

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Bobolink Again in Idaho.—Referring again to *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* in Idaho (see CONDOR, 1911, for previous note): On August last, less than a quarter of a mile from where the bird was noted in 1909, I found a flock of about twenty-five, in the autumn plumage of course, nevertheless unmistakably Bobolinks. One taken proved to be an adult male. This is my second record for the species in Idaho. Apparently it has now gained a firm foothold in this valley. All conditions seem to favor a rapid increase in numbers.—L. E. WYMAN.

Rare Takes for San Mateo County, California.—For the past few years I have been steadily adding to my list of county birds, and at this time think it of sufficient importance to record some of the rarer ones, and also one taken in another part of the State.

Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*). One immature female in juvenal plumage taken off San Bruno in San Francisco Bay on December 23, 1907.

Pacific Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis glupischa*). Female taken in the bay near Redwood City, February 4, 1906; others seen at different times.

Ashy Petrel (*Oceanodroma homochroa*). Female taken November 9, 1909, on the bay near Redwood City. Another reported on November 16, 1911, near Redwood City.

Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*). Numbers of these ducks are taken almost every fall on the bay, and several are in my collection; also a fine male in breeding plumage taken from a flock of a dozen on a small lake near Menlo Park, February 16, 1910.

Barrow Golden-eye (*Clangula islandica*). After examining hundreds of specimens of golden-eyes for many years past, I at last succeeded in securing a young male, in immature plumage on November 19, 1908, and a female on November 28, 1910; all others were of the common, or American Golden-eye, which are quite plentiful during the fall migration on the Redwood City salt marshes.

Old-squaw (*Harelda hyemalis*). Two specimens, female, on December 17, 1909, and male on January 25, 1910, on the bay near Redwood City. Others have been seen the past two winters.

American Scoter (*Oidemia americana*). A single female taken on the bay near Redwood City Creek on January 17, 1909; probably the only record for inland waters in California.

Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*). One taken on February 14, 1902, and another on October 15, 1907. These are the only specimens I have ever noticed in the county.

Brewer Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*). Two specimens collected in city limits, one taken on December 7, 1893, the other on February 17, 1897. The sex of both is in doubt owing to shot holes. No others of this species have been seen.

California Least Vireo (*Vireo belli pusillus*). Only one record for the county, a male taken on April 5, 1905, in city limits.

Emperor Goose (*Philacte canagica*). One specimen, a female, taken at Rio Vista, California, November 3, 1910. This is as far as I know the fourth record from the State. The bird was with a large flock of American White-fronted Geese and was in very poor flesh. Mr. Charles H. Smith of the above city kindly presented the specimen to the writer, saying that he had never killed or even heard of such a bird being seen in that locality before, where thousands of geese are taken yearly.—CHASE LITTLEJOHN.

Wood Ibis near Long Beach.—On July 2, 1911, I collected a specimen of *Mycteria americana* at Dominguez Station, near Long Beach, California. The bird was feeding in a mud slough in a very amusing manner. It was standing almost knee deep in the muddy water, and would insert its bill almost up to the eyes and then, standing on one foot, would seem to be stirring up the water with the other foot. The farmers in the vicinity of the place where this specimen was taken said that from one to half a dozen had visited this slough almost every day for a month. Other members of the Cooper Club report having seen Wood Ibises, about the time of the taking of my specimen, among various sloughs along the coast of Los Angeles County.—J. E. LAW.

Another Eastern Fox Sparrow in Southern California.—On November 11, 1911, while collecting in the Los Angeles River bottom near Burbank, Los Angeles County, I saw and shot a female Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca iliaca*) which is indistinguishable from birds in my collection that were taken in the eastern states. This is the seventh specimen of the species recorded from the State, and the second from the above locality.—ALFRED B. HOWELL.

The American Merganser at Lake Tahoe.—One of the prettiest sights in my experience came very unexpectedly while I was standing on a board walk in front of a little cabin at the edge

of Lake Tahoe about 5 p. m. on June 24, 1911. This was in a little cove occupied by fishermen at the source of the Truckee River between Tahoe Tavern and Tahoe City. At this particular spot the walk stood out over the water and on either side the willow marsh extended out to a like distance.

Suddenly we heard a coarse masculine "quack" almost under our feet and a beautiful adult American Merganser, with glossy auburn head and crest, glided out, followed by eighteen or twenty babies not over a week old. The water was as smooth as glass, and this pretty procession paid no attention to us as it passed the length of the short walk within five feet of where we stood. The little ones kept close in the wake of the mother, moving quickly here and there, never quiet a minute, and changing positions so rapidly that it was impossible to accurately count them. The mother's commanding "quack" seemed to keep the little ones in perfect obedience and they behaved like a company of little soldiers. They were a pretty golden brown, each with a conspicuous white spot on each wing. Evidently they were after their supper and all working hard. They passed quickly on, then tacked back a little farther out, then gradually worked across the cove and into the willows a few hundred yards along the shore.

Several times the mother raised almost out of the water and dashed quickly along for fifty feet or so, every chick rising and skipping after her, flapping their little wings and paddling the surface of the water with their little feet. After three of these spurts the youngsters seemed to tire, and one climbed on its mother's back; and soon several had done so, and rode securely there as long as they were in sight. Fortunately we had a good pair of Zeiss glasses and were able to watch every movement till they disappeared into the willows.

The fisherwives said this little family had been about the cove for two or three days and there were twenty chicks, but I could only be sure that there were eighteen. Did anyone ever see a more beautiful picture than this, with beautiful Lake Tahoe and its snow-topped mountains beyond as a background, and the stately pine forests all about down to the very water's edge?

The fisherwives said the hens stole the youngsters from each other, and sometimes had more than at others, but these were undoubtedly different families with varying numbers.

On the 28th we skirted the west shore, north some six miles, in search of other mergansers. Several adults were seen, twice in pairs, and on the lake side of "The Island" a female with six chicks, slightly larger than the "18" family, was observed and chased in a launch in an effort to get pictures. Time and again all rose on the surface and dashed along for a short spurt, fifty feet or so. The female would not leave them, nor did any show any tendency to dive.—J. E. LAW.

Concerning Nesting Sites of the California Jay.—In recent conversation with two experienced oologists, the nesting sites of *Aphelocoma c. californica* were discussed, and statements were made that observations upon their nest building habits were difficult in that birds of this common species were seldom seen carrying nesting material. An experience of the writer's, covering both subjects, was related, and the discussion that followed led to this paper as perhaps being worth while.

An abundant resident of Marin County, California, our nesting notes upon this species established the following sites for the eighty-three nests observed: oaks 69; bay 3; wild coffee 4; elder 2; madrona 1; gooseberry 1; toxon 1; poison oak 2. And yet in Belvedere, Marin County, where live-oaks are most plentiful, a nest has been built almost yearly, for seven or eight years, in a clematis which climbs up the side of our summer home. The nest has usually been placed within reach of, as well as observation from, the window of a constantly occupied bed room, a window opening out and frequently opened and closed daily.

A lucky observation on May 26, 1909, caught one of the nest builders with an oak twig held crosswise in its bill, and about to dart to the nest from the limb of a live-oak a few feet distant from, but slightly higher than, the nesting site in the clematis. The sudden appearance in the window of the observer caused the bird to resume its perching position, but more through curiosity than alarm, judging from the many "jay bobbings" then indulged in. After numerous interchanges of such morning salutations between the observed and the observer, the former deliberately put down its head and, bringing the twig in proper contact with the perch, placed one foot over the twig and thus securely held it in its perching grasp. The renewed bobbings were then accompanied by the bird's familiar and prolonged scolding note or squawk, in its rising crescendo.

This play was repeated a number of times, the observer retiring from the open window and reappearing at the critical moment of contemplated flight to the nest, already well along in construction.

To the foregoing notes upon nesting sites in Marin County, may be added the following which came under our observation in San Benito County, California: oaks 4; elder 1; willow 7; honeysuckle 2; sage 2; chaparral 1; greasewood (black willow) 1.—JOHN W. MAILLIARD.