

And dark surf-echoing cave; the cormorants,
 Jet fishermen and gatherers of mosses gay,
 Who on the terraced rock their cities of weed
 Would build; web-footed pigeons of the sea
 That whispering, cooed along the spray-tossed shores;
 The snowy gulls with mouse-gray backs and black-
 Tipped wings, that plundered all their feathered kin;
 The queer-beaked puffins with long flowing curls
 That in the rock recesses lived; and with
 The night, from sea, and from their burrows came
 The auklet-thousands with weird cries; and from
 The crannied rocks the perfumed petrel,
 Daintiest traveller of the sea, lone welcomer of storms.

But all this noisy crew gave nought to the isles
 Of song. Yet, wandering with the winds
 From granite gorge or sea-opposing cliff
 Rare melody would come: the rock-wren's song;
 That oft the islanders would pause to hear,
 So wild and free and crystal clear it was!
 So strangely sweet, so ever new! And they
 Had found where paths by myriad pebbles paved
 To hidden bowers led; quaint tiny caves
 Wherein a floor was made of tide-worn stones
 And bones of furred and finned and feathered tribes,
 Long-bleached by sea and sun and inlaid bright
 With bits of abalone pearl, while scattered lay
 A world of treasure! No jackdaw's cache
 Ere rivaled the wealth of these Salpinctian homes.

NESTING HABITS OF THE WESTERN FLYCATCHER

By HARRIET WILLIAMS MYERS

WITH ONE PHOTO

ON June 17, 1910, I made a trip to Camp Rincon, in the San Gabriel Canyon, for a week's bird study. From Los Angeles we went by trolley to Azusa, and from there 14 miles by stage through the San Gabriel Canyon to the camp, which is very near the San Gabriel River and has an elevation of 2000 feet. One of the pretty trips from this camp was to a place called Fern Canyon. It extended about one half mile into the mountains and was so narrow in many places that it was little more than a trail beside a small stream. The banks rose high above our heads and were overgrown with shrubs and trees. Alders predominated, but there were also rock maples, oaks, sycamores and bays.

On June 21, at almost the end of the canyon, in an alder tree that grew close beside the water, I discovered a pair of Western Flycatchers (*Empidonax difficilis*) feeding their young. The nest was on the southeast side of the tree in a crotch made by a dead stub a foot long. There were no leaves near it, so our view was

unobstructed. Though this crotch was about twenty feet from the foot of the tree, the bank rising steeply from the stream passed not far from the nesting site. On this sloping bank my companion and myself were able to rest and watch every move of the birds.

The nest was darker than the tree trunk but matched the shadow in the crotch. It was made entirely of fine plant fibers. The location of the nest reminded me of one of the Western Gnatcatcher which I once watched which was built on the side of a sycamore tree in much the same way, the chief difference being that in the latter case the supports were new leafy shoots.

It was about 8:40 when we sat down to watch these little flycatchers. At that time both birds fed, one having a moth in its bill which was fed to several young. After feeding, the female sat on a near-by limb and guarded. The male fed four times in six minutes, resting on the edge of the nest one-half minute after the last



Fig. 33. NEST OF THE WESTERN FLYCATCHER

feeding. As the bird fed we could just see tiny bills above the nest. There seemed to be three of them.

For the next eight minutes the female fed, making three trips and resting on the edge of the nest a short time. Then the male fed three times, then for thirteen minutes both birds fed in all seven times, then they seemed to divide the labor again, the female feeding for a time, then the male doing all the feeding. Perhaps I am wrong in this conclusion, but in the three hours and forty minutes that we watched them, I came to the conclusion that it was their way to take turn about in the feeding. Sometimes the watching bird would be seen perched in a tree not far away; at other times it was out of sight. During the three hours and forty minutes the young were fed sixty-three times, the female feeding thirty-three times to the male's thirty, the shortest interval being one minute, the longest ten and one-half minutes.

At 9:30 the sun was shining on the nest when the female came to feed, and we could see long necks, dark fuzzy heads and broad yellow bills. After feeding the mother slipped onto the nest, resting lightly above two of the birds, the third one showing on our side. Presently the mother raised higher up and partly spread her wings. For three minutes she thus shielded the nestlings, when the male came to feed and she flew away. The male did not stay this time, but a few minutes later when he came to feed, he rested on the edge of the nest and finally slipped onto it, where he stayed ten and one-half minutes. In my mind there is little doubt but that the male helps brood the eggs, for never have I seen a bird that did not share the brooding take the nest as this one did.

The common call of this pair of birds, one that I heard on the upward trip and all about our camp, was a "pe-wit" or "seé-rip". This was given by the female quite frequently before and after feeding. The male used it in the same way but not so frequently. Only once did I hear any other note and then it was only a little varied.

The food brought seemed to be large winged insects to a great extent. Sometimes they were so large as to make several feedings. The female often foraged quite near the nest in a damp place under the bank. Both birds sat about on limbs not far from us and seemed not to mind our presence.

I made only one other trip to the nest and then I took my camera. The nest was so far away and the light so uncertain that not very satisfactory results were obtained. However, the camera shows the location of the nest. For the rest one must use the imagination.

MY AVIAN VISITORS: NOTES FROM SOUTH DAKOTA

By H. TULLSEN

The bird's point of view differs scarcely at all from our own in the essentials of life: Protection from enemies, the preservation of the family, a sheltered home, congenial environment, abundant food, and pure water—these natural rights, the birds, like man, are ever seeking.—NELTJE BLANCHAN.

THE conditions of existence to which animals are normally exposed are not so tranquil and unexact that such creatures are rendered unwilling to take occasional advantage of opportunities to try other and different environments. This we sometimes see illustrated in the fact that birds, in order to obtain food in greater abundance, shelter from cold, or security against the attacks of their natural foes, at times will temporarily or permanently forsake their wild haunts and seek the environs of the habitations of men. Of course it is to be admitted that our feathered friends frequently visit our dooryards and gardens for mere variety's sake, or in obedience to the promptings of curiosity, or, perchance, owing to a spirit of daring; but the fact remains that necessity and want, or at least a hope of *sooner* finding the means of appeasing hunger than under ordinary circumstances, are oftener the agents that move such callers to come.

In southwestern South Dakota, on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation, I had ample opportunity to observe the behavior of farmyard and dooryard bird-visitors of both the main categories named above, viz., seekers of food and shelter, on the