breeding ground the majority of birds seemed to be males, but this may have been an illusion caused by their greater conspicuousness. Or perhaps the females dropped out into the fields in closer proximity to their nests. The food which they carried seemed to consist mostly of large, smooth, green caterpillars from the alfalfa fields, and the benefit derived from the presence of such a large number of active insect destroyers must be enormous.

Within a mile of this breeding ground were several nests of *Buteo swainsoni*, some of which were placed in remarkable positions for a hawk, considering the fact that large cottonwood and poplar trees were numerous only a mile or so distant. One nest containing three partly incubated eggs was found in a willow that had been put in the ground to serve as a fence post for barbed wire and which had sprouted into a small bushy tree. This nest was so low that I reached into it from the ground, and yet it was only a few feet from a road through the fields that was used to some extent almost every day.

Another containing four eggs was discovered between a wagon road and the irrigating canal in a small willow that leaned over the latter, the nest being placed about sixteen feet above the water. Yet some of these birds built their nests out on the end of slim branches of very tall trees in such a way as to be safe from the depredations of even the small boy. I revisited this ranch six weeks later and repaired immediately to the tule patch to see what had been done meanwhile by the *A. tricolor*. The tules had doubled their height and were as thick as it was possible for them to grow. Only a few of the birds were in the vicinity and these were most probably some that had hatched out a second setting after the first had been destroyed. Large flocks were seen along the river six miles away, but in very inaccessible tule land among deep overflow channels full of water.

These flocks were mixed up with *A g. californicus* and some few *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*. The breeding place of this latter species remained undiscovered by me, and I could get no information concerning it. Upon this second visit the young *Buteo swainsoni* were found to have all left their nests and were flying about in all stages and varieties of plumage. Two young ones which were shot proved to be especially interesting in that one was in the dark phase and the other in the light, though evidently out of the same nest as they were shot, together with the old one, under such conditions as to make it certain that the group was of one family.

Nesting of the Condor on the Slope of the Cuyamacas, San Diego Co, Cal.

PHOTOGRAPHING A NEST.

MARCH, 1900 found Prof. W. V. Dyche and I at Mesa Grande, making ready for an extended trip through the mountain regions of San Diego and Riverside counties in quest of the eggs of the larger species of birds inhabiting these regions. The professor had a pair of condors located in the Cuyamaca Mountains, in the Boulder Creek country, and had employed reliable parties to watch them.

Just a few days before we were to start on our intended trip, Prof. Dyche received word from the boys that the birds had an egg in the nest, and to come immediately. We accordingly started the next day, taking with us a kodak, provisions and 150 feet of rope for scaling cliffs. After a ride of 22 miles by way of Julian and the Eagle Peak road we arrived at the rancho about two o'clock in the afternoon. After a hasty lunch we saddled our horses and with rope and camera and accompanied by our guides, we traveled over five miles of the steepest, roughest and rockiest country in Southern California, arriving at the foot of the cliff where the nest was situated at about 3.30 p.m.

We found no use for the rope as the face of the cliff was on such an incline that we could climb up to the nest which we proceeded to do. Starting from the bed of Boulder Creek which flows 300 feet below the nest, we made the ascent in a very short time. The rocks about the nest were covered with a growth of poison oak and climbing plants, and on the ledge below the nest were feathers and splotches of excrement.

We saw no sign of the parent birds and in all probability they were frightened away by the boys' previous visit to the nest. The egg was on the bare, level soil in a small natural cave running about ten feet into the side of the cliff. The opening was about 18 inches wide and 26 inches high. There were quite a number of feathers and bones of small animals scattered about the interior of the cave.

NESTING CAVE OF THE CONDOR.

Photos by P. L. Gedney

THE EGG AS FOUND IN THE NEST.

The day was cloudy and I had to make a time exposure in order to successfully photograph the egg, which I did, taking two views of the egg in the nest and two views of the exterior of the cave. Upon developing the negatives I found the results exactly alike in both cases, and the two photographs are herewith presented. I wished very much to secure one more view showing the cliffs and surrounding landscape, but the rain coming on at this time prevented the attempt. The egg was then securely packed, and we decended the cliff, mounted our horses and returned to the rancho where we were hospitably entertained for the night. The follow-

ing day we returned to Mesa Grande where Prof. Dyche blew the egg and I brought it with me to San Francisco. It may now be seen in the collection of Mr. H. R. Taylor of Alameda.

P. L. GEDNEY.

San Francisco.

Notes on Some Unusual Sets of Eggs

The following are some unusual sets I have taken which may interest the readers of THE CONDOR:

1. RUSSET-BACKED THRUSH (*Hylocichla ustulata.*) June 11, 1895, *five* fresh eggs. Nest made almost entirely of redwood bark and placed among the out-growth of a redwood stump. Boulder Creek, Santa Cruz Co., Cal.

2. CASSIN'S VIREO (*Vireo solitarius cassini.*) June 6, 1896, *six* eggs, incubation advanced. Nest composed of leaves, grasses and stems, and placed in a low tree four feet up. Lexington, Santa Clara Co., Cal.

3. LONG-TAILED CHAT (*Icteria virens longicauda*). May 27, 1900, *five* eggs, fresh. Nest made of leaves and grasses and lined with fine grass. Agnews, Santa Clara Co., Cal. Collected by Chas. A. Love.

4. CALIFORNIA PARTRIDGE (*Lophortyx californicus*). May 23, 1900, two sets taken within 20 yards of each other, one containing 21 and the other 23 eggs, incubation begun. Nests in dry tules, made of same and but poorly concealed. San Francisco Co., Cal.

5. CALIFORNIA JAY (*Aphelocoma californica.*) May 1, 1900, *two* eggs, incubation advanced. Nest made of twigs and moss and lined with hair and grasses.

WESTERN LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus strigatus.*) June 21, 1898, *two* eggs, incubation begun. Nest of grasses and weeds in a small oak. Knight's Ferry, Cal.

MILTON S. RAY.

San Francisco, Cal.

Another Bluejay Incident.

In connection with the notes that appeared in the March-April and May-June numbers of the current volume of THE CONDOR concerning jays burying food I would like to mention a curious case of this sort that happened yesterday only a few yards from my creamery.

A Blue-fronted Jay, (*Cyanacitta s. frontalis*) was seen to fly to the ground from a small tree about twenty yards distant with a bay nut in his beak. After fussing around for a short time he chose a spot in the dry grass on a little hillside, either found a hole or made one, and stuck in the nut. After covering it over with a little loose earth he brought several lumps of dirt, one by one, from a radius of several feet, placed them on top of the nut and packed them down well. Satisfied with his work he flew back toward his tree. Before he even reached it, however, a California Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), which had been watching the proceedings from a neighboring bush, flew down, resurrected the nut and flew off with it in triumph. By rights there should have been a fight, but there was no indication of dissatisfaction on the part of the original owner of the prize who allowed the thief to carry it off unmolested.

The question naturally arises as to why the California Jay should have stolen the nut. There were plenty of them still on the bay trees and lots on the ground under them, all to be had for the gathering. If he liked nut sprouts, worms or wormy flavors he could have waited and taken the chance of digging it up before the depositor thought of it again, or he could have gathered a lot more and buried them himself.

As both kinds of jays eat these nuts fresh, getting at the kernel by hammering the shell with their bills as they hold the nut against a horizontal limb until it splits open, it appears curious that they should bury it at all. It seems as if the Blue-fronted Jay had buried it either to keep it moist for a while or as a matter of provision for the future, though these nuts lie on the ground for a long time in a good state of preservation, or in fact until they are eaten up by squirrels and birds, or buried by natural processes. It also seems as if the California Jay had stolen the nut either out of pure mischief or actual spite.

JOSEPH MAILLARD,

San Geronimo, Cal., 10-21, '00.

Chas. K. Reed, the well known dealer of Worcester, Mass., has issued a very neat and compact hand-book on the collecting of birds and eggs and the mounting of birds, mammals and fishes. The volume is a handy one and contains much useful information which will be appreciated by collectors. The hand-book may be had on application.