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### Another Chapter on the Nesting of *Dendroica occidentalis*, and Other Sierra Notes.

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RESTING in a four-foot cedar tree in the forest, with tall cedars and pines towering about it, the third nest and eggs of the Hermit Warbler were destined to be found. This nest was discovered by Mr. H. W. Carriger, who was one of our party to visit the Sierras from June 6 to 11, and to Mr. Carriger belongs the credit of taking the set, and through his kindness I am permitted to describe the nest and eggs, which constitute the third authentic set on record.

Our location was Fyffe, El Dorado Co., Cal., at an elevation of 3,700 feet, in the pine belt. Black-throated Gray, Calaveras and Hermit Warblers were present in about equal numbers, and could be classed as common. They were observed chiefly in the black oaks where most of the smaller birds seem to secure their food supply and the singing birds were doubtless males. On June 8, while passing through the timber, Mr. Carriger came upon a nest of the Hermit Warbler placed in a small cedar tree but  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the ground. The female was off at the time but soon appeared in a near-by bush. The nest was built on a small limb near the trunk of the sapling, which is certainly an unusual nesting site for this tree-breeding species to select.

The nest held four badly incubated eggs and we returned in the afternoon

to photograph and collect the set. A photograph was taken of the sapling and nest, showing the latter's position, after which we prepared to secure a picture of the bird when she should return and alight on the nest. All twigs which threw shadows on the nest were cut away until it was fully exposed to the sun. The camera was then set up about four feet from the nest, a string was attached to the shutter, and we prepared to conceal ourselves in the bushes. Mr. Welch, who carried the gun (a very necessary collecting adjunct in some cases) unconsciously deposited himself upon a small ant-hill, and heroically withstood their onslaughts for an hour, while Mr. Carriger crawled into some deer brush and I sat down ten feet away behind some small cedars to await the coming of the bird and take the picture. Soon the female warbler appeared and grew nervous at the army of invaders which surrounded her, the lense of the camera seeming most terrifying of all. Soon, however, she grew quite fearless and hopped about the bushes and in the pine above me, sometimes approaching within three feet and feeding all the while. Several times she hopped close to the nest, but a glance at the camera caused her to lose courage and around the circuit of bushes and trees she would go again, finally approaching the nest.

Meanwhile we were keeping as quiet in the hot sun, as numerous ants, flies, mosquitoes and other winged abominations would permit. Finally, the bird made her last circuit, approached the bush and hopped up on the edge of the nest; the shutter clicked and the watch said we had waited something over three hours for the photograph. This, however, was not forthcoming, for when I reached home and developed the plate it was almost completely "fogged," there being but an outline of the bird and nest. While our direct object failed I cannot say I regret my three hours' close acquaintance with little *Dendroica occidentalis*.

Mr. Carriger collected the nest and eggs which he describes as follows: the nest is composed outwardly of small, light weed stems and bleached pine needles, lined with cedar bark and horsehair. The nest measures: inside diameter  $1\frac{3}{4} \times 2$  inches; outside  $3 \times 4$  inches (extremes); outside depth 3 inches; inside depth  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Placed  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the ground in a small cedar, resting on a small limb about two inches from the trunk. The eggs measure .66x.52; .65x.53; .66x.53 and .67x.54 inches, and are marked principally at the larger ends, some confluent, with reddish brown and a few spots of black. The markings are heavy and more in the form of a wash than distinct spots. The female parent was secured. We noticed that the male Hermit Warblers were usually singing from the tall pines and black oaks and it is unlikely that the female sings during the breeding season. The position of the male bird has little to do with the location of the nest, and in the case of Mr. Carriger's nest the male did not appear for nearly an hour.

On June 9, two miles above Fyffe I saw a pair of Hermit Warblers and watched the female, thinking she had left her nest to feed. I watched her for half an hour, during which time she searched the deer brush and small trees industriously for food, covering both sides of the road, and the number of worms consumed was really remarkable. Finally I discovered her feeding a young bird in the road and had no trouble in capturing it. It was just out

of the nest and could not fly apparently. The plumage consisted of a few pin feathers, wing coverts and down of a dark grayish color, with two white bars on each wing. After examining it, I left the bird perched on a low limb.

While walking along a narrow trail in the woods on June 9, a Calaveras Warbler (*Helminthophila ruficapilla gutturalis*) flushed a few feet ahead of me and I found the nest beneath a small cedar bush, built in the "mountain misery" flush with the ground. The cavity was lined with soap root fiber and the nest contained five half grown young.

Three nests of the Plumed Quail were found by us, all built in the tar-weed or "mountain misery" (*Chamaebatia foliolosa*), and all near paths or roads. The one shown in the illustration was built at the foot of a large cedar tree, and was nicely concealed and shaded by the foliage of the weeds. The nesting cavity was about six inches across and three inches deep, lined with feathers from the parent bird. It held ten eggs, in which incubation was well advanced. Several times the bird was flushed in order that we might observe the nest, but she was persistent and always returned. The photograph was taken in the early morning of June 7, at which time the bright sunlight presented a variety of shades in the forest. The "mountain misery" was in full bloom at this time and the nature of the shrub is well illustrated in the half-tone photograph. Another nest containing 11 incubated eggs was found on the same day, placed amongst the tar-weed in the shade of large cedars. This nesting cavity was about six inches in depth, and composed of dry leaves from the tar-weed and lined with feathers. From the nests observed it seems certain that the Plumed Quail makes a nest of its own, for the one last mentioned was substantial enough to bring home. On June 10 Mr. Carriger took a nest and 10 eggs built beside the road in the tar-weed three miles above Fyffe. The whistle of the Plumed Quail could be heard commonly through the woods, but the birds were seldom seen.