

and hit the stump a resounding thwack—but there was no answer. No Chickadee responded to rude and repeated summonses. Violet-green Swallows there were, however, darting about the top of the stub, and altho it was early in the season for them, it seemed worth while to investigate. The stump was some twelve feet high by one and one-half feet in diameter and destitute of bark,—as slick as grease and impossible to climb outright. So sticks of various lengths were cut and leaned against it. By and by the Chickadee's fortitude failed her and she emerged, chattering disgustedly.

This nest was unusual. An old knot-hole about eight feet up had been re-workt by the birds, and gave access to a large cavity half filled with rotten punk. This cavity the Chickadees had undertaken to fill up to the level of the entrance with mosses, cow-hair, and other soft substances. The nest proper was, therefore, deeply cupt in the center of a level expanse of this material some seven inches in diameter, and the six fresh eggs which it contained had quite the handsomest frame in the annals of Chickadee art.

The Violet-green Swallows had nothing to offer beyond a feather-lined cavity. Here was luck enough, however, for one stub. When the Chickadee's eggs were stowed away in the bursting can, and the homeward course begun, it was high noon—the meridian of a red letter day. Science? Not a bit of it! Luck! Sheer luck, all of it!

But to show that fortune has no favorits in the bird business, I must epitomize another day. On the 21st of May I returned to this same range filled with the highest anticipations, and prepared to camp, if need be, for a week. Weather conditions were perfect and myself apparently in the highest spirits. Work began at 4 a. m. and the quest was pursued unremittingly till 5 p. m. Hermit Warblers abounded and Black-throated Grays challenged from every other tree, with lesser breeds in proportion—yet never an egg did I find, and I went home disgusted at the end of a black day. Psychological conditions? Perhaps. "Luck", certainly. Brothers, we are gamblers. *Rouge et noir!*

A SUMMER TRIP TO THE NORTHERN SANTA BARBARA ISLANDS

By G. WILLETT

ON the evening of June 4, 1910, a party of Cooper Club members, composed of V. W. Owen, Antonin Jay, J. S. Appleton and the writer, left San Pedro on the 32-foot launch "Niedra", Capt. E. R. Hall, for a two weeks' trip to the four northern islands of the Santa Barbara group.

Our expectations were to canvass the four islands thoroly from an ornithological standpoint; but owing to inclement weather our operations were mostly confined to the islands of Anacapa and San Miguel. We were able to land on Santa Rosa for a couple of hours only, and we past by Santa Cruz entirely.

We arrived at Anacapa Island at 8:00 a. m., June 5. Black Petrels and Dark-bodied Shearwaters were common at sea and near the arch rock at the extreme east end of the island two pairs of Xantus Murrelets (*Brachyramphus hypoleucus*) were seen on the water. We were unable to find any nests of this bird; but I believe that it may occasionally breed on some of the islands of this group.

Tufted Puffins, Baird and Farallon Cormorants were breeding on the cliffs and

Pigeon Guillemots were common in the caves. Several Wandering Tattlers were also noted feeding among the rocks. Cassin Auklets were common at night and were undoubtedly breeding somewhere on the island, but we did not locate the nesting colony. At least three pairs of Black Oystercatchers were seen, but we failed to find the eggs.

On the afternoon of June 5 we made the difficult ascent to the summit of the east end of Anacapa Island. Here we found many nests of the Western Gull containing eggs and young; also a colony containing about 500 nests of the California Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus californicus*). These were placed on the ground among some low bushes and contained eggs from fresh to advanced in incubation, and young birds from newly hatched to nearly full grown. Only 4 nests contained sets of 4 eggs. The others mostly contained 3, and occasionally but 2. We secured as many sets of eggs as we desired and brought back two nests entire. This, I believe, is the first definitely recorded instance of the breeding of this Pelican north of Mexico, altho an article was published (Museum V, March 1899, pp. 71-72) by C. F. Holder, on a colony of Brown Pelicans nesting on Anacapa, but exact data was not given.

V. W. Owen and Howard Robertson visited this same locality June 4, 5 and 6, 1899, and the birds were not breeding there at that time; so it would seem that they do not always use the same breeding locations each year. The commonest land birds on Anacapa were the Island Horned Lark, the Rock Wren and the House Finch. We noted a number of White-throated Swifts and found several nests of the Bald Eagle and Duck Hawk containing nearly full grown young. Owen noted a male Allen Hummer on the top of the island among some low bushes. This was the only one seen.

We left Anacapa at 3:00 a. m. June 7, and crossed the channel to Smuggler's Harbor, Santa Cruz Island, where we found the launch "Flier" from Long Beach. Among the party on board were O. W. and Arthur Howard, H. J. Lelande and H. N. Lowe of the Cooper Club. After arranging to meet them later at San Miguel Island we followed along the southerly shore of Santa Cruz, crossed the channel to Santa Rosa Island and dropped anchor at Johnson's Lee where we lay during a heavy northwest blow until the morning of June 9. In the afternoon we landed on Santa Rosa for a couple of hours but took no specimens. We noted Bell and Chipping Sparrows common in the brush, also Horned Larks, Rock Wrens and Spurred Towhees.

On the morning of the 9th, the wind having died down some, we left at 4 o'clock for San Miguel Island. We arrived at Cuyler's harbor at 7:30 a. m. and met Mr. L. A. Ward who has charge of the Island. He proved to be a very hospitable gentleman and allowed us to camp in a warehouse on the beach. This added greatly to our bodily comfort as the heavy wind which blew during our entire stay would have made camping out decidedly unpleasant. We are also indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Ward for several bountiful dinners we enjoyed at the ranch-house as well as for many other courtesies extended us.

After we had landed our supplies and our launch had left for the mainland, Owen and myself took our skiff and rowed to Prince Island, a small island about a half mile from the main island. Here we were joined by the Howard brothers, Lelande and Lowe, their boat having arrived and anchored off Prince Island. They were leaving in the evening on their return trip, but we persuaded O. W. Howard to join our party during the remainder of our stay. We found Prince Island to be literally alive with breeding sea birds, and later obtained many interesting specimens, as well as notes and photos.

After looking over some of the breeding colonies Owen and myself returned to camp leaving Howard on Prince Island with his blankets and expecting to return for him in the morning. In the morning, however, the northwester was howling again and we were unable to reach him for two days and then only with the aid of some Japanese abalone fishermen and their launch. Howard's story of how he subsisted for two days on mussels and gull's eggs, washt down with cactus juice, and how the Auklets persisted in getting in bed with him, is too harrowing to be told by an outside party, and I shall leave it for him to narrate in later columns of THE CONDOR.

We remained on San Miguel 14 days, being unable to leave as soon as we had planned on account of rough weather. During this time we were rarely able to use our skiff and most of our time was spent on the main island. Here there were no sea-birds breeding excepting the Baird Cormorant and Pigeon Guillemot whose nests were placed in locations inaccessible to the foxes which were numerous. To the numbers of the foxes we attributed the absence of other breeding sea-birds which were so abundant on outlying rocks and islets.

The island of San Miguel is about 8 miles long by three or four miles wide and is mostly composed of rocks and sand hills, altho there is considerable grass on the more elevated portions. This, however, is being gradually covered up by sand which is drifting slowly but surely across the island, carried by the prevailing northwesterly winds. There are several varieties of shrubs on San Miguel but no trees worthy of the name. The most common shrub is the loco weed which is the favorit resort of the Song Sparrows. The commonest land birds on the island are the Island Horned Lark (*Otocoris a. insularis*), the Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*), the San Clemente Song Sparrow (*Melospiza m. clementae*) and the San Clemente House Finch (*Carpodacus m. clementis*). The Horned Larks had evidently raised one brood of young and were beginning to nest a second time. The same was probably true of the Song Sparrows, as full-grown young were noted, and other birds taken were evidently about to breed. Bald Eagles, Duck Hawks and Ravens were common but no Ospreys were seen. We saw the wings of a female Sparrow Hawk that Mr. Ward had shot, and he informed us that there were a few Burrowing Owls on the island, altho we observed none. He also told us that there had been three Brewer Blackbirds around his house and barn-yard during the preceding spring.

The following are the water-birds observed during our stay:

Tufted Puffin (*Lunda cirrhata*). Breeding commonly on Prince Island. On June 15, most of the nests contained young or eggs advanced in incubation.

Cassin Auklet (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*.) On Prince Island, wherever there was soil enough to burrow in, the auklets were nesting, and some nests were found in niches in the rocks. I also found a few nests on a small island off the west end. On June 15 most of the nests contained young of various ages; but a few fresh eggs were found.

Pigeon Guillemot (*Cephus columba*). Breeding commonly in caves and niches in cliffs all around the islands. Many nests were found containing young of various ages, and fresh eggs were secured as late as June 23.

California Murre (*Uria t. californica*). About 100 pairs of these birds were breeding on Prince Island. On June 15, most of the eggs were advanced in incubation and a few newly hatcht young were noted. In most cases the eggs were deposited on the floors of damp caves, and in some instances had been rolled in the mud until the color of the shell was entirely hidden. This Murre colony was previously visited by J. S. Appleton in 1906. He took fresh and slightly-incubated

eggs on June 6 of that year. I believe this is the first record of a breeding colony of these birds south of the Farallon Islands.

Western Gull (*Larus occidentalis*). Breeding commonly on all out-lying rocks and islets. Fresh eggs were found as late as June 18.

Heermann Gull (*Larus heermanni*). Common, feeding along the beaches.

Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*). Several immature birds seen and one taken at the west end of the island June 17. Altho this bird has been reported breeding on San Miguel, I am satisfied that none were nesting there this year. We went over the island thoroly and found no evidence of their breeding and only observed the birds in the one instance as noted above.

Farallon Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax a. albociliatus*). There was quite a large colony of these birds breeding on Prince Island. Many of the nests were placed in the cactus patches on the eastern side of the island. On June 15 we found nearly full-grown young, and eggs in various stages of incubation.

Brandt Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*). The most abundant of the cormorants on Prince Island, breeding in several large rookeries. Nests contained from fresh eggs to nearly grown young on June 15. Owing to the ravages of the gulls some of these birds must lay several sets of eggs before they succede in raising young. In one colony of about a hundred pairs which we past on the morning of June 15, all of the nests contained eggs. On our return in the afternoon there were not a dozen eggs in the whole colony. The cormorants had been frightened from the nests by our presence and the gulls had done the rest. I collected one set of 6 eggs of this species.

Baird Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax resplendens*). Breeding commonly on the cliffs everywhere. Some young were noted, but most of the nests contained eggs. Fresh eggs were found as late as June 19.

California Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus californicus*). Five nests containing young were found on Prince Island, June 15.

White-winged Scoter (*Oidemia deglandi*); Surf Scoter (*Oidemia perspicillata*). Immature birds of both these scoters were common around all the islands visited. They are plentiful along our southern California coast thruout the entire summer.

Western Willet (*Catoptrophorus s. inornatus*). Flock of 10 or 12 birds seen at the west end of the island June 17.

Wandering Tattler (*Heteractitis incanus*). One or two seen daily during our entire stay.

Black Turnstone (*Arenaria melanocephala*). Male taken June 21.

Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*). Breeding commonly on detach rocks and islets. Apparently nests nearly a month later in this locality than it does on the San Luis Obispo coast. (See Willett, Condor XI, Nov. 1909, 186-187.) The earliest nesting record I have from San Miguel is that of young about two weeks old taken June 23. Five sets of eggs were taken as follows: Set of 2, incubation about one week, taken by Owen, June 9. Set of 2, fresh, taken by Howard, June 10. Set of 3, fresh, by Willett, June 17; and 3 slightly incubated, and two fresh, taken by Appleton and Willett, June 18.

The following birds were observed at sea:

Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*). Feeding commonly at sea on June 24 about 18 miles out from the southern Ventura County coast. These birds were probably from a colony which J. S. Appleton has noted breeding near Hueneme.

Pink-footed Shearwater (*Puffinus creatopus*). First noted off Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands June 7. By June 24 it had increast in numbers until it was quite plentiful.

Dark-bodied Shearwater (*Puffinus griseus*). Abundant at sea during our entire trip.

Black Petrel (*Oceanodroma melania*). Common out at sea. None of these birds were seen within a mile or two of land at any time and, altho we made particular search for evidence of their breeding, we found none.

We left San Miguel on the evening of June 23, and arrived in San Pedro the afternoon of the 24th, well satisfied with the results of our trip, but glad to be out of the everlasting wind.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Larus canus: a Correction.—Shortly after my record of the capture of a young Mew Gull (*L. canus*) appeared in THE CONDOR (vol. VIII, p. 75) I received two gulls from North Carolina in immature plumage, one of which was evidently the Ring-billed (*L. delawarensis*) and the other intermediate between this and my Pacific Beach bird. This made me strongly suspect that both these were also *L. delawarensis*, and later I was able to compare these skins and other Ring-billed Gulls with a series of European specimens of *L. canus* in the collection of Dr. Jonathan Dwight, Jr., with the following result: *L. canus* has a more slender bill and shorter wing and tail than *L. delawarensis*; but the male *L. canus* is the same size as the female of *L. delawarensis*, tho the bill is slightly more slender. This slight difference in size is the only character separating the young of the two species in first winter plumage. My bird should therefore stand as *L. delawarensis*, and to this species, I suspect, most California records of *L. canus* belong.—LOUIS B. BISHOP.

A Southern California Spring Record for the Common Tern.—May 24, 1910, I took two specimens of the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) from a flock of 12 or 15 that were fishing near the outlet of the Los Angeles outfall sewer at Hyperion Beach, Los Angeles County.

The birds taken were adult male and female and were in almost full summer plumage. So far as I know, there are only two previous records for this species in southern California and they are both in the fall. One of these records was by H. W. Marsden at Pacific Beach, San Diego County, in September, 1904; and the other by C. B. Linton at Alamitos Bay, Los Angeles County, in September, 1907. These instances have both been previously recorded in THE CONDOR.—G. WILLETT.

Cowbird again Noted in Los Angeles County.—On July 1, 1910, with George Willett and Antonin and Alphonse Jay, I was down in the lowland willows, and we found three nests of the California Cuckoo (*Coccyzus a. occidentalis*)—one with young less than a week old, one nest with four eggs, and one with three eggs. While passing along the road we observed a bird which I am morally sure was a female Cowbird (*Molothrus a. obscurus?*) as it was considerably less in size than a female Brewer Blackbird, and of the umber brown color throat, of the eastern female cowbird. While in the willows, Antonin Jay discovered a nest of the Traill Flycatcher, with two eggs of its own and one of the cowbird; and while I was watching the cuckoo with her brood of young, a male yellowthroat came hopping along with a young cowbird in close tow, coming within ten feet of where I sat. This youngster was fully fledged, but still bobtailed, and was about twice the size of the yellowthroat; the yellowthroat would frequently run up to him and put something into his bill. The little fellow was, as nearly as I could make out, quite streaked.—J. EUGENE LAW.

An Additional Song Sparrow for California.—A California-taken song sparrow recently submitted to me for determination proves to be *Melospiza melodia caurina* Ridgway. It is identical in every respect with numerous skins of *M. m. caurina* in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology collection, from several localities in southeastern Alaska. I have never seen anything like it before from California. The specimen is a female, no. 34, collection of C. Irvin Clay, and was obtained at Eureka, Humboldt County, California, February 20, 1910.

Mr. C. I. Clay, who personally secured this rare bird, writes me that this same individual was first seen on January 17, and was noted on five subsequent occasions, always in exactly the same locality, up to February 20 when it was shot. The bird staid among drift-wood on the ocean beach. It was shy, and would run along in the shelter of logs, peeking over occasionally,