

Sialia sialis sialis. Bluebird. Common resident, but the numbers were greatly increased by winter visitors. Its principal food during the cold weather was sumac berries. Nidification began about March 25. Young and adults were both molting heavily as late as September 18.

San Antonio, Texas, October 22, 1914.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Barn Owls as the Farmer's Friends.—On May 13, 1914, while staying for a short time at the Herminghaus Ranch near Mendota, Fresno County, California, I was informed that there were two nests of Monkey-faced Owls in the tank house, which is a large three-story affair built on a slight knoll a short distance from the house. Although the tank is still in place the building has been in disuse for several years.

Upon investigation I found that two pairs of Barn Owls (*Aluco pratincola*) had shared the structure with a colony of Cliff Swallows and a great number of bats. One nest was placed in the tank on the bones, fur, pellets, and refuse that had accumulated to a depth of several inches. One bird was perched on a beam overhead asleep, while his mate occupied the nest which contained four very small birds and six eggs. Scattered about on the floor were five Pocket Gophers (*Thomomys*), five Kangaroo Rats (*Perodipus*), one Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus*), and two white-footed mice (*Peromyscus*), all of which were in good condition and undoubtedly of the previous night's capture. Besides these, there were partly eaten remains and fresh skeletons of several more. All evidence pointed to the fact that this place had been used for a great many years by owls, as I picked up nearly four hundred entire pellets and could have secured many more.

The other nest was on the floor of the platform between the siding and tank in a rather exposed situation, and the nine eggs had been deserted for some time.

A second visit was made to the Herminghaus Ranch on July 19, and upon inquiry about the owls, I was informed that all of the ten eggs in the first mentioned nest had hatched and only one of the owlets failed to come to maturity. My informant also stated that early in June a second set, consisting of seven eggs, had been deposited and produced seven sturdy birds, the youngest of which was still present, being unwilling to attempt a long flight.

Aside from the late nesting dates, there was another fact that may have had some significance. Mr. Albert Foster, the superintendent of the ranch, realizes the great benefit that he derives from the presence of such efficient mammal destroyers about the place, and affords them protection at all times; but he informs me that a former tenant persistently shot all hawks and owls and destroyed their nests at every opportunity, and that on the Herminghaus Ranch, the Barn Owls were reduced almost to the point of extermination. Is it not possible that these nocturnal hunters, now safe from persecution, are depositing large sets of eggs in an effort to regain their normal abundance in that region?

If the thoughtless farmers who so relentlessly destroy this owl on account of its supposed fondness for chickens and pigeons would take the trouble to keep watch of a nest-site through one season, the most ignorant among them could hardly fail to realize that they are working against their own best interests whenever they kill a Barn Owl. Then, if we could convince sportsmen that all hawks and owls are not the ravenous destroyers of game birds that hunters generally suppose them to be, we would not be saddened by the all too frequent sight of the remains of numerous innocent Sparrow Hawks and Red-tails that are to be found on the ground beneath the telephone and power wires along so many of our country roads during the shooting season, and the plague-infested squirrels, of which we have heard so much in recent years, would cease to be a supposed menace to our health, or destroyers of the farmers' crops.—JOHN G. TYLER, *Fresno, California.*

Two Birds New to California.—*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis.* While collecting January 17, 1914, at La Punta, located on the south end of San Diego Bay, I shot a Louisiana Heron. It proved to be an adult female.

Vireosylva olivacea. While skinning birds at home on the screen porch, October 6, 1914, I heard a strange bird call in a fruit tree outside. Picking up my gun I soon had the specimen in hand. It was an adult male Red-eyed Vireo.

The identification of these specimens was made by Mr. J. Grinnell.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *San Diego, California*.

Return of Winter Birds to the Same Locality.—For two winters I have been feeding birds about our canyon home. During the winter of 1912-13 I scattered the food on the hill-slope in front of our dining-room window, and was rewarded by the daily appearance of Song Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, the two Towhees, Golden-crowned Sparrows, Thrashers and Wren-tits.

The next winter, 1913-14, for photographic purposes I began putting the food on the railing of the narrow unroofed porch, which extends under the window. It took some time to induce all the different varieties to come to this new table, which was set for them immediately in front of a large plate-glass window and at a distance of only three feet. But one by one they overcame their shyness, and came even when several observers stood just inside the window.

On the morning of September 27, 1914, a Golden-crowned Sparrow made his first fall appearance on the feeding-ground, and a few minutes later he flew up on to the railing in search of food. At seven o'clock on the morning of October 4, 1914, I saw a Fox Sparrow on the feeding-ground. At nine o'clock he, too, was feeding on the railing. He may very likely have been there earlier, but I had not caught him at it.

It would seem to me quite unreasonable to suppose that these birds were not the same birds that had been trained to pose for photographs on my railing during the previous winter.—MRS. AMELIA S. ALLEN, *Berkeley, California*.

Note on the Feeding Habits of the Blue-fronted Jay.—In July, 1914, I spent a few days with friends in the Yosemite Valley. On July 12 we made a trip to Sierra Point, then came down to "The Happy Isles", in the Merced River below Vernal Falls, where we spent some time. While eating luncheon a Blue-fronted Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis*) came near us, evidently in quest of food. A good-sized piece of cracker thrown to it was seized at once. With the cracker in its beak the bird ascended from limb to limb nearly to the top of a tall tree near by, then, flying across the river, disappeared in the heavy forest on the other side. In a few moments it returned. Another small bit of cracker was thrown to it which it ate at once.

When still another small piece of cracker was thrown on the ground not fifteen feet from where we sat eating our luncheon, the bird picked it up and, flying to a large cedar tree near by, alighted upon the trunk about five feet from the ground. Then we saw the bird put the cracker in a crack in the bark, driving it in securely by tapping it vigorously with its bill. And then came the most interesting and unexpected act of the performance: the bird pulled off three or four small pieces of bark and placed them in the crack in such a way as to quite effectively cover up the cracker and protect it from easy discovery!

The bird then came back for a larger piece of cracker which it carried across the river as it did the first piece, first ascending by a series of short flights well toward the top of the same tall tree and then disappearing among the trees on the other side. Several of our party then went to the tree where the bird had hidden the cracker and all saw the cracker and the pieces of bark with which the bird had covered it up so neatly.—BARTON WARREN EVERMANN, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco*.

Another Record of the Occurrence of the Emperor Goose in California.—While in San Jose recently I noticed a mounted Emperor Goose (*Philacte canagica*) in a store window. On inquiry at the store and through the correspondence which ensued, I was able to get the following information. The specimen was obtained on the Glyde Ranch near Davis, Yolo County, California, by G. H. Anderson of San Jose. The mounted specimen bears the date of December, 1906. Mr. Anderson says that the bird had been seen on a pond for about three weeks before its capture, and that other hunters had not been able to get close enough for a shot. By driving within ninety yards, a lucky shot brought it down.