

typical limicoline birds of the plover group. They are darker, being of a clear, olive-drab color, moderately dotted, chiefly over the larger half of the egg, with irregular black spots and fine little specks, lending to the surface a very delicate appearance on account of the elegant shade of the ground color. Size: 1.40-1.50 by 1.10 (Coues). "Varying from light olive to deep cream color, rather sparsely and irregularly speckled and lined with dark brown, black and purplish gray," is Ridgway's description of the eggs of this plover. He rarely states how many there are to the set in the case of any of these smaller pluvialine species; but they probably run from three to four in nearly all the species, if not in all.

All three of the species of oyster-catchers (*Hamatopus*) are to be found in Mr. Court's collection. They constitute a beautiful series of eggs, and examples of all of them are given on fig. 46 of this paper (nos. 51-54). As will be noted, they do not vary to any great extent; they run from a deep, dull, buffy shade to a creamy buff, with very pronounced, bold markings of big and little dots, blotches, fine specks, often coarse, scraggly lines and other irregular designs. These are pretty evenly distributed all over the eggs, and are very striking, being either dull black, vandyke brown or bistre, often with lighter spots of pale gray. The sets run from two to three, and, I believe, never four.

For our Oyster-catcher (*Hamatopus palliatus*) Coues ("Key," 5th ed., p. 789) gives the measurements as "about 2.20 by 1.55." Those of the European species (*H. ostralegus*) are smaller, and, in the case of the specimens at hand, darker. In a paper I published in the Report of the U. S. National Museum for 1892 (pp. 461-493) entitled "Comparative Oölogy of North American Birds," I said, when commenting on the study of the eggs of the *Limicolæ*, that the study of the oölogy of this group is important, for "perhaps the greatest scientific triumph of oölogists lies in their having fully appreciated the intimate alliance of the *Limicolæ* (the great group of snipes and plovers) with the *Gaviæ* (the gulls, terns, and other birds more distantly connected with them) before it was recognized by any professed taxonomist, L'Herminier, whose researches have been much overlooked, excepted; though to such an one was given the privilege of placing that affinity beyond cavil" (Huxley, P. Z. S., 1867, pp. 426, 456-458; cf. *Ibis*, 1868, p. 92) ³.

The subject has, however, by no means been exhausted, and even our best reference "Keys" and "Manuals" are often derelict in the matter of giving any description at all of the eggs of the birds composing this important and interesting group.

WITH THE BAND-TAILED PIGEON IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

By LAURENCE M. HUEY

IN THE early summers during the past three years, extended camping trips have been made by the writer through the mountains of San Diego County, California, on which a good many interesting ornithological notes were taken. Among them are some in regard to the Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*), as observed in that region.

On June 21, 1910, while driving slowly up the grade among the trees that

3. Newton. Alfred, Article "Birds", Encyclopaedia Britannica. p. 773.

clothe the summit of the Palomar Mountains, near the northern boundary of San Diego County and about eighty miles from the coast, a Band-tailed Pigeon was flushed from a tree directly over the main road. On examination it was seen to have flown from the nest, and the single egg was plainly visible through the frail structure. The nest was saddled on a small fork of a horizontal limb of a black oak, thirty feet from the ground.

The bird did not fly directly away, but hesitated a moment over a near by tree, and then, as if by a sudden change of mind, made off like a bullet and was seen no more, although I remained there for some time. The egg was taken, but on trying to remove the nest it was reduced to a mere handful of twigs, being composed of not more than sixteen or eighteen sticks in all.

July 3, 1910, found me at Wynola, four miles east of Julian in the Cuyamaca Range. Some boys there told me that for the past two weeks a bunch of about one hundred Pigeons had been feeding on green manzanita berries in a near by thicket, and I was much pleased when they offered to take me to the place. It proved to be about one and one half miles north of their ranch, due south of Volcan Mountain, and was the only thicket thereabout having a large crop of berries. In the morning the birds would begin to arrive a little after sunrise, leaving between eight and nine o'clock; in the evening they returned about four and stayed until dark. They seemed always to come from, and return to, the same place, at the top of Volcan Mountain among the pine trees.

The Pigeons seen were apparently always the same bunch, as one bird noted with a few secondaries missing on the left wing was seen on three out of four occasions when the flock was encountered. It was interesting to watch them trying to alight on the clusters of berries, far too weak to support them, making many futile attempts, and finally succeeding in reaching the berries only by settling on a stronger perch and then walking out to the cluster. But how they did gorge and stuff when they finally got at them!

On two occasions birds alighted very near me, close enough to be heard and seen eating. Their table manners were extremely poor, reminding one very much of a chicken eating corn, accompanied by gulping noises when swallowing a berry. These ranged from the size of an average pea to that of a large hazel nut.

A few days later the boys brought me a fractured egg which they had taken from a Pigeon shot by them that evening. The shell, though not very thick, was rough to the touch, and the egg would probably have been laid the next morning.

July 6 found me camping near the foot of North Peak in the Cuyamaca Mountains, at a place called Talley's Ranch, and early on the morning of the 7th I was travelling via mule back to the summit. About two-thirds of the way up is located a small saw-mill, the owner living near by. I was talking to one of his children when my attention was called to a pair of captive Pigeons which proved to be the Band-tailed. On questioning the lad I learned that they had been taken about a week or ten days before, farther up the mountain, from a nest in an oak tree. One bird was much larger than the other, having gained the juvenal plumage, while the smaller one was still rather downy about the neck and head. Both did justice to any food stuffs offered them, and ate freely even of food offered by strangers, swallowing whole grains of corn and large pieces of bread.

I made my way to the summit but was unsuccessful in locating any more Pigeons, nor could I hear one coo, although I listened assiduously. Being much interested in the captive young ones I returned three days later with hopes of

purchasing them for pets, but was disappointed to find that the smaller one had been killed by being dropped out of the boy's hands while he was handling it. I was unable to purchase the other, but left with the boy's promise to turn it loose when it could care for itself.

In the Palomar Mountains a very young female Pigeon was collected on June 25, 1911. It was perched on an under branch of a large oak tree, and shot from horse-back with a "32 aux." This was the only one of the species observed that year.

At daybreak of June 9, 1912, while homeward bound from the Palomar Mountains, two Pigeons were heard fly from the top of a fir tree, where they apparently had been roosting. On reaching the valley below, many Pigeons were seen rapidly descending from the mountain to an over-ripened uncut wheat field, dropping down with swift flight, on semi-curved wings, and with an occasional flap at long intervals. One bird was also noticed eating berries from an elder bush, among a small flock of Phainopeplas.

THE ALL-DAY TEST AT SANTA BARBARA

By W. LEON DAWSON

RUSSELL CONWELL'S long-famous lecture, "Acres of Diamonds," flashes a thousand scintillating lights upon the homely truth that opportunity lies close at hand. Twice has the writer listened to this brilliant discourse, yet apparently without having greatly profited thereby; for has he not allowed eight preceding seasons to pass by in the West without having put his ornithological resources to the "All-Day" test? That is, in the spring time. We have conducted several very gratifying winter tests, because we knew we had the Easterner on the hip there. But to venture an all-day in the spring, when the hedgerows of Nebraska, the groves of Ohio, and the very wayside weeds of New England are alive with birds, surely that were to invite disaster and to make one's beloved West ridiculous in the eyes of men. We have been so often told by the confident Easterner, "But you have no birds. I do not see them. They do not wake me up at three o'clock in the morning as they do in dear old Indiana," that we have assumed an apologetic air and tried to explain, rather lamely, that owing to the uniformity of weather conditions here our birds do not move in waves as they do in the East. And so we have long forborne to make the acid test of counting on a May day.

But having exhausted the bliss of ignorance, and having wearied of polite pity, the writer determined to know the worst. Besides, bird-horizoning is such exhilarating sport that no one who has really tasted the flavor of it can ever quite forget. It is more exciting than golf or polo or bridge (I suppose), because Nature plays the other hand; and Nature both shuffles and deals and her hands are never twice alike. One Hundred is the proper bid, and if you win less than that Nature has dealt you a poor hand. All that you get above that number not only feeds your *amour propre*, but justifies your local pride. And you win anyhow—health, happiness, and a very considerable increase in your knowledge of the birds. Of course it is an honor game. If you cheated, you would only cheat yourself. To fake records or to put down occurrences that you are not quite sure about brings its own punishment; namely, to become that kind of a man.