

from the nest, also starting to stray away. It was quite apparent that each young owl, when it reached the approximate age of two weeks, strayed off by itself into the brush surrounding the nest, long before it was able to fly. Each bird seems to be in a place by himself, and wanders farther and farther away from the nest each day. I tried the experiment of putting one or two of the young birds that I found back in the nest again, but each time they soon left and could not be found without considerable search the next morning. At first the young were fairly close to the nest, but later were at a considerable distance. On June 28 I found no. 2 about 100 yards away, and on July 1, I found no. 6 at a full 150 yards. The parents evidently cared for all the young, no matter where they wandered, as I often found food or ejected pellets near them; and the parents were usually ready to show me the location of a young bird, by feigning wounded when I approached.

I attempted many times to get photographs of the young birds but did not succeed very well. The young when approached had a habit of flattening themselves down into the grass in a way that I could not make show up well in a picture. I could not make them perch on the bushes at all, and the best pictures I got were taken of owl no. 2 perching on my hand.

On July 1, I found owl no. 6. He was the farthest developed of any of the brood that I had examined. He was quite pugnacious, snapping at my fingers when I attempted to pick him up, and clicking his bill. When I extended my foot toward him, he perched on the toe of my shoe and picked savagely at my shoe lace. I lifted him up into the air in this way, when he spread his wings to keep his balance and tried to climb up to my knee. Once or twice he screamed, a long, hoarse, terrifying scream, a note I had not heard before from either young or parents.

I heard this scream once again on July 22, at a point fully three hundred yards from the nest site. I supposed that it was one of the young owls again, but I searched the grass in vain for him. One of the parents was near, sitting on a fence post, but not feigning wounded as before, and hence not helping me to find the young bird. This point was across an irrigating ditch from the nesting site, so it is quite probable that the young bird could fly a little by that time.

## SYNOPSIS OF THE RECENT CAMPAIGN FOR THE CONSERVATION OF WILD LIFE IN CALIFORNIA

By W. P. TAYLOR

ONE of the most hopeful signs of our generation is the fact that we as a people are growing in a knowledge of our deficiencies.

This is particularly true in the broad domain covered by the phrase "conservation of natural resources," and even more strikingly apparent in that subdivision of the larger subject with which those interested in our native birds and mammals are most intimately concerned.

Sensible of the fact that the Cooper Ornithological Club is in a position peculiarly favorable to its taking an active part in work for conservation, the

Northern Division of that organization, on January 20, 1912, requested its president to appoint a permanent committee on Conservation of Wild Life, and suggested a similar course of action to the Southern Division. The two committees were appointed forthwith, and went to work immediately.

For the purpose of this Synopsis it is well to note that steps were taken to interest other Californian organizations in the wild life situation. On the initiative of the Northern Division committee just referred to, a meeting of representatives of societies interested was called on November 7, 1912, in the rooms of the Sierra Club, in San Francisco. Eight constituencies were represented, and after a consideration of ways and means, a constitution was drafted and a temporary organization effected. This was the inception of the California Associated Societies for the Conservation of Wild Life. At a later meeting the organization was perfected and headquarters established at the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. Altogether about ten thousand persons are by this means bound together in a federation to educate the body politic and stimulate legislation in behalf of this great natural asset.

The organization showed activity from the beginning. An Advisory Committee, made up of nearly a hundred influential persons from all sections of the state, was appointed, as were also committees on Legislation and Revision of Game Laws. A campaign fund of fifteen hundred dollars was raised, a series of recommendations as to desirable changes in the laws concerning wild life was submitted to the Fish and Game Commission, several bills were drawn up for introduction in the legislature, and preparations were made to take active part in the work of law-making. Since a law prohibiting the sale of wild game was regarded as the most important and far-reaching of all measures practicable at this time, several news-letters concerning the proposed law (the Flint-Cary bill) were published and despatched to the newspapers of the state early in the campaign.

Three Western Wild Life Calls, the first issue of sixteen pages, the second and third of eight pages each, were published. These were sent to the members of the legislature, to libraries throughout the state, to many clubs and societies, to influential individual citizens, and to the newspapers. Of the first issue there were mailed nearly seventeen thousand copies. Hundreds of personal letters were sent out by the President and Secretary. Through the co-operation of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California and the California Associated Societies the Secretary was enabled to lobby continually in behalf of wild life conservation for the two months of the second half of the bifurcated session of the legislature. On strategic occasions other members of the Executive Committee and of the organization visited Sacramento.

Although the response to the appeals of the Associated Societies was widespread and gratifying, it must not be thought that no opposition was encountered. The Hotelmen's Association of California lobbied persistently against the non-sale bill. In some sections of the state the people proved to be unacquainted with the facts and necessities of the situation and very often to be violently prejudiced against adequate conservatory measures. Several newspapers, particularly the San Francisco *Examiner*, continually and openly fought the conservationists, charging bad faith and collusion with the gun club sportsmen.

However, the gain as regards wild life conservation at this session of the legislature has been tremendous. Bills embodying the following improvements were passed by both houses of the Legislature, and at the present writing await only the Governor's signature, which it is practically certain will not be withheld:

## LAW HERETOFORE

1. Sale of band-tailed pigeons and wild ducks allowed.
2. Shipment of protected wild game permitted.
3. No civil service for fish and game wardens.
4. Propagation of wild game in captivity not provided for.
5. Use for food of birds shot destroying crops permitted.
6. Possession of plumage of wild birds permitted.
7. Bag-limit on ducks 25 a day, 50 a week.
8. Bag-limit on quail 20 a day, no weekly limit.
9. License required to hunt but not to fish.
10. No provision in law for the Fish and Game Commission carrying on educational work or scientific investigation.
11. No specific appropriation for the scientific and educational work of the Fish and Game Commission.
12. Aliens allowed to hunt and bear firearms.
13. Seasons on the Rallidae, Limicolae, Band-tailed Pigeon, Wood Duck, Ibis, Sea Otter.

## LAW AS AMENDED BY THE PRESENT LEGISLATURE (1913)

1. Sale of band-tailed pigeons and wild ducks prohibited (ducks may be sold during November).
2. Shipment of protected wild game prohibited.
3. Civil service for fish and game wardens.
4. Propagation of wild game in captivity provided for.
5. Use for food of birds shot destroying crops prohibited.
6. Possession of plumage of wild birds prohibited for any purpose.
7. Bag-limit on ducks 15 a day, 30 a week.
8. Bag-limit on quail, 15 a day, 30 a week.
9. License required to either hunt or fish.
10. Provision in law that Fish and Game Commission may carry forward educational work or scientific investigation as the necessity may arise.
11. Appropriation of \$5000 for carrying forward educational work and scientific investigation.
12. Aliens prohibited from hunting and bearing firearms.
13. Absolute protection accorded the Rallidae, Limicolae (except the Wilson Snipe), Band-tailed Pigeon, Wood Duck, Ibis, Sea Otter.

Furthermore, no losses were registered. An attempt was made to open a season on robins, meadowlarks, and blackbirds, as well as to remove protection from the so-called "fish-eating birds." These attempts, however, fortunately came to nought.

Two Joint Resolutions of interest to wild life conservationists were adopted. One memorializes Congress to set aside a part or all of the National Forest in California as a game preserve. The other requests the President of the United States to propose to the governments of the world the negotiation of an International Congress for the Conservation of Wild Life, to be held in San Francisco in 1915.

Several of these measures were the subject of terrific assaults from a few disaffected and misguided law-makers. Their passage was only possible through continuous and vigorous attention on the part of friends of wild life conservation within and without the legislature. Of course the changes above listed do not represent all the improvements registered during this legislative session. They are merely those in which it may be assumed the California Associated Societies are most interested.

At one time the publication of a list of those persons to whom credit is due for our series of victories was contemplated. So many friends were found, however, that this is an impossibility. The success of the campaign should be credited: (1) to those individuals and organizations who donated money to the cause and

who wrote to their legislators urging the reform legislation; (2) to the persistent work of the Fish and Game Commission; (3) to the cooperation of the Fish and Game Commission of Oregon; (4) to the cordial cooperation of the ablest and most enlightened of California's law-makers; (5) to the leaders of the national conservation campaign in New York City and Washington, D. C.; (6) to the far-sighted sportsmen who put real conservation above personal interest; and (7) to the unselfish devotion of some of the busiest of California's leaders, newspaper editors, officials of women's clubs, doctors, lawyers, ministers, university professors, and business men.

In conclusion, it may be said that while the laws on the statute books are good, still others are badly needed. But there must be something more than laws if the situation is to be permanently improved. A public sentiment more favorable to wild life protection must be awakened. This can only come through a broad education, which shall mean not only completer knowledge of the wild life and of the game laws, but also a greater willingness to abide by the laws when these are known and understood, and an increased respect for the authorities constituted to enforce them.

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Harris Hawk in California.**—I got a fine specimen of *Parabuteo unicinctus harrisi* on November 17, 1912, a male in full plumage. The bird when seen was perched on a telephone pole overlooking my neighbor's poultry yard, in Mission Valley, near San Diego. The lady shot it on suspicion, and sent it over to me. The skin is now in the collection of the San Diego Society of Natural History and is said to be the first recorded for San Diego County and the second for California.—HENRY GREY.

**An Unusual Nest of the Sora Rail.**—On June 18, 1912, I collected a set of eggs of the Sora Rail (*Porzana carolina*) that numbered eighteen. This nest was located in a marsh near Chouteau, Montana. It was first found on June 14, at which time it contained but thirteen visible eggs. Having failed to get a successful photograph of this nest when it was first found, I visited it again on the 18th, when finding the visible number of eggs increased to seventeen I decided to collect it. After I had photographed it and removed it I found the eighteenth egg, embedded in the nest material in the bottom of the nest. In the accompanying photograph but fifteen eggs are visible, the others being in a lower layer.



Fig. 39. NEST AND EIGHTEEN EGGS OF THE SORA RAIL; PHOTOGRAPHED JUNE 18, 1912, NEAR CHOUTEAU, MONTANA

It is probable, from the number of eggs found on the different dates, that the eggs were laid daily, and that the last one had been laid the morning of the 18th. Had it been possible it would have been interesting to have left the nest for another visit to see whether the bird would have laid more, but I had no opportunity to visit it again. The eggs were all the way from fresh to advanced in incubation. From appearances, some of them would have hatched in a few days more. The nest was placed in thick rushes, supported by them, and roughly arched over by drawing the tops of the ones surrounding the nest together. It was built of dead rushes, and the bottom of it rested in the water, which at that place in the marsh was about six inches deep.—ARETAS A. SAUNDERS.