Hydrochelidon surinamensis*, nest on floating driftwood, two eggs, partly incubated.

June 15.— Outside of the usual species the only new bird I observed to-day was a Russet-backed Thrush (*Hylocichla ustulata ustulata*). This is the first one I have seen on the floor of the valley.

June 16.— We found a nest of the Mallard (*Anas boschas*) to-day in a wooded swamp. The nest was placed on one of the numerous and regular mounds, the origin of which I do not know, and the seven practically fresh eggs rested on a warm lining of

feathers and down. The nest measured seven inches across and was photographed.

On my first visit to Lake Valley, in 1901, I found, on June 11, on the shore of Rowlands Marsh, in a pine stump, a nest of the Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana occidentalis*) with five nearly fresh eggs. The parents being close at hand identification was made sure and as such I listed them in 'The Osprey' (Vol. V, No. 8). On my return to Lake Valley the following year I failed to find this species, which rather puzzled me, and I listed only the Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia arctica*) in my 'Land Birds of Lake Valley' (Auk, Vol. XX, No. 2). This year, however, I solved the puzzle. *Sialia mexicana occidentalis* occurs here but sparingly, being about one third as abundant as *Sialia arctica*, and, strange to say, does not frequent the habitations like the latter but nests deep in the woods, and well up on the mountain sides. It was in the latter location that I found a nest to-day, and intend to return to-morrow to collect the set with parent.

June 17.—I revisited the nest of the Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana occidentalis*) to-day and collected the eggs and male parent. The cavity, which was six feet up in a pine stump, was lined with the usual substances, and held six half-incubated eggs. This nest was located on the side of the mountain, about a mile southeast of Edgewood, which lies just over the state-line in Nevada.

On the way back considerable commotion about a nest of the Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia arctica*) in a tall dead tamarack attracted my attention. A chipmunk, intentionally or otherwise, had wandered up the tree trunk in close proximity to the nest-hole, and the angry owners, with bills and claws free, were giving him a grilling, while the chipmunk, needing his claws to cling to the bark, was helpless and forced to make an ignominious retreat. While the depredations on bird-life by this animal are said by some writers to be considerable, I am of the opinion that little harm is done to the bluebird family, who seem well able to protect their homes against this pest.

June 18.—To-day I rowed from Bijou to Rowlands Marsh, about two miles distant. Off shore at the latter place, in cavities in piles projecting above deep water, I found two nests of the

Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*), both being warmly lined with feathers. One contained seven eggs well advanced in incubation, while the other held a single but unusually large egg, measuring .84 × .54 inches, which contained two perfectly formed embryos, the first instance of the kind I have found in eggs of wild birds. The specimen is elliptical oval in shape and has the same uneven patched effect noticeable in double-yoked chicken eggs.

I found that with the rowboat I was unable to reach many portions of the marsh that I visited in 1901 and 1902, when I had a light canvas canoe. While nothing particularly new was observed, the marsh with its great tern colonies (*Sterna forsteri* and *Hydrochelidon surinamensis*), the clattering crowds of blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus neutralis*, *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus* and *Euphagus cyanocephalus*) full of nesting troubles, the busy Killdeer, and Spotted Sandpiper (*Ægialitis vocifera* and *Actitis macularia*) practicing their deceptive tactics—running everywhere along the grassy shores except about their nests—and the various waterfowl, present a sight that is ever new and interesting to the naturalist.

June 19-25.—During this week I did little ornithological work except taking a female Nighthawk (*Chordeiles virginianus virginianus*) which contained an egg about to be laid. (This specimen, in the collection of the San Francisco Academy of Sciences, was identified by Mr. Leverett M. Loomis as above.)

June 26.—This morning a friend named Agnew and myself started for Star Lake, which we reached at noon and put in some time successfully fishing. Neither here nor on the way up did I notice anything new in the 'bird line.' Around the log cabin in which we are staying Clark Nutcrackers (*Nucifraga columbiana*) come in droves after the fish heads we have thrown out on the snow, which still lies deep on the ground.

June 27.—All forenoon Agnew was endeavoring to cook some beans, but the high altitude was against us. About noon we set forth, ascending the precipitous mountain side which rises above the southern end of the lake. Chopping into the snow to keep from slipping, clambering over masses of huge boulders, or threading our way along narrow ledges made the climb both laborious and dangerous. On reaching the main backbone of

the ridge a pair of Sharp-shinned Hawks (*Accipiter velox rufilatus*) flew out among the rocky crevices and hovered above, but I could not locate the nest. Following the ridge the ascent of Job's Peak and Job's Sister was made, and lastly Freel's Peak, which lies 10,849 feet above the sea level. We did not see any Leucostictes (*Leucosticte tephrocotis tephrocotis*) about the summits of these peaks, as we expected we would, but, strange to say, we observed near the top of Freel's Peak, and also further down on the broad patches of snow, a small dull-colored bird about the size of a Chipping Sparrow which we were unable to secure or identify.

The view from the top of Freel's Peak was magnificent, Hope Valley lying below on one side and Lake Valley and Lake Tahoe on the opposite. To the east was Nevada, with the fertile Carson Valley and countless ranges of barren mountains fading away in the dim distance. Surrounding Lake Tahoe and running in a northerly and southerly direction extended a never-ending line of snow-capped peaks rising above the heavy timber.

After spending some time running over the records of the Sierra Club, in the brass cylinder on the peak, we started for camp where we arrived about nine o'clock in the evening.

June 28.—We rested to-day from our trip. On the porch of the hotel a pair of Mountain Bluebirds (*Sialia arctica*) have their nest with young, and while we lounge around reading magazines the parents flit back and forth with provender for the juveniles, heedless of our presence.

June 29.—I found a dead male Lazuli Bunting (*Cyanospiza amœna*) near camp to-day.

June 30.—Cascade Lake was visited to-day but nothing appears in my note book. Late to-day, at Rowlands Marsh, a nest of the Cinnamon Teal (*Querquedula cyanoptera*), previously located, was visited and found to contain ten practically fresh eggs. It was well lined with down and placed among reeds on a narrow strip of land with deep water on both sides not far from the road. Further on in the sand bank which runs along the lake shore I noted a nest of the Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*) with large young.

July 1.—We left Bijou this morning for Carson City, Nevada,

which we made late in the afternoon. On the way, at Cave Rock—a tall bluff jutting out into Lake Tahoe—we noticed on a small rocky shelf the nest of a hawk containing young. The remains of several squirrels were observed hanging over the edge of the nest.

July 2.—We left Carson City this morning early. Bird life is abundant where there is any timber or meadowland but almost absent on the broad stretches of sage brush. In passing along Washoe Lake, on the road, we listed thirty different species, which is rather unusual for a drive of only about eight miles. We reached Laughton's Hot Springs, west of Reno, late this afternoon.

July 3.—We unexpectedly disposed of our team and outfit this morning in time to catch the ten o'clock overland train, which landed us in San Francisco at seven o'clock P. M., and brought the trip to a sudden ending.

The following additions were made to the list of the 'Land Birds of Lake Valley' (*cf.* Auk, Vol. XX, No. 2).

110. *Buteo swainsoni*. SWAINSON HAWK.—A stuffed specimen of this species adorns the wall of the Custom House Saloon at Rowlands, where it was shot.

111. *Sialia mexicana occidentalis*. WESTERN BLUEBIRD.—Found breeding at various points in Lake Valley as above noted. While not uncommon, it is not nearly as abundant as *Sialia arctica*.