

## BIRD NOTES FROM SOUTHEASTERN OREGON AND NORTHEASTERN CALIFORNIA

By GEORGE WILLETT

WITH FIVE PHOTOS

THE WRITER spent the greater part of the summer of 1918 at Malheur Lake, Harney County, Oregon, in the interests of the United States Biological Survey, and, while there, accumulated the bulk of the bird notes that make up this article. There will be found, however, a few additional items from other localities, principally from Clear Lake, Modoc County, California, and from the territory between Malheur Lake and Klamath Falls, the latter having been covered by auto in company with Dr. G. W. Field and Mr. Stanley G. Jewett, both of the Biological Survey.

More than four months, from April 23 to August 27, were spent at Malheur Lake, so that the notes from that immediate section may be considered fairly complete for this season of the year, but those from other localities are more or less fragmentary. From April 4 to April 16 was spent at Clear Lake and, though quite a number of species of birds were observed at this time, some of the regular summer visitants had either not appeared at all or were present in small numbers at the date of my departure. The auto trip from Malheur Lake to Klamath Falls occupied nine days, from August 27 to September 4, inclusive. While on this trip we travelled almost continuously during daylight hours and undoubtedly missed seeing many species of birds that were common in the country traversed. The principal points touched at this time were Diamond Valley, Warner Valley (Adel and Plush), Warner Mountain, old Fort Warner (east side of Warner Mountain), Paisley, Summer Lake, Silver Lake, Bear Flat, and Upper Klamath and Chiloquin marshes.

Malheur Lake, one of the best water-bird nesting grounds in the United States, is situated in Harney Valley, Harney County, Oregon. The lake and surrounding tule marsh cover approximately 75,000 acres. The water body, while several miles in width, is very shallow, being only from six to seven feet deep at high water. During the latter part of the past summer—one of the driest in the history of the region—the water in the lake probably averaged less than one foot in depth, and the surrounding tule marshes were mostly dry. The two principal streams that feed the lake are the Blitzen River, running in from the south, and the Silves River, from the west. Along these streams a few miles back from the lake are straggling groves of willows, the only timber in the entire locality, with the exception of occasional cottonwood trees planted around ranch houses. On the hills directly surrounding Harney Valley are scattered groves of stunted junipers, and the rolling country between the hills and the lake is mostly covered with sage (*Artemisia tridentata*) and greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*). Around the outer edge of the swamp are extensive wild hay fields that furnish nesting grounds for many ducks and other species of ground-nesting birds.

During my entire stay in the region I boarded at the Alva Springer Ranch, which lies on the Blitzen River at the south end of the lake. There are living springs on this ranch which form a pond known as the Spring Branch, flowing into the Blitzen. Where this spring water empties into the river there are

numerous sand bars which are resorted to by many waders and other birds. As the birds in this locality are entirely undisturbed during the summer, many notes were obtained here. Mr. and Mrs. Alva Springer and son Ed have resided in the locality for many years and, having a good general knowledge of birds, were able to furnish considerable helpful information. Dr. L. C. Hibbard, of Burns, who has studied the birds of the region for a number of years, also supplied data of value.

Though the lake and swamp were rather thoroughly covered, and I believe very little bird life was overlooked in this immediate section, the surrounding hill region was hardly touched, and it is very probable that many species occur here regularly that were not seen by me at all. Also, as a very limited area was covered during the migration season, the notes obtained on the migratory birds must be regarded as far from complete. In the following list of birds observed, unless otherwise stated, the notes refer to Malheur Lake.



Fig. 40. YOUNG CORMORANTS AT MALHEUR LAKE, OREGON, JUNE 18, 1918.

*Aechmophorus occidentalis*. Western Grebe. Nesting abundantly at Malheur Lake; most plentiful along north and west sides. Some young noted as early as June 7, but the species did not begin to nest generally until about June 10. After this date many nesting colonies were visited. These colonies consisted of from two or three to twenty nests each, and were situated in tule patches, generally near the open water. Four was the usual complement of eggs, no nests containing more than this number being seen. The species was also noted at Clear Lake during early April.

*Colymbus auritus*. Horned Grebe. One bird seen on Malheur Lake May 12, another June 7, and three more June 14, all adults in high spring plumage. Upon seeing these birds present so late in the year, it was hoped to find them nesting, but they were not further noted, though carefully sought for, and I am forced to conclude that they were present only as migrants.

*Colymbus nigricollis californicus*. Eared Grebe. Breeding abundantly in colonies in tules at Malheur Lake, well out toward edge of open water. As with the Western Grebe, a few scattering pairs evidently nest much earlier than the great majority, as a few young were noted June 14-15, at which time the bulk of the species was just beginning to nest. A very peculiar feature noted was the small number of eggs laid to the

nest. Though several hundred nests were examined, in no case were more than three eggs seen in a nest, and in many instances the birds were incubating one or two eggs.

**Podilymbus podiceps.** Pied-billed Grebe. Breeding rather commonly in Malheur Swamp, though much less plentiful than the last and differing considerably in nesting habits. The nest of the Pied-billed Grebe was rather rare near the open water but was fairly common in ponds in the swamp well back toward the hay lands. It also nests earlier than the last, beginning to lay the first week in May and continuing throughout the month. Young were noted early in June. Six or seven eggs was the usual complement, eight was occasional, and nine was found once. The nests were larger and more substantially built than those of *C. n. californicus*, and were always floating, whereas those of the other species are often built on supporting tules.

**Larus californicus.** California Gull. At Malheur Lake this and the next species were nesting on Pelican Islands, a chain of small grass-covered islets near east end of lake. The gull colony was on parts of two of these islands, the two sections of the colony being separated by a channel of water about fifty yards wide. There were only about sixty pairs of *L. californicus* nesting, they being greatly outnumbered by the next species. Their nests were all in the same corner of the colony on a strip of bare ground and, although they were immediately contiguous to those of *delawarensis*, the nests of the two species did not intermingle. The California Gull began to nest about June 7, but it was not through laying until ten days later. On the ninth of July a severe hail storm occurred that played sad havoc in the gull colonies, killing a large percentage of the downy young. This gull suffered very little, however, only two dead, downies being noted.

**Larus delawarensis.** Ring-billed Gull. By far the most abundant of the gulls nesting on Pelican Islands, there being about five hundred pairs in the colonies. Only a small percentage of the nests were on the bare ground like those of the last species, most of them being in the short grass. They began to lay about June 5 and the majority of the clutches were complete by June 15. There was evidently some confusion among them as to location of their nests, as one nest containing five eggs and several with four eggs were noted. In most of these cases two distinct types of eggs were in the clutch and they were probably the product of different females. It is feared that a small number of the young of this gull survived the summer. Over three hundred dead downies were counted that were killed by the hail storm July 9, and many of the young that survived this disaster were apparently stricken with disease at about the time they were beginning to fly and died in considerable numbers.

While the gulls had not yet begun to nest at Clear Lake at the time of my departure from that section, they were present in some numbers at the usual breeding grounds on islands in the lake. These islands were visited April 10, on which date about two thousand gulls were present. In direct contrast to the gulls at Malheur, at least ninety percent of these were *californicus*, the remainder being *delawarensis*.

**Sterna caspia.** Caspian Tern. First seen at Malheur May 14. The breeding colony consisted of about one hundred pairs and was situated on a sandy section of the shore of one of the Pelican Islands directly adjoining one of the Ring-billed Gull colonies. The Caspian Terns began to lay about June 5 and had apparently finished by June 15. Most of the nests were hollows in the sand with very little lining. The usual number of eggs was two, though several nests contained three and one held four. Thirty-two dead downies were counted after the hail storm previously mentioned.

**Sterna forsteri.** Forster Tern. By far the most abundant tern in the Malheur region, nesting in tules entirely around the lake, though more plentiful on south and west sides. The nesting colonies, however, did not extend back into the swamps but were in tules in the deeper water, generally within a half mile of the open water of the lake. Two types of nesting sites were generally used, one being the tops and sides of muskrat houses and the other on broken-down tules floating on the water. The birds using the first type of site built no nest whatever, laying the eggs on the tules composing the muskrat house, while those using the second location generally built a substantial nest composed of dead tule stalks. This species began to lay about June 5 and the nesting season was considerably extended, some eggs being laid as late as the first week in July. Three eggs was the usual complement, though two was rather common and four occasional. First young were seen June 28, and they were noted flying by July 20.

Some of the downies on the muskrat houses were killed by the hail July 9. The nests built by the terns, themselves, were better protected, being more or less covered by sheltering tules, and no damage was noted in these localities.

*Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis*. Black Tern. Common breeding bird at Malheur but much less plentiful than the last. Small colonies were found in tules near edge of open water in several different localities. They began laying about June 5; first young were seen July 8, and some of the young were flying by July 20. The nests were fairly compactly built of dead rushes and were situated on broken-down tules floating on the water. The eggs were two or three in number and varied greatly in color and markings. The adult birds began to take on the fall plumage about the middle of July, and the species was quite scarce on the lake the latter part of August, many apparently having left the locality by this time. Eight or ten pairs of Black Terns were observed nesting in a tule patch in a hay field several miles from the lake, June 26.

*Phalacrocorax auritus* (subsp.?). Cormorant. Though the cormorants of both Clear and Malheur lakes have been previously referred frequently to *P. a. albociliatus*, the Fallon Cormorant, I am very doubtful as to the correctness of this identification, particularly as regards the bird of the latter locality. A great many of these birds, while in



Fig. 41. YOUNG WHITE PELICANS AT MALHEUR LAKE, OREGON, JUNE 18, 1918.

fresh spring plumage, were examined carefully at close range with glasses and in no instance was I able to detect any trace of the white plumes supposed to be characteristic of *albociliatus*. I am inclined to believe, therefore, that this bird may prove referable to the eastern form, *P. a. auritus*.

At Clear Lake on April 10 about one hundred pairs of comorants were beginning to nest on one of the small islands. At this date many nests were about completed and a few contained one or two eggs each, no full clutches being noted.

At Malheur Lake about one hundred pairs of birds were found nesting on broken-down tules near the northeast end of the lake June 18, on which date most of the nests contained young of different ages—some being nearly as large as the adults (fig. 40)—though two or three nests still held eggs. Most of these nests had been built up a foot or two from their foundations and had apparently been used for several years.

*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*. White Pelican. From four hundred to five hundred pairs noted on islands at Clear Lake April 10. At this date about one hundred and fifty nests were noted, many of which contained one or two eggs each.

At Malheur Lake about four hundred pairs were nesting on broken-down tules in company with cormorants and blue herons. At the time of the first visit to this colony,

June 18, about half the young were already hatched, some being, apparently, nearly a month old (fig. 41). The rest of the nests contained eggs in various stages of incubation. In most cases the eggs were laid on the broken-down tules with little or no attempt at nest construction. They were generally two or three in number, rarely four. The pelicans and cormorants were feeding principally on fish of the minnow family which are considered of no value for human consumption. The remains of a rainbow trout found in the colony was the only real food-fish noted.

*Mergus americanus*. American Merganser. Eleven birds seen at Clear Lake April 10. Noted several times at Malheur in late April and early May, one bird May 25, six birds July 3, ten or a dozen August 8, and rather common thereafter. Two birds seen on stream near Adel September 2. It is very probable that *M. serrator* also occurs in the region, but it was not identified.

*Lophodytes cucullatus*. Hooded Merganser. Single bird seen April 5 at Clear Lake.

*Anas platyrhynchos*. Mallard. Rather common at Clear Lake; nest containing four eggs found in this locality April 10. At Malheur Lake nests abundantly in hay fields, both inside and outside reservation boundary. The earliest of the nesting ducks in the vicinity, beginning to lay the latter part of April, but nesting most abundantly from May 15 to 31. The most common nesting site is on the ground in long grass, though often found in sides of haystacks, under scattering bunches of hay and, occasionally, on dry ground in sage-brush. Eggs generally from eight to twelve in number. As soon as the young leave the nest they are taken out onto the open water of the lake, and during late summer the species is rare in other localities.

*Chaulelasmus streperus*. Gadwall. Probably nearly as abundant as the last species at Malheur, but nests, on an average, much later, being the last duck to finish incubating. Nesting localities very much the same as those of the mallard excepting that it was not found in haystacks. (See fig. 42). Many nests were seen in the hay fields and one in the sage-brush. First nest, containing seven eggs, found June 1; height of nesting season June 20 to 30. First young seen July 5. The eggs in a nest in the Springer field did not hatch until August 8, and two broods of young about two weeks old were noted August 22. From seven to eleven eggs is the usual complement, though one brood of fourteen young was seen.

*Mareca americana*. American Widgeon. Not noted in spring, though probably occurs at this season. First seen in fall migration July 31, and became rather common during August.

*Nettion carolinense*. Green-winged Teal. Common at Clear Lake during my visit in April. First noted in fall at Malheur July 31; common after early August.

*Querquedula discors*. Blue-winged Teal. An adult male seen at Malheur June 13 was the only one identified. It is difficult to distinguish between this and the next species, however, particularly in case of the females, and it is possible that *discors* nests at Malheur in very small numbers.

*Querquedula cyanoptera*. Cinnamon Teal. Abundant nesting bird at Malheur in hay lands both inside and outside reservation line. Began laying early in May, most plentifully during month of June. Many nests of this and other ducks are destroyed annually by ravens, coyotes, skunks and mink. Careful observations in the Malheur region seemed to show that at least fifty percent of the ground-nesting ducks' eggs are destroyed by these agencies, ravens and skunks probably doing the most damage.

*Spatula clypeata*. Spoonbill. Breeds at Malheur in small numbers. The only nest positively identified as belonging to this species was found on May 31 and contained eleven eggs. It was situated on the ground in a hay field and was indistinguishable in construction and situation from nests of other ground-nesting ducks. Spoonbills were seen occasionally throughout the summer.

*Dafila acuta*. Pintail. Pair seen at Clear Lake April 10. Noted occasionally during the summer at Malheur, so probably breeds in small numbers, though no nests were identified. In fall the species began coming in from the outside about July 31 and became common the first week in August. Female with five half-grown young seen on canal in Diamond Valley August 28.

*Marila americana*. Redhead. Breeds abundantly in the tules at Malheur Lake,

mostly during month of June. Some downies were seen as early as June 7, and they were still in evidence late in July.

*Marila marila*. Greater Scaup. *Marila affinis*. Lesser Scaup. Scaup ducks were plentiful at Clear Lake in April and both species identified, though, owing to their similarity, in most cases identification was impossible, and I am in doubt as to the comparative abundance of the two. At Malheur they were fairly common in spring until about May 10, and in fall after August 5. They were also noted occasionally in summer but, in this locality, I was never able to approach closely enough to be sure of the species.

*Marila collaris*. Ring-necked Duck. The only time that this duck was positively identified was on April 6 at Clear Lake, when three pairs were observed at the mouth of Willow Creek. They were approached closely and carefully examined with glasses. The bill markings, white spot on throat and ring on neck were plainly seen on the male birds.

*Clangula americana*. Golden-eye. Noted several times on Blitzen River in late April and early May.

*Charitonetta albeola*. Bufflehead. Female seen at Clear Lake April 7. Fairly common at Malheur in spring until about May 10.



Fig. 42. NEST OF GADWALL AT MALHEUR LAKE, OREGON.

*Erismatura jamaicensis*. Ruddy Duck. Breeding abundantly in tules at Malheur Lake, generally fairly close to open water. Several nests noted in sides of muskrat houses. Bulk of nesting in June. Young seen as early as June 7 and as late as early August.

*Chen hyperboreus hyperboreus*. Lesser Snow Goose. Four birds seen at Clear Lake April 6. Common locally on meadowlands between Malheur Lake and Burns in late April. Single bird seen on Blitzen River May 12 and two more in same locality June 21.

*Anser albifrons albifrons*. White-fronted Goose. About twenty-five birds seen at Clear Lake April 15.

*Branta canadensis canadensis*. Canada Goose. Forty-six nests examined on various small islands in Clear Lake. Began to lay the latter part of March. Most of the nests contained from four to seven eggs, though eight or nine were seen occasionally, ten in one instance and twelve in another. It may be that these larger sets were the product of more than one female. Also in two nests examined were two addled eggs of last year together with newly laid eggs. Most of the nests were on bare ground among the sage-bushes but several were built among the rocks and one was in small cave in

rocks three feet back from entrance. At Malheur the nesting sites were entirely different, the nests being usually on broken-down tules or on top of muskrat houses. The young mostly hatched the first week in May. For about three weeks after hatching they remain on land, then accompany their parents to the water and out onto the open lake, where they remain during rest of summer.

*Branta canadensis minima*. Cackling Goose. Common in late April on fields between Malheur Lake and Burns. It is probable that *B. c. hutchinsi* also occurs in migrations but it was not identified.

*Plegadis guarauna*. White-faced Glossy Ibis. First seen May 23 near Springer Ranch. About one hundred pairs nested in tules along west side of Malheur Lake. Began to lay about June 1, and some young were flying the last week in July.

*Botaurus lentiginosus*. Bittern. Nesting rather commonly in marsh lands along border of Malheur Reservation. Two nests found in tule marsh May 20, one containing five eggs and the other five newly hatched young. The young leave the nest when a few days old and remain hidden in the tules until nearly full grown.

*Ixobrychus exilis*. Least Bittern. Breeds rather commonly in tules on some parts of Malheur Lake, mostly well out toward open water. Young flying by middle of July.

*Ardea herodias* (subsp.?). Blue Heron. Though Grinnell in his California list refers the Modoc County blue heron to the variety *hyperonca*, he informs me that he has not compared specimens from this locality, and I think it very possible for geographical reasons that the Clear Lake bird will prove referable to *A. h. treganzai*. Furthermore, it seems almost certain that the Malheur Lake bird would belong to this form.

About one hundred nests of the blue heron were noted on the various islands in Clear Lake, mostly on tops of low bushes, though some were on the rocks and on the ground. Some nests contained complements as early as April 6, though it is probable that many birds had not yet nested. At Malheur Lake over six hundred pairs were noted nesting in tules in different localities. Some of these were in the colony with pelicans and cormorants, some with ibis and night herons, and others with the egrets. In this locality they nested mostly in May. Some young were flying a little by June 18. In late summer half-grown muskrats form one of the items of this bird's diet.

*Herodias egretta*. Egret. Though this bird was seen frequently in early summer at Malheur Lake, considerable difficulty was experienced in locating the nesting colony. Local people who were familiar with the species stated that it formerly nested in trees along the Blitzen and Silves rivers, and it was in these localities that I first sought for it. Not finding it here, attention was turned to the tules along the southern border of the lake where the birds had been most frequently seen. On June 28, while rowing along the outer edge of the tules at the southern end of the lake, I finally located the colony in two small tule patches about three miles east of the mouth of the Blitzen River. Twenty pairs of the birds were nesting at this date, three nests containing eggs, apparently heavily incubated, and the other nests containing young of various ages, from newly hatched to half-grown ones that were able to walk around among the tules. The nests were built on bent down tule stalks (figs. 43, 44), much in the same fashion as nests of the ibis. Some were within a foot of the water and others nearly four feet up. They were large and rather well made of tule stalks and in two instances contained branches of greasewood that must have been carried at least a mile. The nest complement was from three to five in number, usually four.

*Nycticorax nycticorax naevius*. Black-crowned Night Heron. Pair seen on island at Clear Lake April 10. About five hundred pairs nesting in tules along west side of Malheur Lake in company with blue herons and ibis. Still some eggs as late as June 7, though large young were common on same date.

*Grus canadensis*. Little Brown Crane. Common on fields between Malheur Lake and Burns in late April.

*Grus mexicanus*. Sandhill Crane. Nests generally in swampy localities throughout the region, but apparently nowhere in large numbers. There were probably twenty-five pairs nesting in the swamps around Malheur Lake and, from what could be learned from residents, it is more plentiful at Diamond Swamp and Warner Lake than at Malheur. Five or six pairs raised their young in marshes within two or three miles of the Springer Ranch, the adults being seen daily but no nests found. Old settlers state that this bird is becoming scarcer yearly.

**Rallus virginianus.** Virginia Rail. A single bird of this species seen May 22 in Malheur Marsh was the only rail noted by me.

**Porzana carolina.** Sora Rail. Dr. Hibbard has eggs of this bird taken in the Malheur region. Mr. Springer states that on different occasions while cutting hay he has flushed a small dark-colored rail of some species.

**Fulica americana.** Coot. Seen occasionally at Clear Lake in early April. Nesting abundantly at Malheur Lake, both in wet meadows and in tules around lake. Began to



Fig. 43. NEST OF EGRET, ON BROKEN-DOWN TULES, IN SOUTHERN END OF MALHEUR LAKE, OREGON, JUNE 28, 1918.

lay early in May and first young were noted June 7. On August 24 I was fairly certain that I saw a Florida Gallinule in the marsh but it disappeared in the tules before its identity could be assured.

**Steganopus tricolor.** Wilson Phalarope. So far as was learned, this bird did not nest on Malheur Reservation the past summer. It appeared early in May but left the vicinity of the lake shortly afterward. It nested in some numbers on wet fields between



the lake and Burns, and full grown young appeared at the lake with their parents about July 12, becoming quite common shortly after this date.

*Recurvirostra americana*. Avocet. Breeds abundantly at Malheur, nesting in many different localities, both on the reservation and outside its boundaries. The salt grass flats along south and east sides of lake were favorite nesting grounds, as were some parts of Pelican Islands. There were also many small colonies around the borders of shallow ponds in various sections. Nesting began in May and was at its height during the month of June.

*Himantopus mexicanus*. Black-necked Stilt. Though this bird has been previously reported as nesting at Malheur Lake in small numbers, I failed to see it at all. Mr. Springer's grandson, Wilbur, informed me that he saw two birds near the ranch in late May, and Dr. Hibbard knew of one pair nesting in a field between the lake and Burns.

*Gallinago delicata*. Wilson Snipe. Common at Clear Lake in early April. A few seen at Malheur in late April and they again appeared July 23, after which date they were common until August 1; occasional thereafter.

*Macrorhamphus griseus scolopaceus*. Long-billed Dowitcher. Common migrant at Malheur Lake. Noted as follows: May 13, flock of thirty birds; May 14, flock of one hundred; May 21, one bird; July 16, one bird; July 18-19, two birds; August 24, flock of thirty.

*Pisobia minutilla*. Least Sandpiper. Two birds seen at Clear Lake April 10. Fairly common at Malheur in late April and early May, and from July 9 to August 22.

*Pelidna alpina sakhalina*. Red-backed Sandpiper. Several seen near Springer Ranch May 14.

*Ereunetes mauri*. Western Sandpiper. Appeared at Malheur July 16 and remained rather common through August.

*Totanus melanoleucus*. Greater Yellowlegs. Seen occasionally at Malheur in early May; several noted July 9; rather common thereafter.

*Totanus flavipes*. Lesser Yellowlegs. My son reported three small yellowlegs on the Spring Branch August 18, and on August 24 Dr. Field and the writer saw six or seven birds on Blitzen River where it empties into the lake.

*Helodromas solitarius cinnamomeus*. Western Solitary Sandpiper. Two birds seen between Malheur Lake and Burns May 10, and one on Blitzen River near the lake August 24.

*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus inornatus*. Western Willet. Like several other waders, the Willet breeds on wet meadow lands between the lake and Burns, but not, apparently, on the reservation. One or two birds were seen on the Spring Branch July 13, and about July 20 adults with grown young appeared in small numbers. These disappeared again about August 10.

*Actitis macularius*. Spotted Sandpiper. Fairly common at Malheur Lake throughout the summer, but no signs of its breeding were found. While birds were observed frequently, in no case did they display the actions usual to nesting birds of the species.

*Numenius americanus occidentalis*. Northern Long-billed Curlew. Common on wet meadows in Harney Valley region in late April but much less so through the summer. Probably not more than a dozen pairs nested around the borders of Malheur Lake. Nest containing an addled egg noted June 1, and one or two broods of young seen in July and August. Also nests on meadow lands between the lake and Burns.

*Oxyechus vociferus*. Killdeer. Common around lakes and ponds throughout entire country traversed. Abundant at Malheur Lake, where young appeared early in May.

*Oreortyx picta plumifera*. Plumed Quail. Seen along streams in mountains west of Warner Valley.

*Lophortyx californica vallicola*. Valley Quail. Rather common locally from Clear Lake northeast to Diamond Valley.

*Phasianus torquatus*. Ring-necked Pheasant. Fairly common in meadow lands in vicinity of Burns. While harvesting alfalfa this summer, Dr. Hibbard found a nest of the species.

*Centrocercus urophasianus*. Sage Grouse. Common in sage-brush around borders of Clear Lake; also common locally in sage region from Klamath Falls to Malheur Lake. Pair seen on Blitzen River three or four miles from the lake June 9. Particularly abundant along east slopes of Warner Mountain.

**Cathartes aura septentrionalis.** Turkey Vulture. Seen frequently throughout entire region traversed.

**Accipiter cooperi.** Cooper Hawk. One seen June 9 along Blitzen River, and another near Adel September 2.

**Circus hudsonius.** Marsh Hawk. Common resident of marshy sections. Breeding plentifully around Malheur Lake. Several nests noted in May and early June; first young seen May 20. In fall does considerable damage to young poultry. This latter characteristic of the species was entirely new to the writer, as the Marsh Hawk had always been considered strictly a beneficial bird. Mrs. Springer stated that this bird killed her young chickens, and the writer's personal observations fully confirmed the fact. Have never noted this in any other locality and it may be only a local habit.

**Buteo borealis calurus.** Western Red-tail. Rather common in most parts of the region, though rare in summer around Malheur Lake, probably owing to absence of trees. Nest containing three eggs was noted in juniper tree near Clear Lake April 7.

**Buteo swainsoni.** Swainson Hawk. Two birds seen near Malheur Lake June 26 and two the day following; fairly common during August. Common along most of the



Fig. 44. NEST AND YOUNG OF EGRET AT MALHEUR LAKE, OREGON, JUNE 28, 1918.

route between Malheur and Klamath Falls in late August and early September. Particularly abundant in canyons on slopes of Warner Mountain.

**Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis.** Rough-legged Hawk. Seen occasionally in late April between the lake and Burns, as also between Burns and Bend.

**Aquila chrysaetos.** Golden Eagle. Rather common in mountainous sections.

**Haliaeetus leucocephalus leucocephalus.** Bald Eagle. Two birds seen at Clear Lake April 8.

**Falco mexicanus.** Prairie Falcon. Breeds plentifully in hill region surrounding Harney Valley. In fall, appears in vicinity of the lake in some numbers in pursuit of wild fowl and poultry.

**Falco peregrinus anatum.** Duck Hawk. Fairly common in August with last species, but less plentiful.

**Falco columbarius columbarius.** Pigeon Hawk. Pigeon hawks were occasionally seen near Malheur Lake in August. Two specimens examined were clearly referable to the above subspecies.

*Falco sparverius sparverius*. Sparrow Hawk. Noted frequently throughout the region.

*Pandion halliaetus carolinensis*. Osprey. Pair of birds seen daily at Clear Lake; also seen along Klamath River.

*Asio flammeus*. Short-eared Owl. Common breeding bird in Malheur marshes. Three nests examined, as follows: One near Springer Ranch contained two young and five eggs May 13; two nests on Pelican Islands June 12 held, respectively, seven eggs, hatching, and four eggs, apparently slightly incubated. In several instances remains of small birds were found at nests.

*Bubo virginianus pallescens*. Western Horned Owl. Generally common. Nest containing two eggs, apparently on point of hatching, noted in juniper tree near Clear Lake April 7. Birds seen at Fort Warner and in Diamond Valley. Heard once in late April at Malheur Lake. Remains of two birds killed during past winter seen at Springer Ranch.

*Speotyto cunicularia hypogaea*. Burrowing Owl. Rather common in fields bordering Malheur Lake.

*Ceryle alcyon caurina*. Western Belted Kingfisher. Rather rare at Clear Lake; also at Malheur.

*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*. Williamson Sapsucker. Noted in woods bordering Chiloquin Marsh.

*Colaptes cafer collaris*. Red-shafted Flicker. Fairly common throughout region.

*Ayndesmus lewis*. Lewis Woodpecker. Single bird appeared at Springer Ranch May 11 and remained until May 14. Also seen in early September near Silver and Upper Klamath lakes.

*Chordeiles virginianus henryi*. Western Nighthawk. First seen at Malheur June 6; abundant during eclipse of sun, 4 p. m., June 8; common throughout rest of summer. During daytime often noted sitting on fence posts along country roads.

*Selasphorus rufus*. Rufous Hummingbird. *Selasphorus platycercus*. Broad-tailed Hummingbird. Hummingbirds were noted occasionally throughout most of the region covered, though not at Malheur Lake. A male *rufus* was seen at Burns August 25. *Platycercus* was identified by Jewett at Adel, on Warner Lake, August 29. None of the others seen was positively identified.

*Tyrannus tyrannus*. Eastern Kingbird. First seen at Malheur, a pair May 5; common shortly after that date. Nesting during latter part of June. One nest examined was in broken-out nose cavity of cow's skull hanging on barbed wire fence. The young in this nest were killed by hail July 9.

*Tyrannus verticalis*. Western Kingbird. Common summer visitant to Harney Valley. Arrived about May 1; nesting by May 20.

*Sayornis sayus*. Say Phoebe. Fairly common in summer, nesting in usual situations.

*Empidonax griseus*. Gray Flycatcher. Fairly common summer visitant to the sage-brush country bordering Malheur Lake. First noticed May 18, and seen frequently from that time until August 4. After this date little attention was given to the particular section inhabited by the species, consequently it was not further noted, though it probably remained in the region considerably later.

*Otocoris alpestris merrilli*. Merrill Horned Lark. Rather common at both Clear and Malheur lakes and in suitable localities between these two points.

*Pica pica hudsonia*. Magpie. Common locally throughout the region. Nesting in willows along Blitzen and Silves rivers a short distance from lake. Several nests examined contained newly hatched young May 12; some young out of nest by May 28.

*Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis*. Blue-fronted Jay. Seen at various points in timbered country from Clear Lake northeast to Fort Warner.

*Aphelocoma californica immanis*. Long-tailed Jay. Common in brushy sections from Clear Lake northeast to Warner Valley.

*Perisoreus obscurus griseus*. Gray Jay. Common at Bear Flat, twenty miles west of Silver Lake, evening of September 3.

*Corvus corax sinuatus*. Raven. Common in hill and mountain sections. Nesting abundantly in bluffs in hills around Malheur Lake. Made regular trips to swamp to obtain eggs, upon which it subsists largely in summer.

*Nucifraga columbiana*. Clarke Nutcracker. Three birds seen at old Fort Warner September 1.

*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*. Bobolink. Rather common breeding bird in hay fields around borders of Malheur swamps. First seen May 20; noted feeding young July 11; young flying July 23.

*Molothrus ater artemisiae*. Nevada Cowbird. Common around barnyards and stock pastures. At Malheur began to breed the latter part of May. Disappeared about August 20 and was not seen thereafter.

*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*. Yellow-headed Blackbird. Abundant summer resident of the Malheur region, nesting in tules well out toward open water of lake. Began to lay about May 10 and eggs were noted as late as July 1. Large young seen June 7.

*Agelanus phoeniceus nevadensis*. Nevada Redwing. Common in swampy districts throughout the region. At Malheur nesting abundantly in wet meadows and swamp lands, but not close to open water as does last species. Began to lay about May 15 and eggs were seen until late in June. Favorite nesting site was in tall grass in hay fields; very few nests found in tules.

*Sturnella neglecta*. Western Meadowlark. Common in grassy country in most localities visited.

*Icterus bullocki*. Bullock Oriole. Nests generally throughout the region but, apparently, not in immediate vicinity of Malheur Lake, owing to lack of suitable trees. First seen at Springers' May 13; noted occasionally for several days after this date, then disappeared. Female seen in same locality August 17.

*Euphagus cyanocephalus*. Brewer Blackbird. Abundant in lower country everywhere. At Malheur nesting in sage-brush and greasewood around outer edge of swamp. Began to lay first week in May.

*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*. House Finch. Seen in many different parts of country visited but, apparently, not very abundant anywhere.

*Loxia curvirostra bendirei*. Bendire Crossbill. Small flock seen at Bear Flat, 20 miles west of Silver Lake, September 4. Pair of adults taken by Jewett at this time were apparently about to breed.

*Poocetes gramineus confinis*. Western Vesper Sparrow. One of the typical birds of the region. At Malheur Lake full-grown young appeared late in June.

*Passerculus sandwichensis nevadensis*. Nevada Savannah Sparrow. Common around both Clear and Malheur lakes and in most of the country intervening. Breeding plentifully in meadow country around border of swamp. Favorite nesting site was on ground in short grass, but several nests were found under small bunches of old hay that had laid on the ground since last year's harvest. Many nests noted between May 10 and June 4. Four or five eggs is the usual complement, though three is occasional.

*Chondestes grammacus strigatus*. Western Lark Sparrow. Fairly common at Malheur in late May and early June. Apparently does not nest near the lake.

*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelli*. Gambel Sparrow. Common in brush near Clear Lake in early April; also seen in hills bordering Warner Valley August 30.

*Spizella passerina arizonae*. Western Chipping Sparrow. Several seen in brush near Malheur Lake May 14, and single bird in same locality May 24.

*Spizella breweri*. Brewer Sparrow. Abundant breeding bird in sage-brush country bordering Malheur Swamp. First nest, containing three eggs, found May 24; latest, also containing three eggs, July 1. Height of nesting season from last week in May to middle of June. Nests in low bushes from four inches to eighteen inches above ground. Usual nest complement three, though four was seen occasionally.

*Amphispiza nevadensis nevadensis*. Nevada Sage Sparrow. Fairly common in sage-brush but, in Malheur region, much less plentiful than the last; also nests somewhat earlier in the season. Three nests noted, as follows: May 24, four young; June 2, one with four eggs and another with four young. The nests were considerably more bulky than those of *S. breweri*, and higher above ground, those noted being from eighteen to thirty inches up.

*Melospiza melodia fisherella*. Modoc Song Sparrow. Seen occasionally at Clear Lake. Rather common breeding bird at Malheur, in tules in marsh country around lake. Young out of nest seen as early as May 22. Though the song sparrow from the Malheur region has been repeatedly recorded as *merrilli*, a summer bird taken is referable to *fisherella*. This identification is confirmed by Grinnell, Swarth and Oberholser.

*Passerella iliaca schistacea*. Slate-colored Fox Sparrow. One bird seen at Springer Ranch August 5 and another August 18.

*Pipilo maculatus curtatus*. Nevada Towhee. Seen at Clear Lake and in several other localities northeast to Warner Mountain.

*Oreospiza chlorura*. Green-tailed Towhee. Seen on slopes of Warner Mountain August 30, and in hills between Adel and Paisley September 2.

*Zamelodia melanocephala*. Black-headed Grosbeak. Single bird noted in willows along Blitzen River June 2.

*Passerina amoena*. Lazuli Bunting. Pair seen May 12 at Springer Ranch.

*Piranga ludoviciana*. Western Tanager. Fairly common in spring migration at Springers', from May 10 to June 5.

*Progne subis* (subsp.?). Purple Martin. Male bird seen at Malheur Lake May 10.

*Petrochelidon lunifrons lunifrons*. Cliff Swallow. Abundant breeding bird throughout the region. Nesting in abandoned shacks, barns and out-houses all over Harney Valley. Began to lay about May 15. First seen at Clear Lake April 10.

*Hirundo erythrogastra*. Barn Swallow. One seen at Clear Lake April 4 and another April 7. Nesting commonly under bridges in many parts of Harney Valley. Began to lay about May 20; young just leaving nest seen as late as August 19.

*Iridoprocne bicolor*. Tree Swallow. Common in spring at Malheur in company with other swallows. Noted from May 5 until June 7; not seen thereafter. Dr. Hibbard has found the eggs at Burns.

*Riparia riparia*. Bank Swallow. Undoubtedly nests within a short distance of Malheur Lake, but breeding colony was not seen. It was rather common during May, the latest spring bird being noted May 30. Next seen July 12, old birds with young common July 13-14, and abundant during latter part of July and month of August.

*Bombycilla cedrorum*. Cedar Waxwing. Small flock seen in junipers near Clear Lake April 8.

*Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides*. White-rumped Shrike. Fairly common throughout region. Nest containing six eggs noted in sage-brush June 2.

*Vireosylva gilva swainsoni*. Western Warbling Vireo. Pair seen along Blitzen River May 18, and another pair in same locality August 4.

*Dendroica aestiva aestiva*. Yellow Warbler. First noted at Springers' May 15; became fairly common shortly after this date and remained so through the entire summer. Nest containing five eggs noted in sage-bush June 5. No specimens were taken and the bird was assigned to above form on strength of ranges as given in last A. O. U. Check-List.

*Dendroica auduboni auduboni*. Audubon Warbler. Noted at Clear Lake April 13; fairly common at Malheur from late April to May 10; several seen May 16, and one bird June 2. A bird seen August 18 at Springer Ranch looked very much like *D. coronata* but may have been an immature of *auduboni*.

*Geothlypis trichas occidentalis*. Western Yellowthroat. First seen at Malheur Lake May 12; became rather common shortly afterwards, and remained so during entire summer. Was generally to be found in marshy sections among bunch grass, and this was undoubtedly where it nested, though no nests were observed. Full-grown young were plentiful in late July and August.

*Anthus rubescens*. Pipit. Rather common at both Clear and Malheur lakes, some remaining in the latter locality as late as May 15.

*Oreoscoptes montanus*. Sage Thrasher. Common in the sage country in most of region visited. Nested in some numbers in vicinity of Malheur Lake. From abundance of old nests and scarcity of new ones, however, should judge it to have been less plentiful than usual this year. Full-grown young were seen late in July.

*Salpinctes obsoletus*. Rock Wren. More or less common in rocky regions from Clear Lake to Harney Valley. Dr. Hibbard has found the nest at Burns.

*Telmatodytes palustris plesius*. Western Marsh Wren. Breeding abundantly in tules at Malheur Lake, from hay lands out to open water. Began to lay early in May and young out of nest were noted by June 10.

*Baeolophus inornatus griseus*. Gray Titmouse. Rather common in juniper timber around Clear Lake. By the middle of April was paired and apparently about to breed.

*Sitta canadensis*. Red-breasted Nuthatch. Noted at Malheur Lake, as follows:

One bird August 3, another August 9, two the day following, and one August 20. Also seen occasionally in wooded districts between Harney Valley and Klamath Falls.

*Regulus calendula calendula*. Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Common in spring at both Clear and Malheur lakes. Remained in the latter locality as late as May 15.

*Myadestes townsendi*. Townsend Solitaire. One bird seen in junipers near Clear Lake April 5, and several more in same locality April 7.

*Planesticus migratorius propinquus*. Western Robin. Common breeding bird in most sections visited, though rather rare around Malheur Lake in midsummer.

*Sialia mexicana occidentalis*. Western Bluebird. Fairly common at Clear Lake.

*Sialia currucoides*. Mountain Bluebird. Common in timbered sections throughout most of the country traversed. Occasional in brush country around Malheur Lake.

*Los Angeles, California, December 21, 1918.*

## THE WILSON SNIPE NESTING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By EDWARD WALL

IN the May issue of *THE CONDOR* I note an article by Dr. Barton Warren Evermann entitled "Nesting of the Wilson Snipe in California". In this article are given all the published records of the nesting of the Snipe in this state. Some two or three years ago I was surprised when Mr. J. R. Pemberton informed me that the printed records showed no eggs of the Wilson Snipe to have been taken in this state, and at that time I prepared at his request a short statement which I intended to send to *THE CONDOR*; but after discussing the matter with other collectors of twenty-five or thirty years ago concluded that it was hardly worth while and that Mr. Pemberton was not, perhaps, so well informed as he might be on the subject. Now, however, I am convinced that for some reason mention of the Wilson Snipe as a regular nesting bird in California has been omitted from the published records of earlier days and so am appending herewith the original manuscript that I intended to send in.

My friend, Mr. J. R. Pemberton, informs me that a set of eggs of Wilson Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) that I gave him some time since has caused quite a commotion in the oological world because of the fact that they were collected as far south as San Bernardino. I can hardly believe this but he insists that he can find no collector of today who has ever heard of the bird nesting at such a southerly point and both he and Mr. W. L. Dawson are of the opinion that it constitutes a new record.

However this may be with the collectors of today, I am certain that the old time collectors of a quarter of a century ago will find nothing to be astonished at in the record, for I personally know of several who have collected not only one set but many sets in the days when they were actively at work in the field. Personally, I have done little or no egg collecting since along in the early nineties, and there was a period of some ten years after that when I did not keep in very close touch with the ornithological or oological world and its news. Even today, although I have again started collecting an occasional skin and keeping a more or less complete record of birds and their movements, I have not been able to catch up with the progress that has been made during the interim. From 1887 to 1893 I was actively engaged in egg-