

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

The Capture of Water-fowl in Fish Nets.—The recent note by Mr. Stanley G. Jewett¹ on the accidental capture of a White-winged Scoter (*Oidemia deglandi*) in a salmon net, is of particular interest in view of the fact that the Bureau of Biological Survey is giving attention to the use of nets to capture birds for banding purposes.²

As stated in the paper referred to in the accompanying foot-note, several forms of net traps have been successfully used, among them being the well-known "fyke" net. This contrivance is made by covering a series of four iron hoops, three to four feet in diameter, with cord webbing. When fully extended the hoops are about two feet apart, and the web cylinder thus produced is divided into two chambers by means of web funnels. The first of these has a large mouth while the second is much reduced. Short wings or guides of webbing are extended from the mouth of the trap and the whole affair is held in place in shallow water by long stakes forced into the mud.

In the marshes of the Illinois River these nets are used extensively for the capture of carp, buffalo, and other fishes, an energetic fisherman frequently running a line of forty to fifty "fykes". The nets are placed in areas where large numbers of ducks gather to feed, and it is common to find half a dozen mallards or pintails in a single net. During March, 1922, while engaged in banding work in this region, I made a practice of trying to beat the fisherman to the nets that were set in my neighborhood for the purpose of securing any ducks that might have been caught. Pintails were most frequently taken and it was noticeable that they were usually caught in flocks of four to six, indicating that they fed in small groups and were strongly inclined to "follow the leader".

In this connection, mention may also be made of a recent "return" from a Buffle-head duck that was banded by Mr. Verdi Burtch, at Branchport, New York, on April 6, 1922. Eleven days later (April 17) the bird was found entangled in a herring net in Georgian Bay, near Collingwood, Ontario.

The problem of evolving suitable methods for the capture of diving ducks for banding purposes will still require considerable experimentation, but present indications are that some form of a submerged net will prove most satisfactory. Such a device will, of course, require an arrangement that will bring captured birds safely to the surface after they have entered the chambers or pockets of the trap.—FREDERICK C. LINCOLN, *U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C., August 14, 1922.*

Northward Range of the Gray Vireo in California.—While on a short collecting trip as guest of Mr. A. Brazier Howell, I spent the afternoon of July 25, 1922, on the west slope of Walker Pass, which is in northeastern Kern County, California, at the southern end of the main high Sierra Nevada. The feature of the occasion was my meeting with an adult pair of Gray Vireos (*Vireo vicinior*). The exact spot was on a steep, north-facing hillside within one-fourth mile south of "Jack's Station" (now merely a roadside camping place); altitude close to 4500 feet; life-zone Upper Sonoran, in a semi-arid phase of it. The birds were in sparse brush (*Garrya*, *Kunzia*, *Artemisia tridentata*, and *Cercocarpus betulaeifolius*); and a digger pine and a pinyon both grew within one hundred feet of where they were discovered.

I was first attracted by the broken, post-nuptially rendered song of the male—intermittent and sketchy, yet distinct enough from the songs of other vireos to be recognized at once. This male Gray Vireo was promptly shot. It proved to be in molt, with only two of the old tail-feathers remaining and with new feathers showing where old ones had fallen out, in the wings and in most of the body tracts. The weight of the bird was 12.5 grams. It is now catalogued as no. 43295 of the bird collection in the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

A minute or two after shooting the singing bird, I caught sight of the other bird which I concluded was the female of the pair. The only note she gave was a low harsh *churr* or *shray*, given now and then as she hopped slowly through the twiggery. From the bushes she went into the pinyon tree before mentioned, and thence into the digger

¹Condor, XXIV, May, 1922, p. 95.

²Auk, XXXIX, no. 3, July, 1922, pp. 322-334, pls. XI-XIV: "Trapping Ducks for Banding Purposes", by Frederick C. Lincoln.

pine, reaching the unusual height of some fifteen feet above the slope at the base of the tree. Her head was turned from side to side at frequent intervals, especially when she approached and eyed me curiously at a range of not more than twelve feet.

As for field characters, besides the general deliberateness of movement, the thick, dark-colored bill was well seen; the gray tone of color both above and below was noticeable; there was no crest, nor inclination to a crest. I was particularly struck by the relative great length of tail, for a vireo; also this member drooped, most of the time, below the axis-line of the body. It will be recalled that chaparral-dwellers in general, whatever their genetic affiliations, have relatively long tails—for example, Bell Sparrows, Bewick Wrens, Wren-tits, Gnatcatchers, Towhees, and Thrashers.

Some of the above observations will be found new or supplementary to those reported for the Gray Vireo from the San Jacinto region (Grinnell and Swarth, Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., vol. 10, 1913, pp. 291-297).

This Walker Pass record is the northernmost in California so far known for the species. In fact, only one other occurrence has been reported from north of west-central Los Angeles County (whence reported by Loye Miller, *Condor*, XXIII, 1921, p. 194). This other northern record (Grinnell, *Pac. Coast Avifauna* no. 11, 1915, p. 144) is for a point at 2400 feet altitude near Bodfish, on the Kern River, in Kern County. An adult female (now no. 20679, *Mus. Vert. Zool.*) was collected there by Walter P. Taylor on June 16, 1911. It is in worn "breeding" plumage. Mr. Taylor's field-notes indicate that the bird was taken on a slope clothed in part with junipers and digger pines—evidently good Upper Sonoran. The date of capture would argue for its nesting in the immediate vicinity.

There are vast areas of the same sort of territory as has afforded the two Kern County records, around the southern Sierra Nevada. It all *looks* like perfectly proper country for Gray Vireos. I am tempted to believe that the species will be found widely, though not abundantly, represented there by someone seeking it in May or June, who is familiar with its song and habitat predilections.—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, August 19, 1922.*

Two Birds from the Bitterroot Valley, Montana.—Ross Goose (*Chen rossi*). As most of the records of this goose in Montana are from points east of the divide, it seems worth while to record one that was taken at Corvallis, October 10, 1911. The specimen is a female, and is now in the Zoological Museum, University of Minnesota.

Rough-legged Hawk (*Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis*). Through an oversight I omitted this species from the list sent to Mr. Saunders several years ago. There is a specimen, a male bird, taken by the writer at Corvallis, January 10, 1910, in the Museum collection at the University of Minnesota. The species was a fairly common winter visitor in this vicinity.—BERNARD BAILEY, *Elk River, Minnesota, June 2, 1922.*

Blackbirds Flocking.—In the May, 1922, issue of *THE CONDOR* (p. 93) mention is made of the Yellow-headed Blackbird flocking with Brewer Blackbirds. It is not an unusual occurrence here to see a combined flock of Brewer and Red-winged Blackbirds, Cowbirds and one or two Yellow-heads all feeding together on the ground, generally about the early part of May. By that time the Cowbirds have arrived and the other several species have not yet scattered to their widely differing nesting grounds. On May 3, this year, I passed by one bull lying out in the pasture with an attendant group of three or four Cowbirds and one Yellow-headed Blackbird, though I cannot say I saw the latter perch on the bull's back like the Cowbirds.—L. B. POTTER, *Eastend, Saskatchewan, July 8, 1922.*

Notes from Southwestern New Mexico.—White-winged Scoter (*Oidemia deglandi*). An adult female was brought to me November 10, 1921. It had been taken from a flock of six, on a small irrigation pond on Duck Creek, thirty miles northwest of Silver City. None of our local shooters remember to have taken this species in this country.

Zone-tailed Hawk (*Buteo abbreviatus*). From Tyrone, Grant County, New Mexico, a fine adult female was brought to me on April 15, 1922. Another was seen on several occasions in the same locality. I have never before seen this species in ten years careful collecting in southwestern New Mexico.