

Since then not a single nut has been stored in the redwood tree by the woodpeckers, which have transferred their choice of storage room to the upper ten feet of the trolley poles on the car line near by. These poles are of solid, hard wood, but the birds have dug out the holes and fitted in the nuts just as though the poles were of one of the softer varieties of wood to which they were accustomed. The squirrels have not yet found these caches.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, August 1, 1923.*

**Nesting of Pigmy Nuthatches at Lake Tahoe.**—On August 15, 1923, I found the nest of a pair of Pigmy Nuthatches (*Sitta pygmaea*) in a hole about ten feet from the ground in an upright post at Brockway, Placer County, California, about 75 yards from the shore of Lake Tahoe. My attention had been attracted to the site by the calls of the adults and nestlings and by the frequent trips to the nest made by the adult birds with food for the young. The nest, entered by a small, irregular orifice, was in a decayed portion of the pole, where excavation was easy. The visits of the adult birds were so noticeably frequent that an hour was given, on the afternoon of the 16th, to observing and recording the time of each visit.

For a few minutes after I first began to observe them, from about a dozen feet from the foot of the pole, the birds were unwilling to visit the nest; so the time during which they were evidently restrained by my presence is excluded. Both parent birds were engaged in the task of carrying what appeared to be flies, worms, and white grubs, and both birds were often in sight at the same time. The first visit was recorded at 2:26 in the afternoon and by 3:27 the birds had made 24 calls, carrying food each time. At this rate the adult birds were making over 300 trips a day. The longest interval between visits was eight minutes, the shortest interval was half a minute. The parents did their foraging in nearby pine trees and well up from the ground, from about 50 to 80 feet or more high. The insects were thrust into the bills of the young the instant the parents arrived, without the slightest delay, and the old birds were off for more, now and then stopping a second or so to remove material from the nest. The approach was usually made by first alighting on a small pine tree almost at the nest, and the departure by the same route, but some of the trips were by a direct course from and to the group of large pines without any intermediate stop at all.

Not once during this hour did either adult enter the nest, although at other times they occasionally did so. The entrance to the nest, and the wood for about three inches around the entrance, was worn and almost polished. The birds alighted near the entrance in any position, with the head pointed toward the nest; but they were always vertical when delivering their captures to the young. The young birds were evidently nearly ready to leave the nest because one always had its head out of the hole when food arrived. They appeared to be fully feathered, and their calls were as loud as and similar to those of the adults. The young could detect the approach of their parents before I could and I learned of the coming of the old birds through the calling of the young.

The pole in which the nest was placed stood at the junction of two board walks, not over twenty feet from an occupied cottage. People were passing every few minutes, workmen were repairing a drain and board walk within one hundred feet, and automobiles were being repaired, moved about, and their engines raced by mechanics, within fifty or seventy-five yards. The adult birds were so intent upon their duties that none of these activities disturbed them. These same general conditions obtained throughout the days August 15 to 17, inclusive. The cottage in which we were staying was only a few rods from the nest, and several times each day I observed the continuous feeding going on. Early on the 18th the nest was deserted, and all the birds had disappeared. Two probable reasons at once suggest themselves for the change of environment: (1) the vicinity of the nest was noisy and unsafe; (2) the territory may have been depleted of available food supply.

During the days on which I watched the birds, foraging was done in a group of about twenty large pine trees. The flights were always direct from near the nest to and from these pines. I measured what seemed the distance of these trees from the nest and estimated that 150 yards was the average round trip and that the total distance traveled each day was approximately thirty miles.

The voice of the Pigmy Nuthatch is unlike that of the Slender-billed and Red-breasted nuthatches. There is none of the familiar *yank, yank, yank*, which is usually

associated with nuthatches. The call is a clear, short, and repeatedly uttered whistle, with very short intervals. The adult birds uttered this call in flight as well as when perching, recalling the habit but not the voice of linnets.—CLAUDE GIGNOUX, *Berkeley, California, August 24, 1923.*

**Additional Records of the European Widgeon in Oregon.**—Through the courtesy of State Game Warden A. E. Burghdoff, I have had a chance to examine two specimens of the European Widgeon (*Mareca penelope*) during the past few years. The first was an adult male shot by Ed King, of Portland, Oregon, on Sauvies Island in the Columbia River, Multnomah County, Oregon, during November, 1920. The second was a beautiful adult male shot by J. L. Stafford, of Gresham, Oregon, on the Morgan ranch, on Sauvies Island, about the first of December, 1922.

Both these birds were mounted by Ed Gonty, taxidermist of Portland, and are in the possession of the men who shot them. Another mounted specimen is in the possession of the Portland Library Association and, upon inquiry, the only information I could get was that it was "shot along the Columbia River."

These, with Mr. Walker's record (CONDOR, xxv, p. 70), constitute three authentic records for northwestern Oregon. There is an element of doubt as to the exact locality of the specimen in the possession of the Portland Library Association.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, July 12, 1923.*

**The Note of the Ruddy.**—The note of the Ruddy Duck (*Erismatura jamaicensis*) being unknown to me, I resolved to become acquainted with it, if possible, in the season of 1923; and the opportunity came to me on June 8. I was on a collecting trip to Lake Majeau with Messrs. R. C. Harlow, Geo. H. Stuart, 3rd, and J. Fletcher Street, and while wading through a bed of tules I observed three Ruddies, two drakes and a female, a short distance out in the open water.

The drakes were evidently courting the female and gave their love note repeatedly. As near as I can render it, it is *chica, chica, chica, chica, quack*. It is given with a feeble utterance, especially the *chica* sounds; the final *quack* is louder. This call is very rapidly uttered by the drakes while the head is quickly jerked up and down, the bill striking the water at the end of each word sound. The only note uttered by the female was a feeble *quack*.

Afterwards I often heard the Ruddies near my home at Lac La Nonne, where at least three pairs were breeding in a bed of tules in front of the house. At a distance of about one hundred yards, the *chica* sounds were not audible, but the final *quack* or *quowk* was quite distinct. The notes of these birds differed slightly from the ones heard at Lake Majeau: the *chica* sounds were not the regular four heard there, but were given in twos and threes, also, and the ending was more often *quowk*, than *quack*.

I heard the Ruddies principally in the evenings and on the clear moonlight nights of the last few days in June and the first part of July. Later they seemed to be silent. Probably, when the female is sitting on the completed clutch of eggs, the drake ceases to call.—A. D. HENDERSON, *Belvedere, Alberta, August 13, 1923.*

**A Possible Function of the Whiteness of the Breast in Crevice-searching Birds.**—In reviewing one's field experience with birds, certain species are likely to stand out in memory by reason of their striking color, behavior, or voice, or of two or even all three of these features in combination. A person of an enquiring turn of mind will be led to ponder over the possible significance of these conspicuous features, and he will "gain merit," intellectually, by so doing, even if he never finds himself ready to offer a conclusive explanation.

At the moment of writing, I have vividly in mind the Dotted Canyon Wren (*Catherpes mexicanus punctulatus*), a bird met with, never in large numbers, but under circumstances which as a rule concentrate attention upon it. Let the reader, with me, recall this bird in its normal surroundings. Our first glimpse is likely to be of a fleeting avian figure, seen momentarily in a remote recess of a broken cliff face or of a rock slide. The bird may disappear for minutes at a time. By patiently waiting, one may again see the bird, barely indicated in the gloom of some cavern. What one then sees is a spot of white moving jerkily up and down, and this way and that.