

a chance glance upward revealed a Turkey Vulture drifting slowly across the sky. It almost seemed that once again I was down in the valley prowling about in the willows and brush along the Gould Ditch; yet I knew of half a dozen nests of Sierra Juncos within a few hundred feet of the lake and only a few moments before had been examining several nests of Western Robins in some small evergreens near the shore.

While standing there in the warm sunshine listening to the characteristic "h'-wak-a-ree" of the blackbirds I was suddenly reminded that the San Joaquin Valley, with its vineyards and canals, was many miles away, for from a clump of small pines nearby burst the harsh scolding notes of a Blue-fronted Jay. A moment or two later the soft but rather melancholy call of a Plumed Quail floated down to me from a pine-clad hillside.

*Fresno, California.*

### THE MOURNING DOVE (*ZENAIIDURA CAROLINENSIS*) IN CAPTIVITY

By E. W. GIFFORD

ON February 15, 1908, I purchased two of these beautiful doves, said to be cock and hen respectively. The smaller of the two, which I took to be the hen, was without a tail when I received her, but soon began growing one. The tail grew very fast, a difference in length being distinguishable daily. The birds were confined to a small summer-house, about five feet in diameter, until about the middle of April. About March 11 they began making their mournful cooing notes.

On April 12 I placed these birds in an aviary with a ground area of four hundred square feet. They seemed quite delighted with the change, and immediately went to feeding with several Barbary Turtle Doves in the short grass. About a week later I saw the smaller of the two, which I had thought was a female, in the act of cooing. Then I awakened to the fact that I had two cock birds. Had I been more familiar with the species I should not have been deceived by the difference in size.

In May and June they cooed incessantly during the day, and often in the middle of the night, especially if it was moonlight. It was also along about this time that the two males were seen fighting in the evenings. Both were in beautiful fresh plumage.

On June 16 I purchased two more of these birds, both proving to be females. Inside of three or four days, one of them became very much attached to one of the cock birds, and it was amusing to see the unladylike manner in which she followed him about and shook her wings. Occasionally he would give chase, only stopping to coo when very close, and that very seldom. The two males would at this date pursue each other with great viciousness.

By June 24 the two females had mated with the two males. At this time one pair had a nest on top of a box placed in a peach tree; it consisted merely of a few sticks and straws. An egg was laid in it on June 23.

The other pair had a nest on a shingle nailed on the beam of a board fence on the west side of the aviary. The males did all the carrying of nesting material in both cases, the females usually sitting on or near the nest. When selecting the nesting site, the male would go to a likely place and squat down, raising the tail and lowering

the head. He would then give a very short coo, gently shaking the wings meanwhile. It seemed to amount to just one note of the many given in the usual call. The females seemed very gentle and loving to their mates. The two males, however, were very savage, carrying on a running fight with each other most of the time, altho sometimes standing their ground. In their blind jealousy they would at times attack the innocent Barbary Turtle Doves.

The pair which nested on top of the box in the peach tree were unfortunate, for on June 28 it was found that one egg had rolled off, and that the other was deserted. At that date it was found that they had started a nest in the lower part of the box which was covered over and had but one side open; no eggs had as yet been laid. Again the male carried all of the sticks and straws for the nest. In the morning the pair nesting on the shingle were found to have one egg; later in the day they had two.

On July 12, the pair nesting on the shingle hatcht a young one. By July 14 the second young bird had hatcht. On that date, however, the cock bird died. For a day or two before, I noticed that its excrement was green in color, while the bird stayed on the ground and appeared very inactive.

At that date, July 14, I did not know whether the eggs of my other pair had hatcht or not, as the parents sat very close, the female doing most of the incubating and the male relieving her for three or four hours in the middle of the day.

On the evening of July 15, I found one of the young of the pair nesting on the shingle dead. It was lying on the roof of a nearby shed, where it had evidently been carried by the mother, probably becoming attacht to her feathers.

On July 16 at least one egg belonging to the pair nesting in the box had hatcht, as I found the shell on the ground. On the 22nd I found a young bird dead in this nest; the other bird was in good condition and growing rapidly.

On the evening of July 25, when I approacht the nest on the shingle, the young bird flew away in alarm, striking the wire some twenty feet away. This bird spent either thirteen or eleven days in the nest. The following morning it left the nest without being disturbed and flew to the roof of the shed. On July 28 the young bird of the pair nesting in the box left the nest, having spent only twelve days in the nest.

On July 31 the hen having the nest on the shingle laid an egg, which I found broken the next day. She had been trying to steal the remaining cock bird from his mate. He seemed more attacht to her than to his mate.

On August 1 the female nesting in the tree laid an egg; this was just four days after her young one had flown. On August 2 the hen nesting on the shingle laid her second egg, which she deserted, however.

On August 14 the pair nesting in the box hatcht an egg. The other proved infertile. The young one developed in the usual time, twelve days. This seemed to close the breeding season; the male coed little if any after this date, and all of his love and fondness for the two females disappeared.

For a few days after the young left the nests the females were very zealous in protecting them, attacking each other and any harmless turtle dove which came too close.

It was interesting to see how angry the hen nesting in the box became when she found that the widow hen was trying to steal her mate. She gave the widow one or two beatings; this appeared to cure her mate of his infatuation, for he paid no more attention to the widow. They were almost human in their jealousies!

This species seems to be one which could be easily domesticated in this country, if a little trouble were taken with it.

*Alameda, California.*