

Jan., 1919

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

The Costa Collection of Birds.—In *The Condor* for May, 1918, pages 114-116, Dr. T. S. Palmer has carefully reviewed the early history of *Calypte costae*, and ends with the phrase, "The Costa collection of hummingbirds, the fate of which is now unknown." Adolphe Boucard in his "Genera of Humming Birds," London, 1893-1895, under *Calypte Costae*, page 5, states: "This fine species was dedicated to Marquis Costa de Beauregard, who was a very enthusiast[ic] collector, and had in his time one of the finest collection[s] of Humming Birds. . . . I bought his collection in 1878, and I found among many rare species, what I consider as the types, male and female of this species."

Boucard, who was one of the ablest of French ornithologists and the last of the great natural history agents who made Paris their headquarters in the nineteenth century, moved to London I think in 1889, where I frequently saw him in the years 1889-1891, at his natural history agency in High Holborn. He made two notable donations of the greater part of his ornithological collection to the Paris Museum, the first I think in 1895, and the last in 1904, a few months before his death. It is probable the supposed types of *Calypte costae* were in the first donation, as Boucard had then finished his "Genera of Humming Birds."

In the Atlas, "Voyage de la Frégate la Vénus," Bourcier's types are figured (*Oiseaux*, pl. 2, figs. 1, 2), in colors from a painting of the male and female by Oudart.—J. H. FLEMING, *Toronto, Ontario, October 25, 1918.*

The Wilson Phalarope in the San Diegan Region.—An adult male of the Wilson Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*) was taken at Nigger Slough on September 16, this year (1918). The species has been recorded from Santa Barbara at sea level, otherwise its occurrence in the low country of the San Diegan region is quite worthy of note. The bird was alone, though Northern Phalaropes came and went from time to time. The plumage is the quiet gray of winter with some persisting wing quills that were worn. The testes were well defined but shrinking in size. This completes the roster of the American phalaropes that I have taken this September in the low country of this region.—LOYE MILLER, *State Normal School, Los Angeles, California, September 23, 1918.*

Nesting of the Western Willet in California.—In a recent conversation the Editor of *THE CONDOR* called my attention to the fact that there is only one definite record of the breeding of the Western Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus inornatus*) within the state of California. This is based upon sets of eggs collected by N. R. Christie, near Beckwith, Plumas County, many years ago. It, therefore, seems well worth while to record the taking of additional eggs of this bird within the state.

During June and July, 1918, Dr. Barton W. Evermann, Mr. Joseph R. Slevin and myself made a long collecting trip by automobile, covering some 1800 miles, through northern California and southern Oregon. In early June we spent several days at a partially flooded mountain meadow known as Grasshopper Meadow or Grasshopper Lake. This is situated in Lassen County about five miles from Eagle Lake.

Grasshopper Lake is very shallow. The relative proportion of lake and meadow varies much from time to time, according as the season is one of more or less moisture. Together they cover many hundred acres. At the time of our visit the immediate shores of the lake were wide mud flats with a scattering, sprawling growth of a thick-stemmed, ragged, more or less vine-like "red-weed". Farther from the lake were meadows of sedges and grasses and a wide belt of yellow primroses, and then rolling hills covered with sage-brush.

As we reached the mud flats a number of large birds with very conspicuous white wing-patches rose in the air and, with loud cries, came driving toward us, passed, wheeled and came again and again, in very much the manner of an Avocet. There seemed to be no reason to doubt that they were the Western Willet, but, to make identification certain, one was shot. There seemed to be about six or eight or perhaps ten pairs here, and later we saw four or five more pairs in another part of the meadow several miles away. We succeeded in finding five nests. On June 1 Dr. Evermann found two nests, with one and two fresh eggs, and on June 6 I found three nests, one empty, one with four broken

eggs, and one with four eggs in which incubation had begun. The nests were made of pieces of weeds rather carelessly built up on the mud. Some were found where the water was a few inches deep and some where the mud was drying. The one with broken eggs was on a clump of "red-weed" where the receding water had permitted complete drying. The broken eggs apparently had been eaten by some mammal or bird.

The sets of one and two eggs collected by Dr. Evermann are now in the collection of the California Academy of Sciences. The set of four is in my collection.—J. VAN DENBURGH, *San Francisco, December 6, 1918.*

Nighthawk Observed in San Francisco.—On the evening of September 18, 1918, I happened to be standing at my bedroom window, on the upper floor of the house, absent-mindedly looking at the sky, when what appeared for the moment to be a far distant but exceedingly erratic sea-gull came above the horizon and at once attracted my attention. Numerous gulls had been flying over without especial notice, but this individual seemed to have gone crazy as it flew into the west, or else was forgetting how to fly. Just when it nearly disappeared from view it suddenly turned and flew back almost directly overhead, disclosing the fact that instead of being a gull it was a nighthawk. The white wing bars were visible, yet it was not possible to locate their position accurately enough to state the species, but it was presumably a Pacific Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor hesperis*). On looking at my watch it was exactly 7:20 p. m. The incident was noted down as a matter of interest and as a record of date.

Three nights after this, that is, on September 21, I happened to be at the same window at the same moment, and across the sky flew the same, or another, nighthawk, again proceeding westward. This time it did not turn, but disappeared in the western sky. I went out into the street to have a wider view, but saw nothing further. Impressed by this repetition the next evening saw me early in the street, and on the lookout for more developments. At precisely 7:21 a nighthawk appeared in the east and pursued the same course as before, again disappearing toward the ocean. Each time the bird's course was about over and parallel with Pacific Avenue or Broadway. The next few evenings were foggy or lowering and the bird was not seen again.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *San Francisco, October 1, 1918.*

Notes on Red-headed Woodpecker and Jack Snipe in New Mexico.—In a recent issue of THE CONDOR were published notes made by several New Mexico ornithologists on the occurrence of the Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) in this state. It was pointed out that all the birds so far observed had been on or near trans-continental railway lines, indicating that the movement across treeless plains had followed the lines of telegraph poles. It might be of interest to add that on August 18, 1918, at a point about four miles north of Albuquerque, and within a quarter of a mile of the main line of the Santa Fe Railway, I observed an additional adult Red-head. I approached within twenty feet of the bird so that there can be no question whatever of identification.

On the same day I also observed four Jack Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) in the same locality. These birds were so tame and unsuspecting that I was led to believe that they had been raised in the locality. I do not know whether Jack Snipe have been known to breed at this altitude (5000 feet) in New Mexico, but this record indicates that they may be found here during the breeding season.—ALDO LEOPOLD, *Albuquerque, New Mexico, August 21, 1918.*

Nesting of the Band-tailed Pigeon in San Diego County, California.—I have recently received an egg of the Band-tailed Pigeon (*Columba fasciata*) taken on Palomar Mountain, San Diego County, on October 11, 1918. This was perfectly fresh and was the only egg in the nest, which was situated in a post-oak near the side of a road and was twelve feet above the ground. The average of 13 eggs given by Bendire is (as reduced from millimeters to inches) 1.57x1.13. His largest egg measured 1.72x1.20. This egg of mine measures 1.93x1.07.

I have the report of another egg taken in the same locality on October 14, incubation commenced. This, also, was in an oak about twelve feet above the ground. The