

During the evening of April 27, 1942, at Malheur Refuge, another observation was made of a Canada Goose on top of an 18-foot telephone pole. When approached, the goose flew away and was accompanied by its mate. There is no way of determining whether this is the same goose as that noted perched on a fence post in 1940 and 1941. While Canada Geese are commonly seen perched on high rock ledges bordering portions of the Blitzen Valley of the Malheur Refuge, their perching on fence posts and telephone poles seems quite unusual.—CLARENCE A. SOOTER, *U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Burns, Oregon.*

Kingbird housekeeping.—We know that many birds are good housekeepers in that, after the young are hatched, they keep the nest scrupulously clean by removing the droppings. A pair of Kingbirds (*Tyrannus t. tyrannus*) have a nest in the spruce tree in the side yard of my country home in Vermont. In the front yard, enclosed by a picket fence with the grass carefully mowed, flower borders on all sides and a handsome bird bath, I like to serve tea to my friends; in fact, that part of the grounds has always been known as the 'Tea Garden.'

Now, what did these Kingbird parents do but use the bird bath as a depository for the nestlings' droppings? I watched one or the other come there, probably four or five times an hour, perch on the side of the bath and drop the excrement into the water. Occasionally the bird would take a sip or two of water before flying away, but not often. I cleaned out the bath every day and estimated that during each twenty-four hour period about fifty droppings accumulated.

Personally I had never heard of such a case before, nor had the bird friends with whom I discussed the incident. Later, however, another friend sent me a copy of an article by Edward C. Raney in 'The Auk' for January 1941, on 'Feeding and Disposition of Nestling Feces by the Kingbird.' In this case, however, the feces were deposited in a row on a boat dock as well as on the back seat of a rowboat fastened to the dock.—LILLIAN S. LOVELAND, *River Road, Norwich, Vermont.*

Predation upon Wilson's Phalarope by Treganza's Heron.—While driving from Boulder, Colorado, to Fort Collins on May 9, 1942, the writer observed a Treganza's Heron (*Ardea herodias treganzai*) standing a few feet from the shore of a roadside pond. Fifty feet beyond it eleven Wilson's Phalaropes (*Steganopus tricolor*) were swimming, one of them some distance from the others. Suddenly the heron flapped over the pond, alighted on the water and seized the lone phalarope by the neck. After shaking the smaller bird violently and plunging it beneath the water several times, the heron carried it to shore. There it dropped the phalarope on the ground, pecked it a number of times and again immersed it in the water. Finally, it tore the wings from the phalarope and rapidly swallowed the remainder of the carcass. Great Blue Herons are known to capture smaller birds occasionally, but no such predation by them upon phalaropes has come to my attention.—FRED MALLERY PACKARD, *University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.*

A generally unrecognized habit of the Florida Burrowing Owl.—Though having had much experience during the past seven years with *Speotyto cunicularia floridana* in the Kissimmee Prairie region of Florida, it was not until this past winter that the writer witnessed a habit of this bird of which he can find little mention in the literature. All observers of this interesting owl have been impressed with the undulating character of its flight, the low elevations at which it is usually performed and the relatively short distances covered.

Shortly before dusk on the afternoon of April 12, 1942, the writer was much surprised to see one of these owls about *one hundred* feet in the air *hovering* in exactly the same manner as a Sparrow Hawk or Kingfisher. So strange was the maneuver, and unlike anything seen before in connection with this owl, that it was difficult to believe for a moment that the individual was indeed a Burrowing Owl! It remained perfectly motionless on rapidly beating wings, sharply outlined against the glow of the western sky, for several moments, then dived suddenly earthward with startling rapidity, alighting in the prairie grass. It was so near dusk that it could not be ascertained whether any prey was secured. Two or three occasions of this sort left no room for doubt that this is a habit which must be indulged in with some frequency.

The writer was in company at the time with Audubon Warden Marvin Chandler, who patrols that area, and who has known the owl all of his life. He stated that he had long known of this habit and had witnessed it often. It did not occur to him that it was anything out of the ordinary and was surprised that it was new to the writer. Chandler further stated that he had watched owls performing in this manner at night, by the aid of his strong 'frog-light', an electric lamp worn on the head by a band, and powered with storage batteries. His attention was drawn to the birds by their notes overhead, and by holding his light on the hovering bird, he could see it plainly. The dives to earth are performed with the wings closed. It would appear that, at times anyway, this performance has a flavor of sport in it as well as a search for prey, for Chandler states that he has seen several doing it, the birds rising and falling in a way that suggests play. That area where the writer observed it was in Highlands County, Florida, in what is known as the Fish Branch section of the Kissimmee Prairie.

Search of the literature has failed to reveal much mention of this habit. Zimmer (Proc. Nebr. Orn. Union, 5, no. 5: 76, Apr., 1913) makes a brief mention of it as observed in the Western Burrowing Owl (*S. c. hypugaea*), and Hoffman ('Birds of the Pacific States': 169, 1925) is equally brief when he states that these owls (again *S. c. hypugaea*) "are occasionally seen in the twilight hovering about twenty feet above the ground, evidently hunting." In the case of the Florida birds, the hovering is performed at much greater elevations, anywhere from 75 to well over 100 feet. It is a most interesting performance and seems strange that it has escaped greater comment.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *The Crescent, Charleston, S. C.*

Albino Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna neglecta*).—On June 26, 1942, I received a call from a farmer, Mr. H. W. Tucker, that his young son had found a very rare bird, a white meadowlark. The children had been walking through a pasture three miles south of Ord and had found this bird with other normal young. It had left the nest and could fly a little, but they ran it down. The bird was in perfect condition when I received it except that it was hungry. I had hopes of keeping it alive and worked for three days, feeding it any insects that it would take. The third day it developed paralysis in its legs and died.

The bird was a true albino, with the flesh, bill and toenails white, the pupil of the eye red, and the iris a light blue. Typical of the albino condition, its eyes were weak and it struck to one side of any object it tried to pick up. The feathers were pure white except for a beautiful tinge of yellow on the breast and a slight gray pattern over the back where normal coloration is dark and striped.