

inches of the ground. I am informed of one nest being placed at a height of eighteen inches.

An accurate estimate of the number of birds in this colony is of course impossible; but judging from the number of floaters and old nests, I should say that in 1908, thirty pairs of birds resided there at that time. I am at present unable to describe any of the notes of the California Black Rail. All the birds observed were flying, and of course voiceless, like other members of the rail family, while on the wing. The stomach contents of the birds shot were indeterminable by me and I lack knowledge of their food habits.

To Mr. Park Harris, a former resident of San Diego, is due the credit of discovering the first eggs of the California Black Rail. Mr. Frank Stephens killed a California Black Rail on May 28, 1908, and recorded the fact in March-April, 1909, CONDOR. This is the earliest known summer record. All previous records are of birds taken out of breeding season. Most of these birds have been recorded from points five hundred miles north of National City.

Thru the courtesy of the State Board of Fish Commissioners, I was granted permission to take six specimens of the California Black Rail and also two nests and sets of eggs.

San Diego, California.

NEST OF THE CALIFORNIA BI-COLORED BLACKBIRD

By JOSEPH MAILLIARD

WITH ONE PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

PRESENTED herewith is a photograph of a nest of the California Bi-colored Blackbird (*Agelaius gubernator californicus* Nelson) taken at San Gerónimo, Marin County, California, May 25, 1908. A few of these birds breed here every year in some meadows that are somewhat swampy in the spring and early summer. This particular nest was situated on the bank of a very small streamlet which meandered slowly thru the meadow, and was built in a bunch of sedge a few inches above the water. It was probably a second laying at such a late date as above. Whether some of these birds are late breeders and others early, or whether some of them raise a second brood in the season is problematical, and I have no opinion on the subject. The fact is that it is no unusual thing to see young birds flying about and yet find nests with fresh eggs in the same meadow in the last week of May.

Speaking of this species reminds me how difficult it is at times to maintain what seems to be the proper point of view pertaining to many matters. For instance I personally endeavored to assist in the recent—and successful—effort to prevent the state legislature from passing a bill removing the protection of the law from the meadowlark, and possibly other birds, on the plea that these birds were very destructive to certain crops. My point of view was that the meadowlark was a bird whose usefulness was great in comparison to the amount of damage of which he is known to be sometimes guilty, and that, with the blackbird mentioned above, he is the farmer's friend.

Now it happened just as our fight in the legislature was over that I had some fifty acres of oats planted in some moist bottom-land on our ranch in Stanislaus County, California. The oats came along beautifully—and so did the blackbirds.

The latter remained to breed, but the oats vanished. A cleaner sweep could hardly be imagined. As fast as an oat sprout would reach the surface there was a black-bird—some with such beautiful crimson epaulettes—waiting for it, until the last one was gone. And yet this was early in March when there was apparently a great abundance of food for even these rapacious appetites. In this work crows and meadowlarks assisted to the best of their ability, but they were few and the black-birds were many.

Now what has happened to my point of view? Well, it is a little bent, and somewhat wobbly, but probably will straighten out again when I see these same birds carrying thousands of fat green worms and other destructive but luscious insects away from the alfalfa fields to feed their clamorous young. Still I *did* hate to see a hundred tons or so (to be) of fine oat hay most brazenly stolen in this way—and by a supposed friend!!

San Francisco, California.



NEST OF THE BI-COLORED BLACKBIRD: SAN GERONIMO, CALIFORNIA

THE LITTLE BROWN CRANE IN CALIFORNIA

By J. GRINNELL

IN the year 1903 I saw, mounted, in the taxidermy shop of Roth Reynolds in Los Angeles, a specimen of the Little Brown (*Grus canadensis*). I was told that it had been secured in the vicinity; but I failed to follow up the matter at the time.

I wrote Mr. Reynolds lately in regard to the bird I saw in his shop, and under date of December 27, 1908, he writes me as follows: "I sold the Little Brown