

in "North American Fauna No. 7." As is evident, probably no other one interior locality has already received so much attention from Naturalists, and yet much new and valuable data doubtless await the future explorer of this locality, still far from the influences of cultivation and the railroad.

The following is a list of the birds detected during my brief visit, July 19 to 26, 1904, within two miles up and down the valley from Fort Tejon:

<i>Lophortyx californicus vallicolus</i>	<i>Astragalinus psaltria hesperophilus</i>
<i>Zenaidura macroura</i>	<i>Astragalinus lawrencei</i>
<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	<i>Chondestes grammacus strigatus</i>
<i>Cathartes aura</i>	<i>Aimophila ruficeps</i>
<i>Accipiter cooperi</i>	<i>Melospiza cinerea heermanni</i>
<i>Buteo borealis calurus</i>	<i>Pipilo maculatus megalonyx</i>
<i>Falco sparverius phalæna</i>	<i>Pipilo fuscus crissalis</i>
<i>Strix pratincola</i>	<i>Zamelodia melanocephala capitalis</i>
<i>Megascops asio bendirei</i>	<i>Guiracia cærulea lazula</i>
<i>Bubo virginianus pacificus</i>	<i>Cyanospiza amœna</i>
<i>Dryobates villosus hyloscopus</i>	<i>Progne subis hesperia</i>
<i>Dryobates pubescens turati</i>	<i>Tachycineta thalassina lepida</i>
<i>Dryobates nuttalli</i>	<i>Vireo gilvus swainsoni</i>
<i>Melanerpes formicivorus bairdi</i>	<i>Vireo solitarius cassini</i>
<i>Colaptes cafer collaris</i>	<i>Vireo pusillus albatu</i>
<i>Phalænoptilus nuttalli californicus</i>	<i>Dendroica æstiva brewsteri</i>
<i>Calypte anna</i>	<i>Toxostoma redivivum pasadenense</i>
<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>	<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>
<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	<i>Catherpes mexicanus punctulatus</i>
<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	<i>Troglodytes aëdon parkmani</i>
<i>Contopus richardsoni</i>	<i>Certhia americana zelotes</i>
<i>Empidonax trailli</i>	<i>Sitta carolinensis aculeata</i>
<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>	<i>Bæolophus inornatus</i>
<i>Corvus corax sinuatus</i>	<i>Chamæa fasciata</i>
<i>Icterus bullocki</i>	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>
<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	<i>Poliophtila cærulea obscura</i>
<i>Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis</i>	<i>Sialia mexicana occidentalis</i>

Some Bird Notes from the Central Sierras

BY CHARLES R. KEYES

DURING the late spring and early summer of 1903 a small party, including the writer, tramped with pack animals from Sonora to Lake Tahoe, thus passing through the central heavily timbered portion of the Sierra Nevada mountains. We left Sonora on May 27, crossed the north fork of the Stanislaus river at Robinson's Ferry and thence made a leisurely trip by the old Big Trees—Carson Valley stage road along the north bank of this river, the route taking us through the Calaveras grove of sequoias, through Bear Valley and through the beautiful chain of mountain meadows called Charity, Faith, and Hope Valleys. From the latter we left the old time stage road, now frequented by few except passing sheep and cattle men, and, turning northward through Luther's Pass, soon descended into Lake Valley and finally concluded our itinerary, so far as

tramping was concerned, on July 5th at Tallac on the southern shore of Lake Tahoe. Including numerous side trips, such as those to South Calaveras Grove, to various lakes about Glen Alpine, and finally the ascent of Mt. Tallac, we tramped about two hundred miles, at no time meeting with hardships and at all times surrounded by a nature surpassingly beautiful in its combination and succession of forest and meadow and mountain.

Notes were made on the birds seen throughout the trip and the opportunities for such study proved to be far richer than had been expected. The alleged "scarcity of birds in the High Sierras" could not at no time be a subject of reasonable complaint. Probably birds were not so abundant as in the plains and foothills of the lower altitudes, but one was seldom indeed removed from the sight of fitting forms and almost never from the sound of bird voices. The loud "querk" of the plumed partridge, the joyous quavers of the ruby-crowned kinglet and the seriously dignified song of the white-crowned sparrow were constantly in one's ears during the days spent in the higher altitudes and the last named songster at least often continued his efforts until well into the night, when sleep had overcome one's powers to observe and note.

In a previous number of THE CONDOR Mr. Barlow contributed his very thorough observations on the birds of the Placerville-Lake Tahoe stage road, a region lying mostly along the course of the American River to the north of the territory covered by our party and joining the region of our observations at Lake Tahoe. So far as the mere occurrence of species is concerned lists of birds found along the route studied by Mr. Barlow and on the one taken by us would differ but little, the faunal conditions evidently being very similar. About all I can hope to add in the way of notes from this region therefore will concern those species which accident or unusual opportunity allowed me to observe with special success. I should say farther that in writing these notes I have kept in mind Mr. Belding's accounts of the same species in his very valuable "Land Birds of the Pacific District." Mr. Belding has covered at different times a considerable part of the very ground which it was my privilege to tread, my most interesting days with the birds being on what is apparently familiar and favorite ground to him, viz., Bear Valley in Alpine county. I should like to say parenthetically that Mr. Blood, who last year completed his fortieth and, as he said, last year in charge of the toll and ranch in this mountain meadow, always spoke with unusual enthusiasm of the days when Mr. Belding came to hunt and study in this favored spot. It caused one to regret the fact that to many of us a personal acquaintance with our esteemed honorary member has not been possible. In the following notes I shall venture a few observations on nine species of land birds only, namely, the plumed partridge, Wright flycatcher, white-crowned sparrow, Lincoln sparrow, thick-billed sparrow, tree swallow, phainopepla, pileolated warbler, and mountain chickadee.

The plumed partridge (*Oreortyx pictus plumiferus*) had already assumed nuptial cares apparently when we first reached its breeding range on June 1, a short distance below Avery at an altitude of 3000 feet. From here on to the end of the trip it was no uncommon sight to see a pair of these birds walking sedately along the road or across a forest opening, the male leading with plumes erect and the female walking close behind. As I afterward learned this was usually an indication of an incompletely set of eggs in the near vicinity. At Bear Valley elevation 7015 feet, three occupied nests were found and two nests of the preceding year. A sixth occupied nest was found on Mt. Tallac. Eyesight alone was depended on to reveal a nest after having decided upon the approximate location from hearing the whistle of the male or seeing the pair walking about as mentioned. The nests

were all on the ground and, while always more or less concealed, yet it seemed to me that the rich buff-colored eggs were rather conspicuous objects. A single egg was first discovered on June 12 in a battered old nest of 1902, or possibly even an earlier date. The egg was a dried up specimen of chalky appearance, which had lost its original color and lustre, having lain under many feet of snow for one winter at least. The nest still showed a slight concavity, being protected under the outer edge of a mass of deer brush (*Ceanothus velutinus*). On June 13 a nest full of egg-shells was found neatly tucked away along the northwest side of a small boulder and partly concealed by dwarf manzanita. The shells seemed to represent about eight eggs and still possessed their color and lustre to a remarkable degree. Evidently, however, these too had passed through a winter, for the snow had only recently disappeared from this locality and indeed still existed in isolated drifts of considerable magnitude. Acting on this clue I found two days later, June 15, a nest with seven eggs in a precisely similar situation and partly concealed by the same kind of dwarf manzanita sprays. It was composed of pine needles and was eight inches in diameter and three inches deep in the center. This nest was carefully observed during the remainder of our stay at Blood's, or until June 21. On the 17th eight eggs were in the nest and another was laid on the 19th, apparently during the early morning. At eleven o'clock a. m. on the 20th, the nest still contained nine eggs but before one o'clock of the same day a tenth had been added. The female was on the nest at 10 a. m. the following day but I approached her too closely and she left the nest without having laid another egg. Whether she would have done so I did not determine, not caring to collect the bird and this being the last day of our stay at Blood's. My fourth nest was also found on June 15, and like the other contained seven eggs. It was in rather an open situation under a Murray pine and five feet away from the trunk, was composed entirely of pine needles and measured nine inches in diameter and three inches in depth. Like the two last it was partially concealed by low sprigs of manzanita. Eight eggs were in the nest when visited the next day, the 16th, nine were found on the 18th, ten on the 20th and eleven on the 21st. These two cases then are not in agreement with Major Bendire's statement that "an egg is laid daily until the set is complete."^a The fifth nest was found on June 20 by tramping through deer brush near the place where a male had been heard calling for several days. It was the best concealed of any, being under quite a thick mass of ceanothus, though I hardly think I should have overlooked it, even though the female had not flushed with a great whirr of wings when I was three or four feet away from her. The nest was quite well constructed of coarse dry grass, a few small twigs, and many breast feathers from the bird. The measurements were the same as those of the last nest described and the eggs were twenty-two in number, laid in two layers, the lower of nineteen eggs with three on top in the center. The set was probably complete, as the bird was again flushed from the nest after an hour or two, though the eggs showed no entirely positive trace of incubation. The question naturally arises in case of a set of this size whether it might have been the joint product of two females. I could not decide this point and the eggs themselves did not make the matter clear. Both long ovate and short ovate forms were in the nest but there were also intermediates and the color tones showed but little variation. I might say in this connection that before I discovered this nest I was drawn away in the opposite direction for a considerable distance by a clucking sound which certainly came from a plumed quail. It was impossible to see the bird, however,

^a Bendire's Life Histories of N. A. Birds, Vol. I, p. 16.

from the thickness of the brush, and finally I interpreted it as the ruse of the male to decoy me from the nest and so began to hunt in the other direction. If it could be shown that the male bird never clucks then some further light might possibly be shed on the question of the origin of this nestful of eggs. I am uninformed on this point. The sixth nest was found July 2 many miles from Blood's on the slope of Mt. Tallac, close to where the trail sends off a branch to Susie Lake, the elevation being about 8000 feet. The nest was under a dwarf laurel bush, was six and a half inches in diameter by two and a half inches deep, composed of a few twigs, pine needles and laurel leaves, and contained nine eggs. The bird was not to be seen at this time but was sitting on her eggs the next day at noon, when I watched her for some time. A tenth egg had been added. From the foregoing it certainly appears, as Mr. Belding says, that the plumed quail does not desert her nest for slight cause. All of the occupied nests were visited and examined more than once and two of them at frequent intervals for a week without disturbing the owners' intentions in the least.

The dainty little Wright flycatcher (*Empidonax wrighti*) was observed only once when a nest, containing four fresh eggs on which the parent was sitting, was discovered in Bear Valley on June 20. This was placed in the forks of a small dead branch of a living ceanothus two feet above the ground. It measured three inches in diameter outwardly and the same in depth. The outer material was soft gray bark strips and the inner part was composed of fine brown bark fibers, hair, wool, and seven small gray feathers. The eggs were immaculate and pure white with but little gloss. A second nest of practically the same description and situated in the same manner, except that the branch was alive throughout, was found on this same day and probably belonged to the same species. The nest was finished but no eggs had yet been laid and the birds were not to be seen.

The white-crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia l. leucophrys*) was common in and about Bear Valley, but, on account of the bird's shyness and because of my lack of acquaintance at first with its song, I did not realize this until several days had been spent there. On June 13 a nest was discovered by accident and with considerable difficulty the proper identification made, the bird flushing before one was near the nest and darting away through weeds and brush in a very perplexing way. This nest was placed in a slight hollow on the ground in a patch of broad-leaved plants called locally "wild corn" (*Veratrum californicum*). These plants were very characteristic of the damper places about the edges of the valley and were much frequented by the white-crowned sparrows and the pileolated warblers. They had attained a height of about eighteen inches at this time and so made excellent retreats. Two other nests were found on June 15 and 17 situated in quite the same way, except that they were rather more on top of the ground than sunken into it. The one was in a patch of unidentified coarse-leaved herbage and the other in a thick mass of veratrum. One description will answer for all three nests. They were quite bulky, from six to eight inches in diameter outwardly and inwardly two and a half inches across and the same in depth. The materials used were weed-stems for the foundations and fine dry grasses with a few horse hairs for lining. Each nest contained four fresh eggs. The birds were shy in all cases and the nests could be located only by close search in such places as the experience in the first case had shown to be likely.

It may be worth while to record a nest of Lincoln sparrow (*Melospiza lincolni*) as neither Mr. Barlow nor Mr. Belding make a definite record for the central Sierras. A nest with three half-fledged young was found in a small and very wet meadow near Susie Lake, just off the Mt. Tallac trail, on July 2. It was placed in

a bunch of dead grass and composed of the same material and a few hairs. Both parents approached me closely while at the nest.

The disparity between the abundance of the thick-billed sparrow (*Passerella iliaca megarhyncha*) in the Big Trees region and the number of nests that one can note in a week's observation is very striking. One nest only was found, this being at Gardner, elevation 4800 feet on June 8. It was placed in a small cedar two feet above the ground and contained three eggs in which the incubation was almost completed. The nest materials used were stems, dry grass, and fine inner bark. The sitting bird was very tame and all but allowed me to touch her with my hand. The fact that the male kept close to the nest and sang lustily most of the time makes it all the more remarkable that the breeding habits of this species have been comparatively so little studied. We were compelled to leave Gardner before the eggs were hatched.

(To be concluded.)



MR. WILLIAM DUTCHER

We take pleasure in being able to publish the portrait of Mr. William Dutcher, chairman of the A. O. U. Committee on the Protection of North American Birds, and chairman of the National Committee of Audubon Societies. For a number of years Mr. Dutcher has been untiring and effective in his efforts to gain better protection for North American birds. His success, in the face of innumerable difficulties, is well known to all ornithologists and bird lovers. Mr. Dutcher's earlier work was especially concerned with the birds of Long Island, N. Y.

With this issue of THE CONDOR the series of portraits of American ornithologists will be discontinued. In the editorial column will be found an announcement of interest.