

## NOTES ON SOME BIRDS OF SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA.

BY GEORGE WILLETT.

THE article by Alfred M. Bailey in the 'The Auk,' for January, April, and July 1927, was of especial interest to the writer, who has resided in the region under discussion for the greater part of the past fifteen years. The following notes may be of interest, as adding somewhat to the information contained in Mr. Bailey's admirable paper.

**Phalacrocorax auritus cincinatus.** WHITE-CRESTED CORMORANT.—In regard to this Cormorant, the writer's experience in southeastern Alaska was practically the same as Bailey's. It was found to be rather common in winter throughout the southern part of the Alexander Archipelago, but, in spite of a particularly careful search and many inquiries, it was never found breeding in the region and adult birds were apparently entirely absent during the summer months. The suspicion that the species might breed around interior lakes and come to the coast in winter has previously been expressed (Condor, xxv, 1923, p. 27). In the summer of 1925 the writer made a trip along the coast of Alaska as far as southern Bering Sea, during which trip he had his first sight of this bird on its breeding grounds. Several birds sitting on their nests were noted on a small rock, off Kodiak Island, a few miles from the town of Kodiak, on July 17. Later, birds in breeding plumage were seen as far west as Umnak Island, Aleutians. The breeding range may probably extend to the eastward from Kodiak, also, as many likely rocks were seen between this point and Prince William Sound, which were not approached closely enough to admit of identification of the birds inhabiting them.

That the White-crested Cormorant does not breed in southeastern Alaska would seem to be fairly well established. Also, Major Brooks (Pac. Coast Avif. 17, p. 31) states that he has never seen it nesting on the Queen Charlottes. These facts would seem to indicate a hiatus in the breeding range of the subspecies, that is, of course, if the bird nesting off the Washington coast is the same as the Alaskan bird. Considering the above facts, a suspicion might, perhaps, be justifiable that the geographical line dividing this form from *P. a. albociliatus* may be drawn in the wrong place. At any rate, the breeding range as given in the A. O. U. 'Check List' and followed by Bent in his 'Life Histories' seems to require revision, as does, also, Bent's implication that the form is non-migratory.

**Phalacrocorax pelagicus resplendens.** BAIRD'S CORMORANT.—The record by Bailey of a specimen of this form taken by the writer off Forrester Island, July 18, 1920, seems an unfortunate one. It would imply

the straggling of a bird of this form to Alaska, which is almost certainly not the case. The writer considers the specimen only an unusually small *P. p. pelagicus*, a form subject to considerable variation in size, and regrets the addition of *resplendens* to the list of Alaskan birds on such evidence.

**Marila marila.** SCAUP DUCK.

**Marila affinis.** LESSER SCAUP DUCK.—Bailey's account of these two species shows a very surprising difference between his observations and those of the writer. He states that *affinis* is abundant during winter and spring and that he has a few definite records for *M. marila*. During the writer's stay in the region under discussion, a great many Scaups have been shot by him personally and he has examined large numbers shot by others and has yet to see a specimen that could be identified as *affinis*, the species considered by Bailey to be the abundant one. Swarth and Brooks (l. c., p. 34) give only one record for *affinis* from the British Columbia coast. Bent (Life Histories North American Ducks, p. 223) gives the winter range for *affinis* as north to southern British Columbia.

The writer, who has been in the field many times with Bailey, has the highest regard for his qualifications as a field observer and has no intention of here questioning the accuracy of his observations, but hopes that this note will result in the placing on record, by Bailey or some other collector, definite specimens of *Marila affinis* taken in southeastern Alaska in winter.

**Cryptoglaux acadica acadica.** SAW-WHET OWL.—A female breeding bird collected by the writer on Forrester Island, June 5, 1914, now in the Biological Survey Collection (Auk, xxxii, p. 303) seemed to be referable to the above form rather than to the Queen Charlotte Island race.

**Glaucidium gnoma grinnelli.** COAST PYGMY OWL.—A recent opportunity of comparing Wrangell and Dall Island specimens of the Pygmy Owl with specimens of *swarthi* and *grinnelli* has shown that the Alaskan coast birds are referable to the latter race.

**Ceryle alcyon caurina.** WESTERN KINGFISHER.—Though Bailey states that he failed to observe this bird during the summer months, the writer did not find it rare at that season in the vicinity of Craig and Ketchikan. It is, however, much less generally distributed in summer than in winter. A bird was flushed from a burrow in a low cut-bank of a stream at the head of Port San Nicolas, Prince of Wales Island, May 9, 1922.

**Dryobates villosus sitkensis.** SITKA HAIRY WOODPECKER.—The Hairy Woodpecker of the region, recorded by Bailey as *D. v. harrisi*, is undoubtedly referable to *sitkensis*. Knowing that the validity of this latter form had been questioned, the writer made a special effort to obtain these birds and accumulated a series of more than thirty specimens. These easily demonstrate that *sitkensis* is a well marked race.

**Dryobates villosus monticola.** ROCKY M'TN. HAIRY WOODPECKER.—A female bird taken at Craig, November 7, 1919 (No. 2935 Coll. G. W.) seems referable to this subspecies. It certainly is not *sitkensis*, being separable from that form at a glance by its light under parts and white

spotting of the inner secondaries. It is probably a straggler from the interior of Alaska.

**Sphyrapicus ruber ruber.** NORTHERN RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER.—This bird is apparently much more plentiful in the southern part of the Alexander Archipelago than it is around Juneau. A number of nests containing young were found in the vicinity of Craig during the month of June. Young were seen outside the nest June 23, 1923. A nest containing newly-hatched young was found on Betton Island, about fifteen miles north of Ketchikan, May 26, 1926. This bird is probably migratory to some extent, as it is apparently much less common in winter than at other times of the year. Winter specimens were taken at Craig, November 23, 1922, and January 26, 1920.

**Colaptes cafer saturator.** NORTHWESTERN FLICKER.—This species, though much less common than Flickers are in most parts of the United States, is not nearly so rare in extreme southeastern Alaska as Bailey found it around Juneau. It was fairly common at Wrangell and Craig and might be seen or heard almost daily at Ketchikan.

**Selasphorus rufus.** RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD.—Extreme migration dates for this bird are April 10 (1925, Ketchikan) and September 9 (1922, Craig). The height of the spring migration is between April 28 and May 7.

**Zonotrichia coronata.** GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW.—A common migrant at Forrester Island, Craig, Ketchikan and Wrangell. Most of the spring migration takes place between April 29 and May 5. Extreme dates are April 22 (1921, Wrangell), and May 29 (1920, Forrester Island). Most plentiful in fall migration between September 28 and October 12. Extreme fall dates are September 8 (1921, Craig) and October 21 (1920, Wrangell). It would seem that Bailey's late June dates from Glacier Bay might indicate, as he suggests, a close proximity to the breeding range.

**Melospiza melodia.** SONG SPARROW.—The writer has had some personal experience with all of the Alaskan races of the Song Sparrow at present on the A. O. U. List and believes that one or two differences between the habits of the various subspecies may be worthy of mention. *M. morphna* and *M. m. rufina*, of southeastern Alaska, occur in inland localities several miles from salt water, while *caurina*, *kenaiensis*, *insignis* and *sanaka* appear to be strictly beach birds, nesting and feeding within a few yards of the beach. Nests of *morphna* found at Ketchikan were often placed several feet up in trees and one was found inside a roll of wire netting that was lying just above the high tide line. This latter nest contained four nearly fresh eggs April 29, 1926. All nests of *rufina* found were either flush with the ground or in short grass a few inches up. The writer has not taken the specimens necessary to prove the wintering of *morphna* in Alaska, but has observed what was apparently the same pair of birds daily throughout the winter until they built their nest in the spring. *M. m. rufina* and *caurina* are both rather common throughout the winter months. Extreme dates for specimens of *caurina* are August

15 (1919, Craig), and April 23 (1920, Wrangell). Though a particularly careful search was made in fall and winter for the more westerly forms of *Melospiza melodia*, no indication of their occurrence was found.

***Passerella iliaca insularis.***

***Passerella iliaca sinuosa.***—During the entire time spent in southeastern Alaska, a particular effort was made to obtain specimens of the various Fox Sparrows that breed in large numbers in western Alaska. With but three exceptions, however, birds taken proved to be the breeding form, *P. i. townsendi*. A male bird taken near Ketchikan, March 29, 1926, seems referable to *insularis*, and a male *sinuosa* was taken in the same locality two days later. A bird taken at Craig, October 22, 1919, differs greatly from any of the known forms of *Passerella*. It is much darker than the darkest *fuliginosa* to be found in any collection the writer has inspected. Mr. Swarth has examined this bird and states that he does not know what it is. Had other similar specimens been found, the writer would not hesitate to describe it as a new race, but there is a possibility of its being only a freak, consequently it would seem best to let it remain for the present, at least, without a name.

***Iridoprocne bicolor.*** TREE SWALLOW.—Extreme migration dates for this bird are April 10 (1921, Wrangell), and August 15 (1922, Craig).

***Hirundo erythrogastra palmeri.*** ALASKA BARN SWALLOW.—Appears much later in spring than does the Tree Swallow. Earliest noted, May 15 (1925, Ketchikan). The summer of 1925 a nest containing four eggs was noted on the porch of the Federal Court House at Ketchikan. The last egg was laid July 11, the young hatched July 24, and flew August 13.

***Vermivora celata lutescens.*** LUTESCENT WARBLER.—A common summer resident throughout the region; eggs laid from May 25 to June 10. Extreme migration dates, April 20 (1925, Ketchikan), and September 24 (1922, Craig).

***Dendroica aestiva rubiginosa.*** ALASKA YELLOW WARBLER.—Two seen at Ketchikan, May 30, 1924, and one September 6, 1925.

***Dendroica coronata hooveri.*** WESTERN MYRTLE WARBLER.—One seen at Craig, September 27, 1919; one or two May 9–10, 1921, and one at Wrangell, April 29, 1921.

***Dendroica townsendi.*** TOWNSEND'S WARBLER.—Common in spring migration at Craig, April 27 (1920) to May 12 (1922). Occasionally seen in summer on wooded mountain sides. Latest fall record August 31 (1922).

***Nannus hiemalis pacificus.*** WESTERN WINTER WREN.—As the Check-List gives the range of this subspecies as north only to Prince William Sound, its occurrence at Seward is worthy of record. Three or four birds were seen there in late November, 1926, a male being taken November 19.

***Hylocichla ustulata ustulata.*** RUSSET-BACKED THRUSH.—Arrives from the south in May. Earliest date, May 16 (1925, Ketchikan). Latest noted in fall, August 15 (1922, Craig). Nests in latter part of June.

***Hyllocichla guttata nana.*** DWARF HERMIT THRUSH.—Fairly common in summer. Earliest record, April 23 (1925, Ketchikan), latest in fall September 21 (1921, Craig). Nest containing four eggs, advanced in incubation, found at Ketchikan, June 8, 1924.

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