

adult bird found by the junior author on September 15, 1921, and a late fall specimen collected by L. M. Huey on October 21, 1919, agree in showing conclusively that the desert race of horned owl is the form found in the extreme southern San Joaquin Valley. Whether *palescens* has invaded the region in recent years and supplanted *pacificus*, which was formerly supposed to inhabit the section, or whether it has always been an established part of the local avifauna, is a debatable question. But the latter hypothesis seems much the more logical when we consider that this region also supports other typical desert forms, such as the Leconte Thrasher and California Sage Sparrow.

*Otocoris alpestris ammophila*: The horned larks breeding about Buena Vista Lake exhibit affinities that are distinctly analogous to those which characterize the horned owls of the region, in that they seem related to the form of the Mohave Desert, rather than to *actia* of the more northern portion of the San Joaquin. A series of breeding birds from the vicinity of the Lake do, in a few instances, show a slight tendency in the latter direction, but the great majority are so close to typical *ammophila* as to be referable with certainty to that form. Breeding birds from Corcoran, Kings County, California, in the collection of A. B. Howell, are unqualifiedly *actia*, so that *ammophila*, in the San Joaquin, must be confined to the extreme southern end of the Valley.—D. R. DICKEY AND A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, January 13, 1922.*

**Position of Feet in Flight in Certain Birds.**—Here are several apparent "rules" in bird life that have interested me for some time, and they are passed on to the readers of THE CONDOR for what they are worth.

1. All water birds in flight extend the feet behind.
2. All web-footed birds, with short tails, spread the toes in flight, the membranes apparently acting as an elevator or rudder. This group includes the murrelets, murrelets, auks, and puffins.
3. All perching birds in flight fold the legs forward under the feathers.

All the short-tailed, web-footed birds that I have had under close observation, when getting under way do spread the toes, placing them side by side to form a wide flat surface, which is no doubt useful in flight. By the time these birds may have attained their regular speed, possibly the toes are relaxed, but they are then as a rule too far distant for accurate observation. I am not so certain that loons follow this rule. Grebes, which are lobe-footed, spread the lobe flat out in rising from the water, and, I think, close the toes after attaining full speed.—GEO. G. CANTWELL, *Puyallup, Washington, January 20, 1922.*

**Further Remarks on the Occurrence of the Buffle-head at Eagle Lake.**—We have read with interest Mr. Allan Brooks's comment on our record of the occurrence of the Buffle-head at Eagle Lake, California. Mr. Ray had received a similar letter from Mr. A. C. Bent drawing his attention particularly to the error in the identification of the young ducks shown in figure 33 of the Condor for November, 1921. It is evident that these are young American Mergansers. We do not wish to take up space unnecessarily in a discussion of this matter, but we believe a further account of the circumstances may be of interest, especially so, as Mr. Brooks has brought up several questions of doubt regarding the identity of the young following the female Buffle-head and also the actions of the male bird.

Mr. Ray and I feel positive that the young following the female are Buffle-heads and we can also vouch for the actions of the male Buffle-head. The error regarding the young ducks shown in figure 33, we believe, should and can be explained by the circumstances leading to their capture. Upon our first encountering the female and eight young, we recognized this as a new breeding duck for this locality and during our efforts to obtain a photograph it was noted that two of the young made several attempts at diving and in this way became separated from the parent. The remaining six kept well up with the parent and seemed to obey each warning. The diving efforts of the two young and the maneuvering of our boat caused a complete separation of the two from the parent and the remainder of the flock.

Several hours afterward, the two young of the photograph were found on the shore of the bay in which the female and young were encountered and not more than 50 yards from the point where the photograph, figure 32, was taken.