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ANOTHER FORTNIGHT ON THE FARALLONES

By WILLIAM LEON DAWSON

WITH SEVEN PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR



TO BE SURE it was the writer's *first* fortnight, so that the word "another" must be understood as recalling the visits of other adventurers instead of former personal experience. The Farallones are classical ground, and their ornithological resources have been so frequently and ably discussed in the pages of THE CONDOR and elsewhere, that one hesitates to add his mite to the imposing array of published notes. This fact also must excuse the writer for assuming in his readers a general knowledge of the location, topography and history of the Farallones, as well as of the chief characteristics of its im-

mortal double quintette of breeding birds. But precisely because such a general interest has been aroused in this, the most populous breeding resort of the nearer Pacific Coast, a report of current conditions there may not be amiss.

Through the courtesy of the management of the California Academy of Sciences, which had permission to secure material for a magnificent "habitat group", the writer spent the fortnight, May 20 to June 3 inclusive, studying and photographing the birds of the Farallones.

The trip out was made in a "tug", properly written t_{ug} and $\rightarrow u_{og}$ or t_{ug} (the best-named, known as the *descensus ad inferno*, being the most excruciating, both in fact and in retrospect). Neptune demanded toll, and in default of payment gave his hapless victim a sound thrashing, after the rude fashion observed by the Skua

and others. A salute of seventeen hundred Murres was fired upon our arrival (only the east battery participating, however); and we were introduced to the fourteen Farallonians, from Mr. Rosendale, the able head keeper, to baby "Snoozer" Cobb, the idol of the thirteen grown ups. But the birds! They are the real proprietors. The pungent odor of guano smites the nostrils at six cable-lengths remove; while ashore it is fairly stifling to the novice. From pinnacle and arch and ledge comes the faint uproar of the Murres, always crowding, bowing, craning, gabbling; "sea pigeons" hiss and "sea parrots" flit by in silent platoons; while over all rises the discordant scream of the sea gull, the irrepressible, the irreconcilable, the insatiable Western Gull.

Humans sit only by sufferance on the edge of this avian volcano, while everywhere, by day or night, birds shift and seethe and gyrate in multitudinous kaleidoscopic succession. Birds—*Birds*—*BIRDS*. It is a sight to be remembered, and no enthusiasm of utterance on the part of visitors can quite spoil it for you when your turn comes.

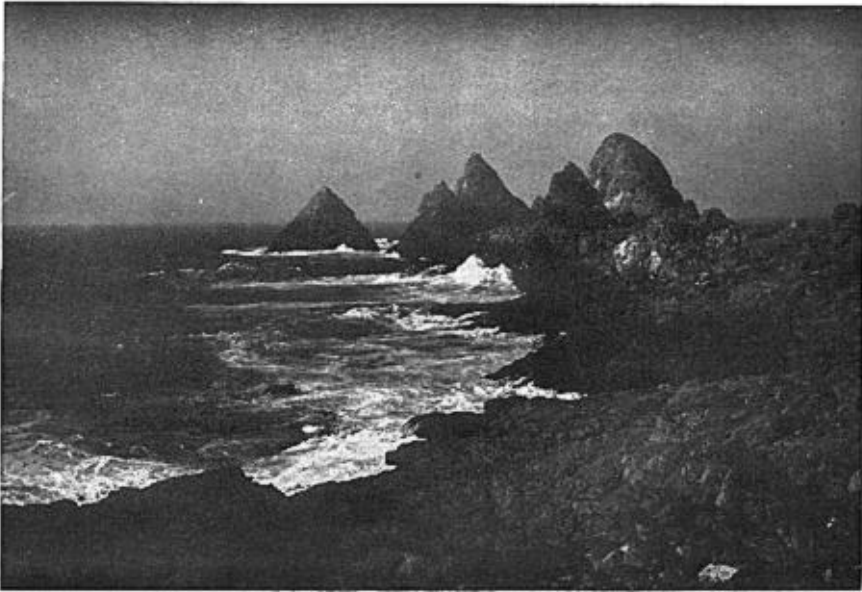


Fig. 49. IN ANGRY MOOD
LOOKING NORTHEAST TOWARD SUGARLOAF

The weather was charming the first day or so. Not a breath of air stirred, and the sun was burning bright,—insomuch that a mere gross of photographic plates looked insignificant beside the boundless opportunity. But on the third day the northwest wind tuned up. It blew with steadily increasing pressure until photography was not to be thought of, and out-of-door study of any sort became a test of endurance. The mercury registered 48° at night and rose to 52° daytimes. After eight days the north wind fell and we had dull weather from the southwest. This brought the migrants, a motley and a woe-begone company. There is no cover on the island save a bit of a grove of Monterey cypress near the siren, and a hedge about a tiny garden in the keeper's yard. Yet, misguided and bewildered, the frail creatures came, day after day, Alaskan migrants, wanderers from the mainland, and exiles from the far East. The occurrence of unusual eastern forms has been noted on these islands before. Indeed, at the present rate it would not be surprising if

practically every species of the eastern *Mniotiltidae* should report sooner or later at this inhospitable rock. We are not, of course, to suppose that it possesses unusual attractions for them. It is only that the slight percentage of alien blood always present in our coastwise migrations is here more readily, almost inevitably, detected.

As to the relative abundance of the staple forms the writer is ill-prepared to record conclusions. The Murres are said to be less abundant than in the days of the eggers. If this be so, it is because of the domination of the Western Gull—this and the ravages of the crude-oil plague. The region just outside of the Golden Gate is especially cursed by this unlawful practice, the cleaning out of the water (*and oil waste*) ballast of the "tankers" just previous to entering the harbor. That this is an active factor in bird destruction is attested by the abundance of oil-soaked carcasses which line the sparse beaches of the southeast Farallon. Murres are the chief sufferers, but Grebes, Loons, Scoters, and Pigeon Guillemots are frequent victims, and the destruction goes relentlessly on in winter as well as summer.

The statement sometimes made that Murres outnumber all other species combined upon the island is certainly ill considered. Cassin Auklets probably outnumber them two or three to one. The Petrels are a close second to the Auklets, and the Murres may come in third. Other resident species are represented in fair proportions,—all, that is, save the Farallon Cormorants. This colony has suffered from too much attention, human as well as Larine, and its numbers are slowly declining. But it is a very difficult task for humans to restore the "balance" of Nature. The wrinkled old dame is under no contract to maintain equality among the species, and *laissez faire* is perhaps the best motto for us. We can be virtuous (or at least moderate) ourselves, but we cannot settle disputes among Nature's children.

Below follows an irregularly annotated list of all the species observed on the southeast Farallon from May 20 to June 3, 1911.

1. **Gavia immer.** Loon. One adult seen in Fisherman's Bay within twenty feet of shore, June 2nd.

2. **Lunda cirrhata.** Tufted Puffin. Present throughout our stay and breeding to the number of several thousand. Although eggs, and these somewhat advanced in incubation, were to be found at the outset, there was a notable increase in numbers of these birds during the earlier days of our visit, and this movement did not culminate till about the 28th of May. Breeding is conducted chiefly on the West End and on the higher portions of Tower Hill. The birds have little opportunity for digging in earth, and little occasion for providing fresh burrows, since crannies and crevices of every sort abound. Many of these retreats have been worked in the softer strata of the rocks themselves, and bear evidence of occupation measured by cycles rather than by generations. Many eggs or sitting birds are visible from the surface, and some of the nesting sites are nothing more than the innermost recesses of niches and caves occupied by Murres.

3. **Ptychoramphus aleuticus.** Cassin Auklet. The Cassin Auklets are *everywhere*. Burrows predominate, but there is not a cleft, nook, crack, cranny, fissure, aperture, retreat, niche, cave, receptacle, or hidey-hole from the water's edge to the summit of the light-tower which is not likely to harbor this ubiquitous bird. The interstices of the stone walls contain them to the number of thousands. Every cavity not definitely occupied by puffin, petrel, or rabbit is tenanted by an Auklet; and in many cases quarters are shared. If one's imagination is not sufficiently stimulated by regular occurrences, it will be jogged by appearances in un-

expected places,—an old nest of Rock Wren or Pigeon Guillemot, an inner recess of a Murre cave, an abandoned spur of a Puffin burrow, an overturned wheelbarrow or neglected board lying on the ground, driftwood on the beach—anything affording the slightest prospect of protection or cover. A pile of coal, sacked up and awaiting transfer from landing to siren, was found to be full of them. Since this was the rule from center to circumference of this magic isle, we conclude that the Cassin Auklet is the commonest bird on the Farallones, and estimates of population anywhere short of one or two hundred thousand do not take account of the facts.

The Cassin Auklet seems incapable of controlling the force of its flight, and the wonder is that the birds are not every one of them dashed to pieces in a single night. In this respect they remind one of nothing else so much as beetles or moths, which come hurtling into the region of candle-light, crash against the candle-stick, and without an instant's pause begin an animated search afoot. This crash-and-crawl method seems not exceptional but characteristic in the Auklet. It was especially noticeable in the paved area just outside our workroom door. Crash! announced the arrival of another food-laden messenger from the unknown deeps. The impact of collision with the building invariably stunned the bird so that it fell to the ground, but it immediately began a frantic search, and, as likely as not, before you could lay hands on it, disappeared in a crack under the doorstep. "Right here! Right here!" from a certain spot under the flooring proclaimed the home-coming, and so enthusiastic would be the reception accorded the dinner-laden parent that for a time all human conversation was suspended.

Fresh eggs were the rule throughout our stay, but this was only the average, and every phase of departure was noted up to chicks half-grown. Not enough birds *without* eggs were discovered to establish the fact that the birds occupy their burrows for some days previous to deposition; but such I suspect to be the fact, as is the case with other monotoxic species.

4. *Cepphus columba*. Pigeon Guillemot. Present in small numbers from the first, but attaining a maximum of about two hundred June 1st. The gentle "sea pigeon" nests in crevices anywhere from about twenty feet above tide up to the summit of Tower Hill. Its favorite nesting range, however, is an immense rock-slide on the east slopes of Tower Hill. Quite contrary to any previous experience with these birds (in Washington), I found all the nests *carefully lined*, usually with rock flakes, sometimes with pebbles or bits of rusty iron.

5. *Uria troille californica*. California Murre. Because of its fabled abundance and its history of unexampled persecution at the hands of the "egggers", the liveliest curiosity possessed my mind regarding the present status and behavior of this species. In both matters I was destined to be disappointed. For some reason this Murre has not profited by full protection as might have been expected. It has neither increased in numbers nor gained in confidence. The fault lies, I think, chiefly with the gulls, which have profited enormously under near immunity from human attack. To be sure, the human is oftenest the occasion, but seldom the cause, of the wrong-doing. Our presence was hailed with glad acclaim by the gulls, who, though somewhat fearful for their own treasures, are always eager for an excuse to plunder "the ledges". In fact, the Larine outcry always seemed to be nine-tenths make-believe, being intended to alarm the galleries instead of voicing a personal anxiety. Obedient to the tradition, the Murres begin to shift and edge away when the gulls assure them that yonder object picking its way carefully over the rocks is dangerous. It looks harmless, but who knows? A gull swoops near to the ledge and shrieks, "Fly for your lives, you fools!" The timorous obey

promptly; the rest crowd to the edges. Fear becomes panic, and panic rout; while the gulls swarm down to feast on the abandoned eggs.

It is possible that conditions would improve were the island absolutely uninhabited. The "West End" is preserved from human invasion with a fair degree of rigor; but ten men marooned on government service require some little breathing space and cannot always wait on the affairs of foolish Murres. The tradition holds, and will till the end of time—or until such time as the Government decides which it will protect, Murres or Gulls.

There was a steady increase in the number of Murres hauling out upon the ledges up to May 30, when the movement ceased. The Murres enjoy a wide and practically general distribution throughout the group, but the larger colonies are on

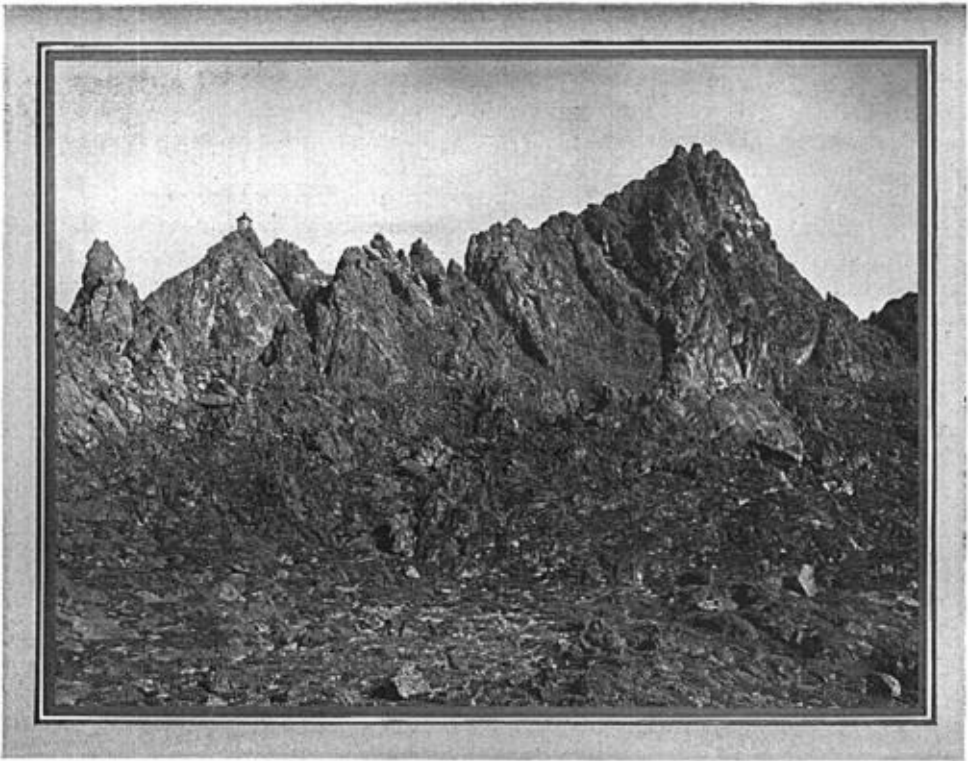


Fig. 50. A MOUNTAIN RANGE IN MINIATURE
VIEW ON SOUTHEAST FARALLON LOOKING SOUTH

the off-shore rocks and outermost promontories. Thus, Seal Rock, or "Saddle-back", as it is called locally, lying southwest from the keepers' houses, was black with them above the range of the lions. In like manner, Sugar Loaf and its associated rocks on the northeast presented most favorable conditions. A flat-topped rock at the extreme west end and the great arch hard by, perhaps came next in point of numbers, but the slopes and ledges on the north side of Maintop harbor thousands, and Indian Head became so popular latterly that we did not go near it. The "great Murre cave", likewise, at the extreme eastern end of the island, we did not dare visit latterly, although it is quite certain that it does not nearly measure up to its ancient standards in point of population.

A reliable estimate is difficult to make, but I doubt if over 20,000 Murres now haul out on the southeast Farallon and its outliers.

While reviewing a ledge one day in company with Mr. J. Rowley, I noticed a bird which apparently had its back to us while all the others were facing. Closer examination showed that it too was facing us. Its underparts were the same color that a Murre's back should be, sooty black. A lucky shot secured it, and it proved to be a male bird with breeding organs in active condition, a melanistic specimen without a trace of white in its plumage.

6. *Larus occidentalis*. Western Gull. These birds afforded the dominant note of life on the West End, the fashionable residence quarter of the Farallones. They nested anywhere from beach to pinnacle, and a careful examination of near a thousand nests discovered a singular uniformity of type in coloring of the eggs. This is evidently a closely inbred colony, free for ages from admixture or disturbing influences. I have seen a four times greater variation in a small colony of not forty pairs on a rock off the coast of Washington, debatable ground between *occidentalis* and *glaucescens*. While most nests contained three eggs, three clutches of four were found, the eggs being in each instance unquestionably the product of a single bird.

In several instances I detected cannibalism, if such a harsh term can be applied to a habit of sampling eggs of the same species. In each case the offender appeared to have leisure for the enjoyment of the unlawful feast, but it is an open question whether they were cases of piracy or worse. Certainly the gulls are very jealous of each other, and the shifting readjustment which accompanies the progress of the bird-man is always attended with many sharp passages-at-arms among the gulls. Conscience plays a proper part and the jealous owner always wins.

Possibly three thousand pairs nested this season.

7. *Larus heermanni*. Heermann Gull. Only one individual twice seen. The second time he was found in company with Western Gulls, a member of a Murre-marauding company.

8. *Oceanodroma kaedingi*. Kaeding Petrel. Our tents were finally pitched under the lee of Tower Hill on the south side, and within hailing distance of the Government Wireless Station. Near us were several half-ruined stone walls, the relics of occupation by the eggers, or possibly by their predecessors, the Russian sea-otter hunters. These walls resounded nightly to the incessant cries of Petrels as did every other wall on the island. On the evening of May 30, Leon Garland one of the wireless operators, secured a white-rumped petrel in his tent, whither it had been attracted by the light. On the morning of the 3rd of June, Mr. Garland brought in another Kaeding Petrel, which he had secured in one of these old stone walls near his tent, and he declared that the bird had been found sitting on an egg, although the latter was broken. Mr. Rowley joined forces with him and spent the best part of the day tearing down the walls of this and neighboring enclosures. Three more specimens were found along with considerable numbers of *homochroa*, which occupied the same area; and two eggs of each species, the first of the season, rewarded the search. Although precisely similar conditions obtain elsewhere, no other Kaeding Petrels were encountered on the Farallones.

9. *Oceanodroma homochroa*. Coues Petrel. Either this species has notably increased of late, or else earlier visitors were inclined to underestimate its numbers. We found them well distributed throughout the main island. Not only are all the stone walls alive with them, but they occupy the minor rock-slides along with the Cassin Auklet, and they even burrow in the level ground in front of the keepers' houses. In investigating the drift area on Franconia beach, we found almost

as many Petrels as Auklets skulking under logs and planks. In point of abundance they are easily third, possibly second on the island.

It is evident that these Petrels have a lengthy season of courtship during which they spend their nights ashore, chiefly in their burrows, and return to the sea daytimes. This is followed by a "honeymoon" period of some duration, presumably a week or more, in which both birds remain ashore all the time. As soon as the egg is laid incubation begins, and the other bird retires to sea to forage. Precisely what the division of labor is from this point on as between male and female remains to be determined, but it is certain that the male is often found alone upon the egg.

The former name, "Ashy" Petrel, is very misleading. Its use suggests a type of coloration similar to that of the Fork-tailed (*O. furcata*), whereas the general

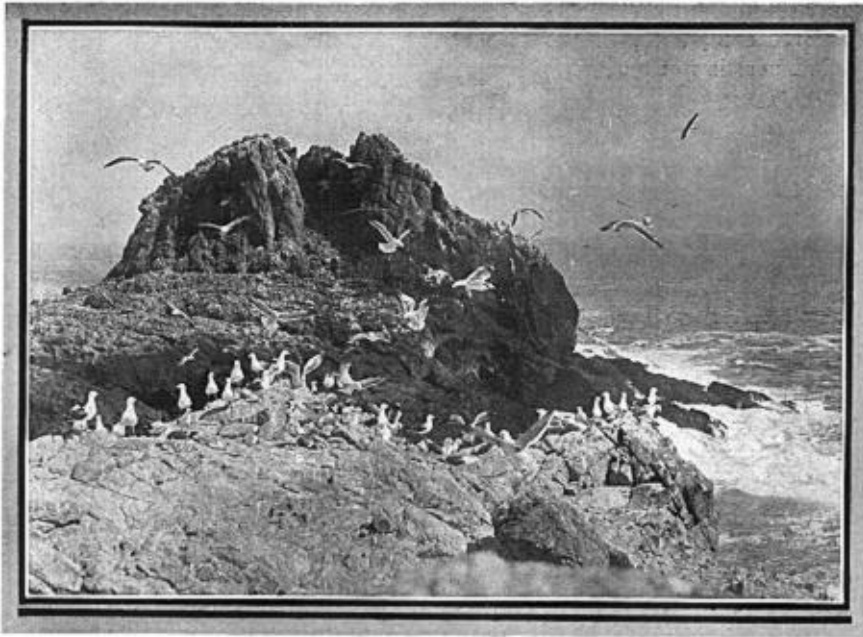


Fig. 51. THE BANQUET TABLE
WESTERN GULLS ROBBING A MURRE LEDGE
INDIAN HEAD IN THE BACKGROUND

cast of color is only a little less sooty than that of *kaedingi* or *leucorhoa*. It does incline to "plumbeous", but is much nearer black than "ashy". Several friends appealed to, agree with me that it is time for a correction, and the name of the original describer, Coues, is respectfully recommended.

10. **Phalacrocorax auritus albociliatus**. Farallon Cormorant. The colony on Maintop, the only one remaining in the Farallones, is now reduced to about thirty-five pairs, and of this number only fifteen were succeeding in raising families this year. The story of the steady persecution to which the confiding members of this historic colony have been subjected would not make a pretty one in print. The human pressure has been removed (nearly, not altogether) latterly; but the gulls are crowding it to certain extinction. The Shags are standing by their guns, and their bravery makes one long to do something on their behalf. By cautious

advances I was able to make friends with two of the most devoted mothers, and I could pause unquestioned within two feet of either.

Owing chiefly to depredations, nesting, at the time of our visit, May 21st, exhibited every stage from fresh eggs or empty nests to those containing young several days old. Our own judicious conduct disappointed the gulls, who stood about expectantly, awaiting their turn. No general exodus occurred at any time, but it was easy to note losses due to Larine vigilance during our absences. Only one bird, which we called "the bride", retained the earlier nuptial plumes. She was exceedingly wary, and her single egg having been abstracted by gulls, she and her mate deserted the colony outright.

In striking contrast with their kindred, the White-crested Cormorants (*P. a. cincinatus*) of the upper coasts, which invariably use sticks, these Farallon Shags employ only weeds and grass in nest construction. The chief ingredient is a coarse, yellow-flowered composite, known locally as Farallon Weed, and the resulting crater-shaped nest is not materially different from that of a Brandt Cormorant.

11. **Phalacrocorax penicillatus.** Brandt Cormorant. Fortunately for themselves these shags are exceedingly wary. It was only by stealth that the Academy staff could secure the necessary specimens for their group work, and a gun-shot always meant suspension of nest-building operations for a day or two thereafter. A few pairs occupied the old site on the northwestern slopes of Maintop, and a single egg was seen, May 21st; but the succeeding ten days witnessed a notable increase in their numbers. By June 1st they were all fairly at it, some 600 of them, and bound to succeed if not further molested.

This colony evidently occupied, last season, the extreme western end of the island, in the vicinity of the "great arch", as a number of wind-dried squab carcasses attested. Brandt Cormorants have no such strong local attachment as birds of the *P. auritus* group, and are quite ready to shift camp for prudential, or it may be for sanitary reasons.

12. **Phalacrocorax pelagicus resplendens.** Baird Cormorant. These wiry little Shags were fairly well distributed along sufficient declivities throughout the West End. Nest-building was in progress at the time of our arrival, but no eggs were seen during our stay.

13. **Phalaropus fulicarius.** Red Phalarope. A page from my note-book under date of May 25th may be of interest:

"Oh, bring me a new dictionary! At least a dozen fresh-minted adjectives I require, caressives, diminutives, and felicitatives. Four Arctic emigrants, ticketed for waters in and about Peary's Pole, have adopted me for their god; and there is nothing they will not do for me, save keep outside the minimum focal length (about 2½ feet) of my camera. Three Red Phalaropes, all females, I take it; although none of them is in highest plumage, and one Northern, also a female just under "high", are pasturing at my feet in a brackish pool some twenty feet long, ten wide, and two deep. The waters of the pool teem with a minute reddish crustacean (?), shaped like an ant, less than a thirty-second of an inch in length, and incredibly nimble. The insects progress by leaps, and are visible only at the moment of arrival. Yet these birds gobble them up one at a time with unerring accuracy, and with a rapidity which is nothing short of marvelous. The Reds work habitually at the rate of five dabs per second, i. e. 300 a minute; while the Northern, with a longer beak and a much daintier motion, works only half as fast. The birds are fast livers and they void the cloaca at intervals of two or three minutes, roughly guessed. The excreta are chiefly of a vivid rose-red color with

an attendant portion of pure white—the same in color, by the way, as those cast by the Murres along the east wall of Shubrick point.

“As I said, these birds will do anything for me. By stealthy approach and good behavior I have won their complete confidence, taking all the pictures wanted at focal length, the birds passing repeatedly within that distance as the camera is pointed diagonally down at them. After using up my plates I lay down by the water’s edge, and the birds repeatedly came nearer to my face than my hands were. Also, when I stretched my hand out slowly into the water, one ventured within six inches of it. Yet the Phalaropes are perfectly aware of my presence, and they give a little start or a warning peep every time an unusual movement or the slightest sound escapes me.”



Fig. 52. FARALLON CORMORANT BROODING YOUNG

Good-sized flocks of these birds were tossing about in the lee of the island almost continually during the prevalence of the northwest wind, and little wisps of them were frequently seen flitting to and fro between the indentations of the tide. Many birds were killed at night by striking against the single telephone wire which stretches east and west along the narrow portion of the island. Occasionally small groups of these Phalaropes were flushed from the ground, and while I was settled in the tent I several times saw them take refuge behind stones to avoid the sweep of the wind.

14. **Lobipes lobatus.** Northern Phalarope. Great shoals of these Phalaropes lay off-shore on the lee side of the island until the wind veered to the south.

Although naturally frailer than the Reds, birds of this species did not so frequently resort to the shore; and in the flocks which visited the tidal channels they were usually in the minority.

15. **Heteractitis incanus.** Wandering Tattler. This is one of the first birds to extend felicitations upon our arrival; and although not a resident, there is none on the Farallones more characteristic at this season, nor any better fitted to symbolize the wild isolation of the group. During the first week of our stay there were not less than ten birds of this species, well distributed, which quavered and teetered, or fled, as often as we approached the surf line. But their numbers had dwindled to two by June 1st.

Contrary to earlier statements these Tattlers do spend a considerable portion of their time upon the higher ground. The tiny boulder-strewn meadow surrounding my earlier camp (just east of Franconia beach) was a favorite resting place for them, and I am inclined to think the birds spent the night there, for some were invariably startled upon my first appearance mornings.

Having a common affection for the tide reefs, Wandering Tattlers are not infrequently found in loose association with Black Turnstones; but when put to flight they pay no attention whatever to the fortunes of their chance shipmates, nor to others of their own kind. Preferably, the Wandering Tattler, like Kipling's cat, walks by himself.

16. **Arenaria melanocephala.** Black Turnstone. Several small flocks—never more than six or eight birds at once—were seen. The Turnstones sat closer and flew farther when disturbed than the Tattlers; and I did not discover them elsewhere than on the dun-colored reefs. None were to be seen after June 1st, and I think not after the rise of the southeast breeze on the 29th of May.

17. **Zenaidura macroura carolinensis.** Mourning Dove. A single bird, wind-driven and desolate, was sighted on the morning of May 24th. It probably lingered through our stay, as it was several times reported by one of the keepers.

18. **Speotyto cunicularia hypogæa.** Burrowing Owl. A single individual, a sole survivor, we were informed, of a former small breeding colony, was several times noted upon the grassy flat south of the steam siren. The bird was almost black to appearance, and so, very desirable; but he proved to be correspondingly modest.

19. **Myiarchus cinerascens cinerascens.** Ash-throated Flycatcher. Two birds were seen haunting the cypress "grove" on the evening of June 1st, and a specimen was taken the following morning.

20. **Nuttallornis borealis.** Olive-sided Flycatcher. The most notable arrival of June 2nd. Several individuals were seen hawking at insects in situations which would much better have suited the Say Phoebe; and one was taken.

21. **Myiochanes richardsoni richardsoni.** Western Wood Pewee. On the morning of May 29th, the weather having moderated, and the wind having changed to the southwest, there was a notable invasion of the island by frail migrants, chief among whom were these Pewees, present to the number of a dozen or more. There was not room for them all in the tiny cypress grove, which alone offered congenial shelter, so they deployed over the rocks, seeking sustenance of the cliffs in quite unfamiliar fashion. Although so evidently ill at ease, none of the Passerine forms appeared to know when to leave or how to make their way to the mainland shore; and I am inclined to think that the majority of them wear themselves out miserably in a vain attempt to get adjusted to a strange environment rather than risk the dangers of further passage over seas.

22. **Empidonax difficilis difficilis**. Western Flycatcher. One taken and another seen near the siren on May 29th.

23. **Empidonax trailli trailli** (?). Traill (?) Flycatcher. An unknown *Empidonax*, certainly not *difficilis*, was seen on the 29th in company with a Western Wood Pewee, but it could not be secured.

24. **Corvus corax sinuatus**. Raven. The nest of the only pair of birds claiming residence on the island had been twice broken up this spring by zealous keepers in the name of their defenceless hens. (It is to laugh, raising *chickens* on the Farallones.) The birds lingered for some days, but evidently gave up and left for the mainland.

25. **Molothrus ater artemisiæ**. Cowbird. A solitary individual, marked down on the 1st of June and secured on the 2nd, is recognized by Mr. Grinnell as

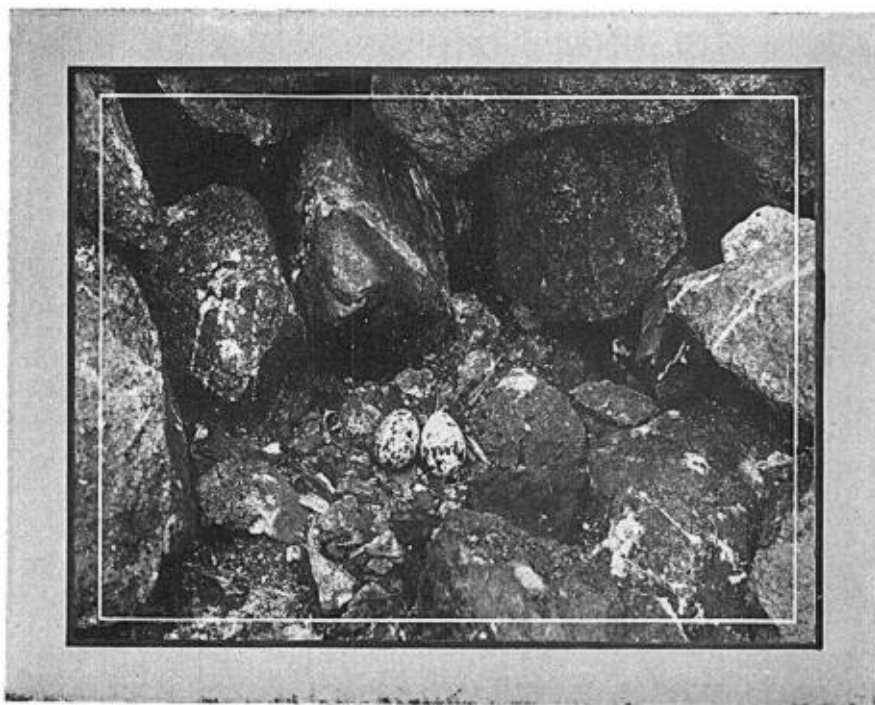


Fig. 53. NEST AND EGGS OF PIGEON GUILLEMOT

belonging to his recently elaborated form from the northern interior. Its occurrence so far west of its normal range is certainly of interest.

26. **Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis**. House Finch. Encouraged by the shelter of the cypress grove and Mr. Rosendale's tiny garden, a small colony of these finches have maintained themselves for some years past. Several broods were being successfully reared at the time of our visit, although the busy households of the cypress grove were visibly embarrassed over the presence of so much unexpected "company" from the East and South.

27. **Passer domesticus**. English Sparrow. More unwelcome than harpies at the feast of Ulysses, these wretched interlopers have invaded this sanctuary also. Small companies of them from San Francisco visit the islands yearly and return

shortly, but several seen at this season evidently intend residence. One leering male in the cypress grove I pasted for luck.

28. *Zonotrichia coronata*. Golden-crowned Sparrow. A handsome male was sighted near the landing on the morning of June 2nd.

29. *Spizella passerina arizonæ* (?) Western (?) Chipping Sparrow. A member of this June band seen in the Monterey Cypress grove—again on the 2nd. It might possibly have been an Easterner.

30. *Passerella iliaca townsendi*. Townsend Fox Sparrow. A number of Fox Sparrows seen from May 31st on were all apparently of the exact form of the one taken, which has been kindly identified by Mr. Grinnell. The "Committee" allows *townsendi* to venture only as far south as Humboldt County in winter, so these rascals from the Farallones were playing a bold hand.

31. *Passerina amœna*. Lazuli Bunting. A handsome male was seen by Mr. Rowley on the first of June, and again by myself on the day following.

32. *Piranga ludoviciana*. Western Tanager. An adult female, driven by necessity, fed over the stony pastures which were the rightful heritage of Cassin Auklets and Rock Wrens—June 1st.

33. *Tachycineta thalassina lepida*. Northern Violet-green Swallow. A solitary male hawked bravely about the inhabited portion of the island all day June 1st, and made an early, and a chilly, bunk on the telephone wire that night.

34. *Bombycilla cedrorum*. Cedar Waxwing. A single bird well seen.

35. *Dendroica æstiva rubiginosa* (?). Alaska (?) Yellow Warbler. A solitary specimen, a female, was several times sighted in the cypress grove, beginning May 29th. The sub-specific name assigned is a mere guess based on the bird's tardy appearance.

36. *Dendroica magnolia*. Magnolia Warbler. These, the daintiest as well as the most conspicuous of the eastern wanderers, were several times seen on the 29th of May, and a handsome male was secured on that date. Another male, bewildered and subdued by the strangeness of his surroundings, was encountered on the steep trail leading out of the Raven cave on the West End, and here, where his only companions were shag-flies and sea fowl, he endeavored to maintain himself for several days. A female was taken from the cypress grove on June 2nd.

37. *Dendroica virens*. Black-throated Green Warbler. A female was secured at close range from the ground west of Keeper Rosendale's house. Unfortunately the specimen is badly shattered, but the remains are in the Academy collection to attest this new record for the Pacific Coast. [Previously reported in the September CONDOR.]

38. *Dendroica townsendi*. Townsend Warbler. A male well seen in the Monterey cypress grove June 1st.

39. *Seiurus aurocapillus*. Oven-bird. The presence of this species, not previously reported west of the Rockies [save in the September CONDOR] gives character to the little bird-wave whose last beat broke on this occidental strand, and serves to mark its members for suspicion as wanderers rather than misdirected Alaskan pilgrims. This bird was caught in a vacant room of the assistant keeper's house, a male in high plumage and perfectly preserved. Another was seen a few minutes later outside the house, and it haunted the neighborhood during the remainder of our stay.

40. *Wilsonia pusilla chryseola*. Golden Pileolated Warbler. Seen on the 21st of May.

41. *Setophaga ruticilla*. Redstart. A second year male was closely observed in the cypress grove on the evening of June 1st.

42. *Salpinctes obsoletus obsoletus*. Rock Wren. The presiding genius of the Farallones, fearless, inquisitive, thrifty, and always happy. There is not a secret of the island which the Rock Wren does not know, for she pokes and pries into every crevice, examines every movable fragment of rock, stick, or bone, with a view to appropriation, scrutinizes every form of insect life with a view to assimilation, bugles from every rock-crest, greets the descending light-keeper in the cool gray of the morning, chirrup at "Snoozer", the island mascot, as she passes in her go-cart, titters at the Cassin Auklet brooding in her gloomy cell, mocks at the dignified "sea parrot", and stirs things up generally.

At the time of our visit the first broods of young were shifting for themselves, and the adult population was busy with second nesting. Five occupied nests were found, besides several promising "empties", without half trying. Of these, two contained pure white eggs, five and six respectively. The set of five was normal in



Fig. 54. WAIFS OF THE SEA
PHALAROPES, RED AND NORTHERN, FEEDING ON SOUTH SIDE OF SOUTHEAST FARALLON

size and shape; but the eggs of the larger set were much undersized, and absurdly shaped, being chopped off, squared, or flattened, like plaster pellets done by hand. One egg, by way of exception to these exceptions, was elongated, instead of shortened—evidently amateur work.

All the Rock Wrens wore their old clothes. Either their seclusion has made them indifferent to the prevailing fashions, or else they had worn out their wedding duds earlier in the season. The "splitters" have had their jealous eyes on these Farallon birds, but so far the wily Wrens have managed to keep within the bounds of Salpinctean propriety—a wide enough range, to be sure.

43. *Hylocichla ustulata*. Russet-backed Thrush. Several birds arrived on the morning of May 29th, and they skulked about the rock-slides or central elevations during the remainder of our stay. One was taken from the cypress grove.