

Probably a number of individuals of this species have been shot at various times in the years gone by, but there are very few labelled specimens in museums or collectors' hands from this state. Most of those shot have been mistaken, as was the one taken by Mr. Pond, for a cross between an American Widgeon (Baldpate) and a Pintail or a Cinnamon Teal. The back of the male bird is a good deal like that of a Pintail, while the red of the head and neck resembles that of a Cinnamon Teal, with the rest of the bird closely approaching the American Widgeon, so that the idea of some such cross is naturally suggested to the mind of any one unfamiliar with the European Widgeon.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *San Francisco, February 9, 1918.*

Another Reference to Early Experiments in Keeping Hummingbirds in Captivity.
—In *THE CONDOR* for September, 1917, p. 168, I called attention to the experiments made by Adolphe Boucard in San Francisco in 1852 in keeping hummingbirds in captivity. Boucard remained in San Francisco from August 16, 1851, to August 18, 1852, and then returned to France via Nicaragua and New York. He states that he collected many specimens of *Selasphorus rufus* and *Calypte anna*, that at one time he had as many as sixty of them alive, and that some of them lived four months.

With these facts in mind it is interesting to compare the following statement by Bonaparte in his "Notes sur les collections rapportées en 1853, par M. A. Delattre, de son voyage en Californie et dans le Nicaragua".

"M. Delattre has brought back from California, with their nests their eggs, and their young, two Hummingbirds, *Selasphorus ruber* Edw. [= *S. rufus*] and *S. anna* Lesson. By force of care he was able to keep in cages for seven or eight months a very large number of these delightful little beings which he had raised himself and on the habits of which he was able to make interesting observations which we shall not undertake to publish." (*Comptes Rendus*, xxxviii, April 3, 1854, p. 660.)

From other sources we learn that Delattre¹ left France in January, 1851, on a sailing vessel bound for California and that he reached San Francisco six months later (probably in August), after rounding Cape Horn. He returned via Nicaragua and reached home in the early part of 1853, and since he collected hummingbirds' nests, and eggs, he must have secured them in the spring of 1852, as he arrived in California after the season of 1851, and evidently left before the nesting season of 1853 in order to stop in Nicaragua and still reach Paris in the first half of that year.

It is very probable that the statements of Boucard and Bonaparte refer to the same or at least to simultaneous experiments. It is very unlikely that two French ornithologists should both conduct experiments in raising the same species of hummingbirds in San Francisco in 1852 and not know of each other's work. Boucard apparently does not mention Delattre, and the latter who never wrote very much, died shortly after his return, three months before Bonaparte's statement was published. When it is recalled that Boucard and Delattre both reached San Francisco by sailing vessel in August, 1851, and returned via the Nicaragua route in 1852, that Boucard was only a boy of 12 when he sailed and consequently rather young to undertake extended collections on his own initiative, while Delattre was an experienced collector 46 years of age, it seems more than likely that they were traveling together. In fact it is highly probable that on this, his first trip, Boucard was working under the direction of Delattre from whom possibly he acquired some of that interest in hummingbirds which became so marked in later years. If this surmise is correct it may throw some light on the region where Delattre collected in California. Boucard intimates that most of the year was spent in the neighborhood of San Francisco. That so experienced a collector of hummingbirds as Delattre secured nothing except *Selasphorus rufus* and *Calypte anna* indicates that he did not work in the mountains or in southern California, and the birds actually brought back could all have been obtained in the immediate vicinity of San Francisco or Monterey. Among other specimens collected was the type of *Passerculus alaudinus*. Under these circumstances it is perhaps reasonable to fix the type locality of this latter species as the vicinity of San Francisco Bay. Certainly the entire list of California birds obtained by Delattre should be re-examined critically in the hope of obtaining further light on the

¹Pierre Adolphe Delattre, often mentioned simply as "A. Delattre", was born in Tours, France, February 12, 1805, and died at Nice, France, January 3 1854, at the age of 49. He was an energetic explorer and traveling naturalist who devoted special attention to collecting hummingbirds. Between 1831 and 1851 he made several expeditions to America.

localities where the specimens were collected.—T. S. PALMER, *Washington, D. C., March 5, 1918.*

An Odd Nest of the Song Sparrow of Los Coronados Islands.—Many of the land birds inhabiting the islands off the coast of California have through long isolation acquired characteristics so pronounced as to warrant separation from the mainland forms. Not only has the plumage and the dimensions of the birds changed but their habits have been altered to conform to the new conditions of life.

During the past spring it was the writer's good fortune to be able to visit Los Coronados Islands, off the coast of Lower California, and to spend several days studying the habits of the nesting birds there. One of the most interesting was the local form of song sparrow, *Melospiza melodia clementae*.

There is no water to be found on any of the islands and but a scanty growth of vegetation growing from between the rocks on the steep slopes, surely a strange place to look for nests of the song sparrow. However, a number of the birds were seen and two nests located. One of these, on South Island, was three feet up in a small bush and



Fig. 22. NEST OF SONG SPARROW FROM LOS CORONADOS ISLANDS, IN WHICH FEATHERS OF VARIOUS SEABIRDS AND A SNAKE-SKIN HAVE ENTERED AS CONSTITUENT MATERIALS.

Photo by J. B. Dixon.

on May 5 held one egg. It was constructed of grass entirely and was quite similar to nests found on the mainland. The second nest was found on North Island and was certainly a strange affair, being constructed entirely of feathers and the skin of a lizard (see fig. 22).

This nest was found in the midst of the large colony of California Brown Pelicans and Western Gulls. It was built on the ground among the rocks, but was completely hidden by a small scrubby bush, very dense and lying flat and close to the earth. The parent bird betrayed her treasures; as I was carefully picking my way among the pelican and gull nests she hopped up through the bush only a few feet ahead of me and immediately ducked back into the identical spot from which she had emerged. Directly below the small opening in the bush was a large ball of feathers. This proved to be the nest and held three slightly incubated eggs.

It is the only nest of any species of song sparrow that the writer has ever seen which contained so much as one feather. It can truly be said that there is no accounting for individual tastes even among the sparrows.—NELSON K. CARPENTER, *Escondido, California, February 1, 1918.*