

Arizona Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis superbus*). On May 8, 1922, at Red Rock, Grant County, New Mexico, these Cardinals were abundant, at least a dozen being seen, and a pair taken. The Gila River comes out of a tight "box" just northeast of Red Rock, and at that point their distribution up the river seems to end.

White-winged Dove (*Melopelia asiatica*). At Red Rock on the same date as above I took a male of this species. Ranchmen told me that these birds had appeared in this locality in the spring of the previous year (1921), but that they had never been noticed before that time.—R. T. KELLOGG, *Silver City, New Mexico, July 13, 1922.*

Birds Eating Snails.—In connection with the survey of infested areas and subsequent clean-up of the European snail, *Helix pisana*, at La Jolla, it is interesting to note that two birds have been observed by the writer as feeding on this mollusk.

The infested territory was burned over about three years ago and at that time enormous numbers of snails were killed, a very strong odor of burning flesh being apparent. Immediately thereafter flocks of sea gulls came in and feasted on the roasted snails; but, although outside of the burned area many live snails were in evidence on low bushes and shrubs, no gulls were observed to feed on them.

Another infestation of this snail at La Jolla has now occurred, and while making a survey of the district last week with Mr. A. J. Basinger of the Pest Control Division of the State Department of Agriculture, I noted a male English Sparrow busily engaged in feeding on young live snails clustered on a small dead Monterey cypress tree. At this stage the shells are, of course, soft and easily broken. The English Sparrow has long been regarded as an undesirable immigrant, but it would seem that it has scored a point in its own favor if it is to be regarded as an enemy of this destructive snail.—R. R. McLEAN, *County Horticultural Commissioner, San Diego, July 26, 1922.*

The Snowy Egret in Los Angeles County, California.—While studying shore-birds at Playa del Rey, September 25, 1922, Mesdames C. H. Hall, A. J. Mix, and F. T. Bicknell, members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, were fortunate in having a close and unobstructed view of a Snowy Egret (*Egretta candidissima candidissima*). It was on a sand bar in the lagoon in company with a small flock of Western Gulls. Mrs. Hall was the first to sight the bird.

Standing in a semi-meditative attitude among the Gulls, not over two hundred feet from shore, the Egret offered a perfect opportunity for study. With field glasses as aids, though not a necessity, its pure white plumage, size, movements, graceful poses and other identification marks were carefully noted. We also observed the uplifting of one slender black leg, the opening and closing of the yellow toes, the stretching of the beautiful white wing, the opening of the long slender ebony bill with its yellow base, and the sleepy blinking of the eyes which enhanced the yellow of the iris. An occasional light puff of the sea-breeze raised and ruffled the snowy feathers on the bird's head and back, giving a momentary semi-nuptial plumage effect.

The encroaching waters of the incoming tide moistened the sand under the Egret's feet, which it resented by moving a few paces nearer the indifferent Gulls. For fully twenty minutes we studied this beautiful and rare bird, when suddenly, alone and without warning, it took flight above the lagoon and disappeared among the sloughs of the adjoining marsh lands.

The larger, American Egret (*Herodias egretta*) is a regular winter visitant on the San Pedro tide lands and Seal Beach salt marshes and is often studied by the Audubon members. Reporting the event to Mr. L. E. Wyman, Ornithologist at the Los Angeles Museum, he suggested, since the Snowy Egret has so few records in this vicinity, that it was well worth mentioning.—MRS. F. T. BICKNELL, *Los Angeles, California, October 2, 1922.*

Perching Pelicans.—Three times in the past three years I have seen individuals of the California Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus californicus*) perch on the wire stretched just above the top of the rail of our pier. This wire is about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter and it is stretched fairly taut, being supported at intervals of about ten feet by upright spikes so that its height above the pier rail is about four inches.

At 7:52 A. M. on September 19, 1922, while working at the end of the pier I noticed a Brown Pelican alight on the rail about one hundred feet away. I quickly took

a fairly comfortable position with the intention of observing the bird's actions as carefully as possible. I could see his feet distinctly and his toes seemed to curl around and grasp the wire in the same way as those of a perching bird. He was standing almost erect and teetering a good deal in an effort to find his balance. Several times the pelican tried to stoop to a sitting posture but with very unsettling results. Once while trying to preen his breast feathers he almost fell over backward and had to flap his wings vigorously to get balanced again. Finally he became satisfied with the erect posture and remained in it for probably ten minutes. In the erect posture for a time his balancing movements were so nearly imperceptible at one hundred feet distance that I would not have been able to detect them if I had not had the advantage of a series of cross wires on a gate within about thirty feet of the bird. By use of these wires I was able to estimate that at best there was rhythmic movement of the head up and down through a distance of at least a half inch, varied every few seconds by a longer swing of two to three inches.

Just before this relatively stable period he had lifted first one foot and then the other several times as though the wire hurt his feet. Indeed, this performance reminded me very much of a barefoot boy trying to stand on a hot pavement. At the end of the quiet period the pelican began side-stepping and walked on the wire a distance of about four feet at the end of which he turned around facing in the opposite direction. In making the turn he got a good deal unbalanced and saved himself from falling by stepping onto the wooden rail with one foot. He again assumed the erect position and remained thus for some little time until excited by the screeching of a flock of gulls which flew near him. At 8:15 he flew away after having perched on the small wire for twenty-three minutes.

When first alighting he had been facing the pier and away from the water. The half turn made after the side-stepping performance brought him into a position facing the water. Before beginning the side-stepping he had made several efforts to stoop, with very strong appearance of getting ready to fly. Every effort to stoop destroyed his balance and he could not get a good jump into the air for starting flight. I do not think it possible that he could have gotten enough jump to enable him to clear the opposite rail. Whatever the actual reason for the half turn it certainly put him into position (facing the water) to launch easily into flight.

I have mentioned a failure to keep balance while attempting to preen. There were two or three fairly successful attempts but they were confined to very small adjustments of breast feathers with very brief action. At various times in the perching period the head was rotated from side to side but this did not involve much shifting in weight and was not very disturbing to balance.

The three cases which I have seen indicate that pelicans do have perching ambitions and that they can make a very creditable showing in a difficult situation. Do such performances indicate vestigial or initiatory tendencies in behavior?—W. E. ALLEN, *Scripps Institution for Biological Research of the University of California, La Jolla, September 20, 1922.*

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The editors of THE CONDOR are once more indebted to Mr. J. R. Pemberton for assistance. The annual index concluding our present volume was in large measure prepared by him.

Volume II, numbers 3-4 (in one), of Dawson's "Journal of the Museum of Comparative Oology" (Santa Barbara) reached our desk on October 31. A very important new nesting record for California is that, by Mr. W. L. Dawson, of the Yellow Rail in

Mono County. Mr. A. B. Howell contributes an article on "The Ethics of Collecting" which is fraught with sound sense; the principles set forth ought to be followed conscientiously by all collectors, and then there would be far less of criticism levied at the fraternity than is, unfortunately, now the case. The greater part of this issue of the "Journal" is occupied by accounts of nest-hunting, chiefly with the Sierra Nevada Rosy Finch as the objective, and with the human-interest element emphasized rather than the ornithological.