

E. R. Warren is occupied with an all-summer collecting trip thru central Colorado. He reports that his "bird list is growing rapidly."

At the April Northern Division meeting the eggs of the White-throated Swift described in the May number of this magazine were exhibited, and proved a novelty to most of those present. This is probably one of the rarest of Californian bird's eggs. Altho the birds themselves are in many places abundant, the difficulty of access to their nests has usually prevented even a glimpse at the eggs. The set in question, obtained by W. C. Hanna, has been generously added by him to the collection of the State Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

Owing to ill health, Mr. Frank Stephens has been compelled to withdraw from field-work, and is again at his home in San Diego. His work up to the end of June was on the edge of the Colorado Desert and in the Salton Sea district.

We wish to call special attention to Mrs. Meyers' article in this issue on the nesting habits of the Rufous-crowned Sparrow. This is an admirable example of a type of work which it is possible to undertake without recourse to a collection or library. Biographical accounts of this kind are still lacking in the literature of many of even our commoner birds, such as the Lazuli Bunting, Black Phoebe, Western Kingbird, etc.

The University of California Summer Session is more largely attended this year than for several years previously. In the course in the Birds, Mammals, and Reptiles of California, as outlined in the news columns of our last issue, there are twenty-two students. The study of birds in the field is exciting particular interest; altho it is not a part of the prescribed work outside time is freely appropriated for frequent class trips.

There is an increasing need for a convenient manual of colors, something after the plan of Ridgway's "Nomenclature of Colors," but more extended. The latter work is long out of print; our own copy, for example, has been put to such good use that it is becoming sadly dilapidated; and there is a fear that some of the colors have faded. Of course the demand for such a work is limited, and its publication could be expected only from some public institution able to stand the heavy cost. Here is an opportunity for some one properly situated to do systematic naturalists an invaluable service.

Mr. R. H. Beck who for the past year has been engaged in securing series of water birds in the San Joaquin Valley for the California Academy of Sciences, is now contemplating a visit to the Hawaiian Islands for the purpose of collecting pelagic birds for the same institution.

CORRESPONDENCE

Editor THE CONDOR;

There are two matters about which I wish to call the attention of those interested in bird protection. The first is, that the opening of the quail season is far too early in the high Sierras. Previous to September 1st, in the vicinity of Lake Tahoe, I took many tramps thru the mountains studying the birds and their habits. Just a day or so before September 1st I noted dozens of pairs of Mountain Quail with small young which had *just emerged from the egg*. No doubt a few also were still sitting on eggs. Yet *two days later the season opened*, and sportsmen from Tallac and other resorts, and also many hunters from the ranches about, were hunting in this very region, viz, Star Lake Canyon, the elevation of which is but little more than that of Lake Valley, which is 6220 feet.

Grouse, while they breed earlier than the quail in this region, are not always fully grown by September 1st either, as I observed juveniles at Mountain Meadows, elevation about 7500 feet, on August 24th. I feel that what is true concerning this region applies to the entire length of the Sierras, and as these birds are principally found only in the higher ranges I think for their protection, and for the ultimate benefit of the sportsman as well, the season for Mountain Quail should begin October 1st, and for Grouse, September 15th. I have always been puzzled to know why the season for these birds opens so much earlier than that of the Valley Quail which breeds considerably earlier than they do.

My experience has led me to believe that dogs on the Farallone Islands do more injury to the bird colonies there than any other agency. As other visitors to the islands have reached the same conclusion it seems that something should be done to have a law framed prohibiting any one with dogs landing on the island and prohibiting the keeping of any dogs or cats by those residing on the island. As they are all government employes it seems to me it would not be a very delicate matter. It may even be that at the present time no dogs are kept there, but most people going to the islands have found one or more. During my visit the dog kept by Keeper Kineen did untold damage to the colonies of almost every

species of bird breeding on the island, wrecking hundreds of nests.

MILTON S. RAY,
San Francisco, California.

April 29, 1909

[The above letter was sent to the State Game Commission, and the following is the substance of the reply.—ED.]

You will observe that in the new fish and game laws, there is a prohibition on the killing of Mountain quail and grouse up to Sept. 1st, 1911. The Mountain Quail have not recovered from the awful demands made upon them by the market hunters, when the quail were allowed to be sold in the market. Two years of close season should show a great improvement, but it is my opinion that the sheep have had much to do with destroying the nests of both the quail and grouse. My observation regarding Mountain Quail is that in the northern part of the state, especially in Siskiyou and Shasta Counties, they are well able to take care of themselves by September 1st; in fact, the people of that region tried to have the law open on August 15th. The Mountain Quail has a wider range than is generally supposed; I have seen them in Sonoma County, also in Mendocino at an elevation not to exceed 1500 feet. One reason why there is a difference in the seasons has been the influence brought about by the people living in the Sierras who claimed that unless they were allowed to shoot quail by the 1st of September, they got none at all, as their migrations commence shortly after; but these problems will work themselves out. Our people are becoming more accustomed to the restrictions and there is a better sentiment all over the state. In fact, the improvement has been most marked in the last four years and thru the Legislature we can accomplish more now than we could five years ago.

With regard to the Farallone Islands, that is territory over which we have no jurisdiction. It is a Federal Reservation, just the same as the Presidio. The Treasury Department at Washington exercises control over the Islands. Having been a witness to the damage done by dogs, a letter from you to the Treasury Department at Washington calling attention to the matter, or to the National Audubon Society at New York, might result in some order being issued that would tend to check this abuse.

Yours respectfully,

CHAS. A. VOGELSONG
Chief Deputy Fish and Game Commission,

Thayer Museum,
Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Editor THE CONDOR:—

My collector, Wilmot W. Brown, Jr., is still in the Cape region of Lower California. His letters are so interesting, I thought the readers of the CONDOR might enjoy them, therefore I

decided to publish them. The collecting of so many sets of such a rare bird as Craveri Murrellet and the description of their nesting habits is indeed interesting.

JOHN E. THAYER.

(Letter no. 1): *La Paz, Lower California, Mexico, January 20, 1909*: From La Paz I went by sea to Buena Vista and from there by mules to Eureka which is on the coast and lies seven miles south from Buena Vista. At Eureka I made a small collection while waiting for the mules from Miraflores to arrive. The most interesting species were a series of the Belding Maryland Yellowthroat, an Elf Owl and a Burrowing Owl. On the way to Miraflores I made a short stay at Santiago and collected a fine series of the Belding Maryland Yellowthroat in the laguna there. Also took several Marsh Wrens and a Carolina Rail. At Miraflores I spent over two weeks collecting while waiting for mules. I finally secured mules for the expedition to El Sauz a Sierra, about two and one-half days' trip with pack mules from Miraflores. El Sauz being the objective point of the expedition and an excellent region for the rare Laguna Sparrow, *Aimophila ruficeps sororia*, we pitched camp near a small mountain stream. We found it very cold up there, our tent many nights being stiff and heavy with ice. To get water for cooking purposes we had to break the ice. The elevation above the sea is about 4,000 feet. We camped there for about 16 days and secured a large series of Laguna Sparrows. It was sometimes difficult work in collecting them as they were found in very steep places. The species is not common there, as six specimens a day was the best I could do. Also collected three specimens of the very rare Xantus Screech Owl, and other interesting species of the Sierras. All are in excellent plumage. From El Sauz we returned to Miraflores where a short stay was made and two more of the Xantus Screech Owls were collected and several specimens of the Elf Owl also.

From Miraflores we took the pack mules to Santiago and camped at the Laguna within fifteen feet of the tules, and shot Belding Maryland Yellowthroats out of the back door of the tent. Also secured two more rails and some Marsh Wrens. But the most interesting were two fine full-plumaged *Megascops xantusi*. My cook getting the malaria or fever we struck camp and returned to Eureka with pack mules and from there to Buena Vista; and two days later by sea to La Paz in the schooner "Laurita." The collection is packed in 5 cases and numbers over three hundred and seventy-five specimens. It contains every species of owl recorded from Lower California—that is from the Cape Region as covered by Mr. Brewster's book. Of the Screech Owl there