

GENERAL NOTES

First North American Sighting and Photographic Record of Common Crane, *Grus grus*.—A Common Crane, *Grus grus*, a Eurasian species, was first seen on April 24, 1958, feeding in the fields at Creamer's Dairy Farm about two miles west of Fairbanks, Alaska. It was readily identified by the light-gray body plumage, the striking black and white head and neck pattern, and the conspicuous "bustle" formed by the inner secondary feathers. During the next two weeks it was seen regularly in the Fairbanks area. It alternated much of the time between Creamer's fields and the fields of the Alaska Agricultural Experiment Station at College, a distance of about three miles. Twice it was reported in the vicinity of Badger Road, about seven miles from Creamer's Dairy. The crane was observed regularly until May 10, but with the possible exception of a report on June 2, it has not been seen since. The attached photograph was taken on May 2, 1958 by Earl L. Schene (Plate 22).

During its stay in the area, the crane was observed a number of times for lengthy periods from a distance of 200 to 300 yards with a 30X spotting scope. The bird appeared to be in sub-adult plumage, since it lacked the typical red crown patch of the adult. It was extremely wary and could not be collected, but several diagnostic photographs were obtained (see Plate 22). The crane frequently was seen feeding and resting with flocks of Canada Geese, *Branta canadensis*, one of the early migrants through the area; when flushed, it usually landed again near the geese. The Sandhill Cranes, *Grus canadensis*, did not arrive until April 28, and the Common Crane showed no particular affinity toward them after they arrived. Throughout the afternoon of April 24, while feeding among about 350 geese, the crane was harassed by several Common Ravens, *Corvus corax*. The ravens pecked at its drooping secondaries, flew over its back, dived at it and at times actually struck it on the back. Several times they forced the crane to fly a short distance in an attempt to rid itself of its persecutors.

Grus grus is normally a breeding bird of Europe and Asia. The eastern subspecies, *G. g. lilfordi*, winters as far east as the lowlands of eastern and southeastern China, and summers about as far north in eastern Siberia as 65° N. Latitude and apparently east to the vicinity of the Kolyma River, 155-160° E. Longitude, about 1700 miles from Fairbanks, Alaska. It is said to be paler than the nominate subspecies, which breeds in Europe and western Asia, wintering to Africa.—BRINA KESSEL AND ROBERT W. KELLY, *University of Alaska, College, Alaska*.

A New Form of Nest in the Scimitar Babblers, *Pomatorhinini*.—Captain Delacour (L'Oiseau et la R.F.O. 1946:23; 1950: 186) has pointed out that the scimitar babblers of the Indomalayan and Australian regions are morphologically so similar that they seem to be congeneric whereas, from a study of their nidification, they appear to belong to two distinct genera. These are an Indomalayan group (*Pomatorhinus* with five species), which construct a large globular nest cradled on the ground (Smythies, "The Birds of Burma" 1953: 25-26) and an Australian group (*Pomatostomus* with four species) which construct a large globular nest cradled in high forks of trees (Serventy and Whittell, "Birds of Western Australia" 1951: 283 and 285). One of the species (*P. isidori* of New Guinea) was included in the latter group on geographical grounds, pending discovery and study of its nest.

In 1956 in the Finisterre Mountains of New Guinea I stumbled on information concerning an extraordinary nest built by a bird which was quite unknown to me.