

10. *Geococcyx californianus*. Roadrunner. A second record for the County, Lake Merced, March 19, 1911 (Carriger and Ray).

11. *Ceryle alcyon*. Belted Kingfisher. We located a freshly-dug nesting burrow March 19, 1911, and an old one, July 4, 1912; both in sandy cliffs at Lake Merced.

12. *Colaptes cafer collaris*. Red-shafted Flicker. De Groot found a nest in a fence-post cavity in Golden Gate Park, May 21, 1916, with five well-incubated eggs.

13. *Calypte anna*. Anna Hummingbird. An early nesting date is that of a set of two fresh eggs noted by De Groot at Lake Merced, February 23, 1915. He notes that this and other early nests were thickly lined with feathers, perhaps for the reason he gives, that plant down and "willow cotton" were not procurable. He states that all late nests had the latter lining.

15. *Selasphorus alleni*. Allen Hummingbird. I have since found this hummer to be a common nester through a long season in our County. Carriger found a very beautiful nest in an acacia tree near North Lake, April 18, 1915. It was exceptionally high walled, very light colored and daintily decorated. Incubation had made a slight start in one of the two eggs it held. In sharp contrast to the actions of *Calypte anna*, this hummingbird usually whizzes off its nest and does not return to debate the question of ownership. This, a very striking difference in temperament, I do not remember having seen noted by other writers.

17. *Empidonax difficilis*. Western Flycatcher. A second breeding record for the County is De Groot's nest found in the Lake Merced region, May 26, 1916. It was placed fifteen feet up in a cypress crotch and held four eggs, dark with incubation.

18. *Otocoris alpestris actia*. California Horned Lark. On April 22, 1911, Carriger collected a set of four well-incubated eggs in a very open situation on the Ingleside Golf Links. The bird flushed at our feet it being almost dusk at the time. De Groot also found a nest of this bird, May 24, 1915, on the top of Twin Peaks about ten feet from the reservoir. The nest, a slight hollow, grass lined, contained three eggs well along in incubation.

19. *Sturnella neglecta*. Western Meadowlark.

23. *Euphagus cyanocephalus*. Brewer Blackbird. Carriger and I have noted both these species breeding in the Lake Merced district.

24. *Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*. House Finch. I saw a veritable cloud of these birds, at least 5000, settle on the telegraph wires and nearby trees near Lake Merced, April 23, 1911. From the thousands of feathered throats came a great chorus that was indescribably beautiful.

27. *Passer domesticus*. European House Sparrow. I can record two very late nesting dates: August 30, 1914, birds building in the Mission district; October 10, 1914, four fresh eggs noted in a nest above a door step, where I then lived, no. 299 San Jose Avenue.

34. *Petrochelidon lunifrons*. Cliff Swallow. Carriger and I noted an unusual departure in the nesting of this bird, in the sandy cliffs at Lake Merced. The sand was evidently too soft to hold a plastered nest, so the birds were using burrows like the Bank Swallows, with a very small arch of mud plastered over the entrance.

43. *Hylocichla ustulata ustulata*. Russet-backed Thrush. My only nests of this bird were several found years ago. De Groot located one May 21, 1916, in Golden Gate Park, with four fresh eggs. It was situated in a patch of bamboo bushes close to the nest of the Western Robin, previously noted.

San Francisco, California, October 9, 1916.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Grammatical Errors in Vernacular Names.—Many times we see earnest recommendations in these columns from ardent ornithologists advocating changes in the vernacular names of birds, the present names of which seem to be misleading or erroneous. Two apparently glaring grammatical errors seem to have escaped notice up to now but here we have them.

Most birds have qualifying names which tend to point out some peculiarity in the

bird which distinguishes it from its relatives in the same genus. Where the character is one of habit or pertains to its notes and song the present participle is the form the adjective takes. Thus we have Laughing Gull, Cackling Goose, Whooping and Whistling Swans, Whooping Crane, Ant-eating Woodpecker, Worm-eating Warbler, Warbling Vireo, and Mourning Warbler. Departures from this practice occur in such names as Melodious Grassquit, Clapper Rail and Trumpeter Swan, but these forms seem permissible.

There are two names, however, which are very much off color, Screech Owl and the Song Sparrow. It seems that, aside from the grammatical error committed, the more prevalent practice should have dictated that these names be Screeching Owl and Singing Sparrow. Screech Owl and Song Sparrow seem good enough names through long usage, but witness how ludicrous the above list of birds would appear were we to change their names to agree with the form expressed in the case of the owl and the sparrow. We would have Laugh Gull, Cackle Goose, Whoop and Whistle Swans, Whoop Crane, Warble Vireo, Mourn Warbler, Melody Grassquit, Clap Rail and Trumpet Swan!

Nouns are used as adjectives, but the meaning is totally different from that in which the present participial form is used. Thus, where we have cow-barn, tire-rack, shot-gun or iron knife the meaning is a barn for a cow, a rack for tires, a gun for shot, and a knife of iron; simply a phrase shortened into two nouns, one of which is used as an adjective. The meaning of Screech Owl and Song Sparrow is obviously an owl which screeches and a sparrow which sings, and not an owl for screeches nor a sparrow for or of song.

So when we get around to doing any changing of names let us set these right before the Gull, Swan and Goose laugh, whoop and cackle at the poor little owl and sparrow!—
J. R. PEMBERTON, *Colton, California.*

Are there Two Forms of the Bryant Marsh Sparrow in San Francisco County?—Joseph Mailliard's note on the Bryant Marsh Sparrow in a recent issue of THE CONDOR suggests a solution to what has been a puzzling problem to me for some time. I have found the Bryant Marsh Sparrow breeding on the Islais Marsh, south of the Potrero district. But there are other birds apparently of this species, averaging somewhat lighter, however, found resident in the Presidio, on the Ingleside Golf Links, and high up the slopes of Twin Peaks. I have noted them many times during the breeding season at the two last named stations. Most of the books speak of this sparrow as though it were found nowhere else than on the salicornia marshes near sea level. It is my opinion that there is an upland form of *Passerculus sandwichensis bryanti* which verges toward *P. s. alaudinus*, and that it ranges from Humboldt County south at least to the Transition area of San Francisco County. I may add that I noted this same light-color Bryant Marsh Sparrow last July on the uplands of western Sonoma County some miles from the sea.—W. A. SQUIRES, *San Francisco, California.*

Caspian Tern in the San Joaquin Valley.—At the time of the appearance of the September (1916) number of THE CONDOR, I had what appeared to be in newspaper parlance a "scoop" on the Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) in the way of a late summer, or early fall interior record, and had a short article upon this subject scrolled out, waiting only the disappearance of this species from the scene before finishing it up and sending it in to the Editor. But meanwhile the above-mentioned number of our journal came out containing John G. Tyler's *Supplementary List of Birds of the Fresno District*, in which there are several records of this species.

However, as Grinnell's *Distributional List of the Birds of California* gives this bird as a "Rather rare winter visitant and migrant, both coastwise and in the interior", with a few records following, most of which are winter with only two spring and no fall records, it should be worthy of note that several individuals have been paying a prolonged visit to the Rancho Dos Rios, near the mouth of the Tuolumne River, Stanislaus County, as many as a dozen having been seen at one time and two specimens taken for positive identification.

It happened this summer that some seepage water was left on our ranch in a depressed piece of ground several acres in extent, and the resulting shallow ponds proved very attractive to several species of aquatic birds. Among these the Caspian Tern chose