

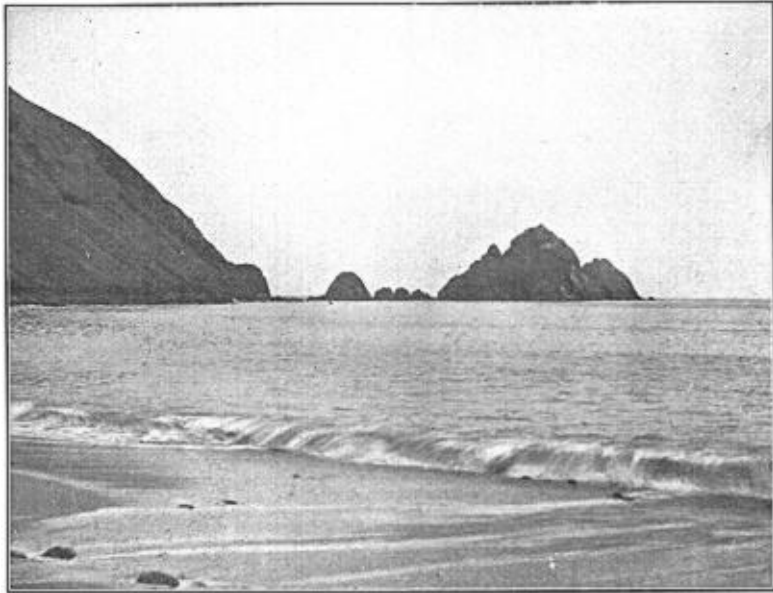
THE PASSING OF THE PEDRO ISLAND SEA-BIRD ROOKERY

By MILTON S. RAY

WITH TWO PHOTOS BY OLUF J. HEINEMANN

WHILE the number of sea-birds which formerly made their summer home on the rocky island which forms the extremity of Pedro Point in San Mateo County, can not be compared to the great Farallone Island rookeries, yet until recently various sea-birds nested here in quite large numbers, and many of the eggs of the California Murre displayed for sale in San Francisco markets were obtained from this source.

It was with a view of learning what birds and what number of birds were nesting on Pedro that we started to journey down the coast on the morning of July 12, 1908, in an open flat-car termed a passenger coach by the "Ocean Shore" man-



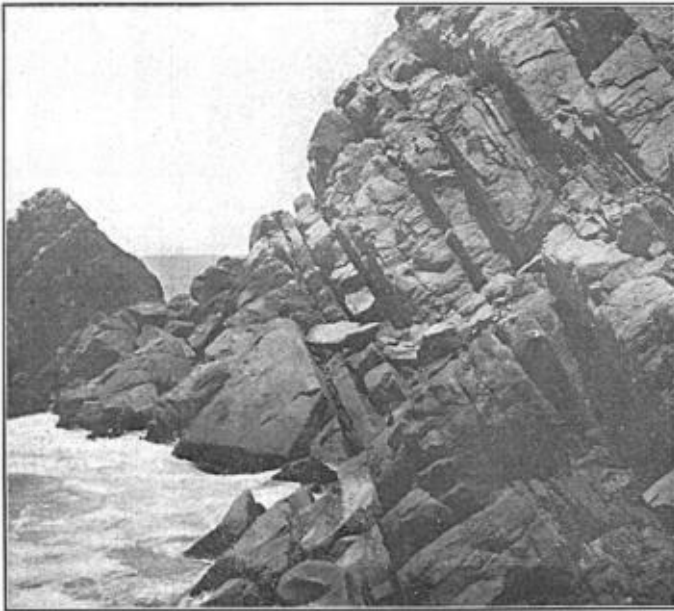
PEDRO ISLAND AS SEEN FROM THE MAINLAND

agement. Our party consisted of H. A. Snow, Oluf Heinemann, and the writer. On leaving the train we walked along the beach to where the point juts out from the mainland. Here we found a number of deep and rather broad sea-channels which separate Pedro Island from the mainland and precluded our reaching it. From the shore we observed a few sea-birds flying about the lofty and precipitous rocks.

Returning to town we engaged a crab-fisherman to take us out in his boat to the island. He informed us that in previous years he had easily collected as many as thirty dozen murre eggs on a trip, but of late the birds had become scarce owing to the continual blasting by the Ocean Shore Railroad Company in its construction work on the opposite mainland near the point. In fact he added that he had made a trip a few weeks before and had found but half a dozen eggs of the murre. After

hearing this we did not expect to find many birds on the island, but decided, however, to make the trip.

Near as the island is to the shore, it was necessary to row about a mile to reach it. The craft was rather small for four people and made slow progress against the waves of an open sea. Our boatman rowed to a spot which he claimed was the best on the island to land. As we neared the great mass of rock rising almost perpendicularly out of the sea it seemed to me that there was but little choice in the matter, for it meant a hard and dangerous climb wherever we disembarked. As I have stated, Mr. Heinemann was one of the party, so it will be understood that we had the usual collection of cameras, tripods and packing cases; these with a rope-ladder, provisions and other necessities made a considerable load. Landing, one at a time, on a wave-splashed rock, between one breaker and another, was exciting if not enjoyable. Then by way of variety came the climb of a narrow and steep



A PORTION OF PEDRO ISLAND; A FLOCK OF SEA-PIGEONS MAY BE DISCERNED ON THE ROCKS AT THE RIGHT MIDDLE

rocky passage to the top of the ridge. It took the combined effort of Oluf and myself to aid the heavy-weight member of our party, Snow, to the top. From here a descent was made to the southern side where traveling was easier. However, the worst was yet to come, for, after a short distance, a steep bluff walled our way which we were forced to ascend, as the cliffs water-wise were as straight as a brick wall.

At the foot of the bluff we lost a member of our party, for Snow found the climbing too difficult and so was left in charge of the commissary department while Oluf and I worked our way to the top. After reaching the summit and wending our way along the ridge we came to a long level ledge which was no doubt in the past the main rookery. Many deserted cormorant nests still remained and in the rocky furrows were scattered egg-shells of the murre. There were but few birds about, however, and these were not nesting. Oluf remained behind to photograph

a flock of sea-pigeons, while I continued along the rocky back-bone to the extreme western point, but without finding any occupied nests and encountering but few birds. The day of the Pedro Rookery was past! The birds had dwindled in numbers so they could be actually counted, and what a meager list the colony gave!

1. *Phalacrocorax pelagicus resplendens* (Baird Cormorant) 24
2. *Phalacrocorax penicillatus* (Brandt Cormorant) 24
3. *Uria troile californica* (California Murre) 20
4. *Pelecanus californicus* (California Brown Pelican) 14
5. *Cephus columba* (Pigeon Guillemot) 15
6. *Larus occidentalis* (Western Gull) 10
7. *Lunda cirrhata* (Tufted Puffin) 6
8. *Larus heermanni* (Heermann Gull) 6

While we were dwelling on this serious decrease in Pedro bird statistics, Snow at the foot of the bluff was, from all appearances, making serious inroads on the supply of eatables, and from a distance we could hear, between the roar of the battering waves, the cry of our angry boatman whose idea of two hours and ours materially differed. The reader will acknowledge, with this situation before us, it would have been unwise to extend our investigations further.

After "sliding" down the bluff and taking a hurried lunch, we joined our impatient boatman who told direful tales of what might have happened had we delayed our coming any longer. With the stiff breeze that had come up, he declared, it would have been impossible for him to take us off and we would have been left on the isle with our scanty supply of provisions. But even the boatman did not know how grave a matter this would have been; for he could scarce dream what lusty appetites were possessed by our commissariat and official photographer.

Ornithologically and oologically considered our trip was a failure, and photographically partly so. Newcomers to the isle will no doubt find fewer birds than were noted by our party, for now, with the coming of the railroad and the attendant population along its line, the number of feathered dwellers on these sea-rocks will be less than ever.

San Francisco, California.

AN ORNITHOLOGICAL TRIP TO LOS CORONADOS ISLANDS, MEXICO

By HOWARD W. WRIGHT

WITH THREE PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

ON June 20, 1908, with three friends, Mr. J. R. Maclintock, Mr. Frank H. Long and Henry Wetherby, I left San Pedro for Los Coronados Islands, Mexico. It was the longest trip I had ever taken in my sail boat, the "Sea Bird", which is about thirty feet over all.

The trip down was uneventful save for a sixteen-hour calm, during which the swells were rolling mountain high, and which caused a falling off of appetite on the part of my friends, to say nothing of myself. Finally a brisk, stern wind sprang up, and we started at a rapid pace for San Diego, making before dark about eighty miles.

All spirits rose with the rising of the wind and on Sunday night, the 21st, we