

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

The White-necked Raven Nesting in Eastern Colorado.—Reports of early observers are unanimous in regard to the great number of White-necked Ravens (*Corvus cryptoleucus*) once found in the foothills and plains regions of eastern Colorado, where they are now of rare occurrence. Finding a nest on July 28 of this year containing well-grown young, is therefore of interest, but not less so, the unusual site the birds selected.

Standing not more than one hundred yards from the well-travelled highway, about eighteen miles south of Hugo, Washington County, Colorado, is the framework of an old windmill tower. When passing the spot on the above date, a pair of ravens was observed at rest on the small platform near the top of the eighteen foot structure.

As the region is a slightly rolling, treeless prairie, devoted largely to agriculture, serious thought that the old tower might be a nesting site of the ravens was not entertained, especially as it was close to a public road and situated in a field of growing corn; but, finding the birds present some hours later, a closer scrutiny was undertaken. This revealed a compact nest composed of weed stalks placed within the square formed by the corner timbers, its top being level with the platform.

An examination of the three young, then two-thirds grown, revealed the white of the basal portions of the throat feathers and thus identified the birds as the now rare White-necked Raven.—ROBERT J. NIEDRACH, *Colorado Museum of Natural History, Denver, October 24, 1923.*

An Additional Note on the "Following" Habit in Hawks.—Mr. Leopold's note on the "following" habit in hawks in THE CONDOR, volume 25, page 180, brings to mind experiences I had with Pigeon Hawks (*Tinnunculus columbarius*) in the Magdaler Islands, Gulf of St. Lawrence, Canada. During the summers of 1906, 1907 and 1908, I frequently walked the shores of Grindstone Island where we had our headquarters. Often one of these little falcons would follow me along the beach, directly over my head, at a height of perhaps twenty feet or, more often, a few yards behind me, all the while uttering its shrill, chattering call. I was too far from the bush to be disturbing any nesting birds, and I was on the open beach where shorebirds should have been obvious enough without disturbing them, to attract any predatory bird.

Many predacious birds, mammals, and, I think, fishes have definite limits to their hunting areas, within which the intrusion of others is variously resented, or not resented, according to the pugnacity of the species or individual. I doubt that any following is done in anticipation of prey being frightened into visible motion.

Digressing slightly from the main theme, there is one "follower", at any rate in the East, that goes out for "game". If you are collecting birds' eggs, our Red Fox will unquestionably follow along and clean up the short sets you are waiting for, should you go too near, and the result shall be "nihil ex ovo".—W. SPRAGUE BROOKS, *Boston Society of Natural History, Boston, October 25, 1923.*

Notes from Eureka, California.—Yakutat Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia caurina*). A male taken on December 27, 1919, in town, was by itself and easily approached. Another male was taken on the ocean beach, across the bay from town, on March 27, 1921. It was flushed from under a log, and the way this bird got over, or under, drift logs was surprising.

Pileolated Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla pileolata*). A male was taken on November 24, 1918, in a brush lot in town; it had been first seen on November 20.

Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*). A male taken on January 1, 1920, in a small spruce grove, just out of town limits; seen also the day before.

Oregon Chickadee (*Penthestes atricapillus occidentalis*). A male was taken on March 31, 1920, in a brushy gulch in town limits. First seen March 26, with a small flock of Chestnut-backed Chickadees. For six afternoons this little flock of Chickadees would be in a certain willow around five o'clock.

Specimens of the above birds were kindly identified for me by Mr. Harry S. Swarth.—JOHN M. DAVIS, *Eureka, California, December 14, 1923.*

English Sparrow at Buena Park, Orange County, California.—The first English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) I ever saw was a male bird, perched on the telegraph wires near the Southern Pacific depot at Buena Park, on April 15, 1912. I was away

a great deal of the time for the next six years and did not observe any more here until April 17, 1918, when a pair was seen. In the spring of 1919 a colony established itself, using some large date palms on Grand Avenue for nesting sites.

Since then they have increased and spread all over the village and out into the surrounding country, until at the present time on my rural mail route covering an area roughly four miles one way by two miles the other, there are six well established colonies, besides the numerous flocks in the village. They seem to require palms for roosting and nesting sites. Every colony I know of is established where either the date palm or the *Washingtonia* palm is growing, using the mass of dead fronds about the trunk of the latter as their shelter. At my home we have no palms, but have a number of large eucalyptus trees that would apparently afford ample nesting sites. The nearest colony is less than one half mile away; and during the winter and spring for the last four years, pairs and small flocks have been frequent visitors to our premises; but as yet they have not nested, nor remained very long at a time.

In Honolulu during 1914-15 they were very common. But I did not notice any decided preference for palms amid the luxuriant tropical gardens of the residence sections. In San Francisco I found them abundant where there were no palms or any other shelter than the cornices of buildings; and in the Taft district of Kern County they lacked palms and seemed to content themselves with the few trees found around some of the oil company camps.

Is the apparent preference for palms a local development, or, given the choice of various shelters, will *Passer domesticus* take palms first?—JOHN MCB. ROBERTSON, Buena Park, California, November 4, 1923.

The Black-bellied Plover at Buena Vista Lake.—While at Buena Vista Lake, Kern County, California, in the company of Mr. A. J. van Rossem, I took a male Black-bellied Plover (*Squatarola squatarola*). The bird was captured April 15, 1923, and is in nearly full spring plumage. The specimen was one of hundreds of sick migratory shore birds that were dying from some unknown condition of the lake water. This individual could not have been abnormally detained at the lake for many days, since the disease seemed to attack and kill the birds rather quickly. Although during our stay much of the lake shore was explored, no other individual of this species was seen.

This bird, as far as I know, is the first Black-bellied Plover taken at the lake, and adds to the other interior records of birds taken farther north in the San Joaquin Valley.—ALDEN H. MILLER, Los Angeles, California, November 29, 1923.

Developmental Color Changes in the Eyes of New Zealand Gulls.—As every mother knows, the color of her infant's eyes undergoes changes, more or less marked, during the first year or two after birth. But these alterations are negligible when compared with the color variations observable in the irides of some young birds. For example, the pretty and often quite tame little Red-billed Gull (in New Zealand the Mackerel Gull), *Larus scopulinus*, is born with a dark brown, almost black, eye, and yet by the time the immature bird is a year old the iris has changed to nearly pure white. A similar alteration is noticeable in the eyes of the much larger but equally beautiful Southern Black-backed Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) that ranges over the whole Southern Hemisphere. Both these birds are easily domesticated and act the part of scavengers and devourers of caterpillars and other insect pests. I have often seen them about the Australasian harbors and fields going about their useful work unafraid of man.—CASEY A. WOOD, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, December 15, 1923.

References to Feeding Habits of Certain Birds.—It is believed the following references will be usefully put on record here. Though they appear in an ichthyological journal they are of direct interest to ornithologists.

Copeia, No. 21, p. 27, "On Fish-bones in a Kingfisher's Nest." The note does not give the specific identity of the bird but it unquestionably refers to the Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*), since that is the only kingfisher known to occur in the region where the observation was made.

Copeia, No. 26, p. 2, "Fish as Owl Food." Notes the Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) feeding on the Yellow Perch.

Copeia, No. 30, p. 31, "Louisiana Water-thrush eating Fish." *Seiurus motacilla* observed catching small fish and picking the flesh.—F. N. BASSETT, Alameda, California, January 11, 1924.