

many of the feathers still adhered to the dried skin and skeleton. This I labeled and preserved. I have found numerous partially devoured remains of auklets, cormorants, etc., in the gorges a mile or more inland. These were victims of the small grayish foxes which are abundant upon this island.

**Pisobia minutilla.** Least Sandpiper. During December, 1908, I observed flocks of this species near Northwest Harbor; specimens shot.

**Breunetes mauri.** Western Sandpiper. Noted with foregoing species; specimens shot.

**Calidris leucophaea.** Sanderling. Common winter visitant.

**Catoptrophorus semipalmatus inornatus.** Western Willet. Seen at Northwest Harbor and Smuggler's Cove; December, 1908.

**Oxyechus vociferus.** Killdeer. Several seen with flock of Sanderlings and Western and Least Sandpipers; one shot.

**Accipiter velox.** Sharp-shinned Hawk. Several seen in the wooded gorges near Mosquito Harbor. One shot but lost in the brush, December, 1908.

**Asio wilsonianus.** Long-eared Owl. One secured, December, 1908. Three seen in the wooded canyons.

**Euphagus carolinus.** Rusty Blackbird. While making up skins in my tent door, Mosquito Harbor, December, 1908, I was greatly surprised to see a blackbird busily engaged in catching insects in the kelp along the beach. My surprise was doubled when, upon picking up the specimen, I discovered it to be a Rusty Blackbird, in fine plumage.

**Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus.** Western Savannah Sparrow. Several seen, December, 1908.

**Spizella passerina arizonae.** Western Chipping Sparrow. Two specimens collected, December, 1908.

**Spizella atrogularis.** Black-chinned Sparrow. One female secured in December, 1908.

**Passerella iliaca unalaschensis.** Shumagin Fox Sparrow. One female specimen secured November 30, 1908. Determined to be this subspecies by Grinnell, but not typical.

**Pipilo maculatus oregonus.** Oregon Towhee. One adult female secured December 4, 1908. This is the southernmost record of this subspecies.

**Dendroica coronata.** Myrtle Warbler. Fairly common winter visitant.

**Dendroica townsendi.** Townsend Warbler. One specimen secured. First observed flycatching in the kelp along the beach, Mosquito Harbor, December, 1908.

**Sialia mexicana occidentalis.** Western Bluebird. While collecting near Howland's Ranch, on the mesa above the Isthmus I was astonished to see a bluebird rise from a clump of bushes. I secured the specimen which was an adult male in beautiful plumage.

*Long Beach, California.*

## SOME SIERRAN NESTS OF THE BREWER BLACKBIRD

By MILTON S. RAY

WITH TWO PHOTOS

IN CERTAIN localities about Lake Tahoe, the Brewer Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) is a very common species. I found it in the greatest numbers at the southern end of the lake, and south, at various points in the lowlands, thru Lake Valley. Most were nesting in groves of small tamarack pines and

almost invariably bordering streams, swamps or boggy meadows. This year (1909), my fifth season in the region, they were as abundant as ever, and more so than usual about Bijou. Here there were half a dozen colonies along the meadows and lake shore, with from about ten to thirty pairs in a colony. Altho the altitude is high here (6220 feet) the birds nest quite early, and while the majority begin to lay about the middle of May, yet, as is usual where birds nest in large numbers, some nests were found with fresh eggs as late as early June.



NEST OF BREWER BLACKBIRD ON PILE AT LAKE TAHOE

On my arrival at Bijou, on May 25, I noted numerous nests about camp, most of which held eggs in an advanced stage of incubation. During the next few weeks I examined a great many nests, nearly all being placed in small tamarack pines, often mere saplings, from four to fifteen feet up, and but poorly concealed. One description will practically answer for all of these: A rather bulky structure of rootlets, grasses and weeds with some mud, and lined with horsehair. Five was the usual complement of eggs, tho often four or six, and sometimes only three. The large number of eggs I examined showed great variation in size, shape and

coloring, which I have described at some length in the article termed "A Defense of Oology," to be published in a future CONDOR.

A strange departure from the usual tree-nests were those placed on the ground. These were in swampy meadow-land, which, when the birds start to nest in May, affords practically no concealment as the grass is very short. That many of those birds nesting on the ground come to an untimely end I feel, is quite certain, for I found about a dozen of these terrestrial nests deserted; and nearby a scattered bunch of the dark feathers of *Euphagus* testified to the sudden end of one of the owners. Along the beach front between Bijou and Lakeside this condition was particularly noticeable; for five nests were found in this state. Various mammals, especially the smaller species, are extremely common in this region; and the sitting birds, on

a poorly-concealed nest and being of conspicuous plumage, no doubt fall an easy prey.

Some years ago I mentioned in *The Auk* (vol. xx, no. 2) finding several nests of the Brewer Blackbird at Rowlands built in piles out in the lake, one being above where the water was twenty feet deep. This year my attention was called to one in a similar situation at Bijou by Mr. Wilton Young. The pile in which the nest was placed formed a part of the main wharf. A portion of the side had been torn away leaving sufficient space for the bird to construct a nest. As it was some distance from the top of the pile and faced lakeward it was unnoticed by those who were continually passing thru the day within a foot or so of it.

Desiring to photograph the nest and eggs *in situ* when Mr.



HEINEMANN'S METHOD OF DEEP-WATER PHOTOGRAPHY

Oluf Heinemann arrived, I collected the set of four eggs, on June seventh, they being then well along in incubation. The nest was a frail structure (conditions did not allow, nor was it necessary for it to be otherwise) of rootlets, grasses, weed stems, a few pine needles, and lined with horse-hair. It was placed thirteen inches above the water which was three feet deep. On June 19, after more pressing work had been done, Heinemann and I assembled with the various photographic paraphernalia on the beach at a time when the light came at a proper angle and proceeded to take the picture. Of course the usual tripod legs were far too short for this class of work; but these were easily lengthened by some long poles we found lying handy. It was likewise necessary for Heinemann to don a bathing suit in order to take the picture which is shown herewith. The smaller view by the writer shows Heinemann and his method of deep water photography.

*San Francisco, California.*