

For the stuffing, I prepared two soft wads of cotton, of size appropriate to the specimen in hand. With the skin on the back I placed one wad in the body cavity on top of the tied humeri; then I wrapped with cotton one end of the bamboo sliver to a diameter to fill out the neck, and inserted it through the neck between the lower jaws and firmly into the mouth, the mandibles having been previously tied shut by a thread sewn through the nostrils.

Then I placed the second cotton wad on top of the body stick, and, after the usual adjustments, sewed up the ventral incision completely, in such a way that the stick protruded backwards in a perfectly symmetrical median position, its exit from the body being about at the vent. The legs were then crossed on top of the stick (as the bird lay on its back), and the thread tied tightly around both the legs and the stick simultaneously. This thread was, by the way, that attached to the permanent label bearing the full data.

The length of the stick, backward beyond the tips of the tail and wing quills, was determined on the basis of its employment as a handle—not too long and not too short. The bird, if with wings spread, was then put in position on a drying board, without wrapping, symmetry being assured by much smoothing and by the use of pins. In the case of a specimen with the wings folded against the sides, I wrapped the bird in split wadding, just as I usually do with the ordinary style of study skin.

After thorough drying, I find specimens prepared as above to be exceedingly firm, promising much longer "life" and especially much greater ease of handling than with the usual type of skin. The stick enables one to twirl the bird, without touching any of the feathers, so as quickly to see any of the superficial characters looked for.

The trouble involved in making this improved type of study skin is very little more than that ordinarily expended. To put up one small bird took me thirty minutes; and I am sure that with practise I could better this rate of output. I am so positive of the advantages of the stick method that I am having a collection of common species prepared in this way for university class use. Since, I am told, this type has been common in European collections for a great many years, I have no doubt that experience there has shown its value. Even for purely research purposes I believe skins "on sticks" are superior. There would be fewer dilapidated specimens in museums if this method had been more commonly in vogue in the past.—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, September 27, 1923.*

The Sabine Gull in Oregon and on the Lower Yukon.—On September 4, 1904, while I was collecting material for the Oregon Agricultural College, a small dark-headed gull was noticed perched well out in Yakima Bay, upon some almost submerged sea drift. It was collected, when it proved to be a Sabine Gull (*Xema sabini*). This specimen is now no. 196, in the O. A. C. Museum collection.

Four years later, this attractive little gull was again met with, this time in its summer home on the lower Yukon River, Alaska. Here, and well out into Bering Sea, its appearance was striking, even to the casual observer, on account of its dark head and black markings on the tips of the outstretched wings.

At St. Michael, Alaska, two specimens were taken, which are now in the Museum of the State College of Washington, with the following data: Adult male, July 30, 1908; juvenal female, August 4, 1908; both collected by Wenrich and Shaw.—WILLIAM T. SHAW, *Pullman, Washington, January 22, 1924.*

Destruction of Inland Nesting Waterfowl.—Dr. H. C. Bryant, in an interesting paper on "fallacies in game protection," read recently before the Northern Division of the Cooper Club, stated that the "proper kind of protection could only be determined upon and given after the publication of adequate information bearing on the subject." I, therefore, desire to record a few experiences that I have had concerning the killing of birds and the destruction of their nests by predatory animals.

In May, 1906, I spent some time in South Assiniboia, Canada, now Saskatchewan, at a point north of Walsh, known as Many Island Lake. On the mainland of this lake I found many ducks' nests destroyed and the eggs broken and contents eaten by some animal whose tracks resembled those of the coyote. Every nest found on the mainland had been destroyed, while those on the islands a few hundred feet from the shore were unmolested. From the large number of nesting birds on these

islands, it was evident that some of the wiser birds had learned, by experience, that they were safer when separated from the mainland, even if by only a few hundred feet of shallow water.

A few days later, I visited Crane Lake, a little farther east, in Assiniboia, and while investigating a large colony of Western Grebe there, I was amazed by the large number of dead Grebes on nests or floating on the water near nests. The males were swimming about and diving near the nests but the females were nearly all dead. The water at this point was about 30 feet deep and the nests were the usual floating platforms placed among rather thin growths of tules. The area covered by the tules comprised probably five acres or more. The nests all contained from three to five eggs. In making a trip through this area and back, I counted not less than 200 dead birds, and the destruction seemed to extend throughout the colony. The birds had recently been killed, and upon investigation I found each bird had two or more small blood patches on the under part of the neck; otherwise the plumage and flesh were undisturbed. My conclusion was that each bird had been killed while on the nest by a mink or some such animal. This place was, at that time, far from any habitation.

Another incident within my observation, was in Lassen County, California, in May, 1919. I was walking over a piece of land recently drained, where high water had flooded an area of sagebrush. In this sagebrush there had been a colony of Red-winged Blackbirds. I found the eggs in each case broken and the nests partly pulled away from their fastenings. After finding one or two nests in this condition, I observed the tracks of a coyote in the soft mud and by following the coyote tracks, I was led to at least a dozen other nests similarly destroyed.

These depredations, no doubt, go on continually and have been going on for generations; but they point to at least one important cause of bird destruction.

I have been informed by friends who have visited the lakes above referred to, in recent years, that settlers and agriculture have encroached upon these bird breeding grounds to such an extent that the places have been almost deserted by the birds. This would indicate either a great depletion in their number or a very much more congested breeding ground elsewhere.

In further reference to this subject and the apparent lack of data regarding the actual game bird census, I would suggest that some effort be made to secure from each person obtaining a hunting license, a statement as to the number and kind of birds taken the previous year. The duck shooting grounds in California are nearly all covered by private game preserves, and I do not believe it would be difficult for the owners of these preserves to keep a record and return to the proper authorities a statement at the end of each year giving the number of birds killed each day and the numbers for each species. Tabulation of these figures for a few years should be a valuable guide as to the proper bag limit, and would also furnish information regarding migration.—JULES LABARTHE, *San Francisco, January 26, 1924.*

Mid-winter Occurrence of Black-crowned Night Heron Near Gridley, California.

—On January 13, 1924, I spent most of the day with Mr. Gerald J. Chalmers, whose ranch is riparian to the west side of the Feather River about due east of Manzanita, in Butte County, California, trying to find a flock of Wood Ducks, which he had seen near his ranch several days before. A half-mile or so north of the Chalmers ranch and about 3½ miles southeast of Gridley, there is an irregularly shaped pond, covering two or three acres, with a subterranean connection with the Feather River. The water level of this pond corresponds with that in the river. Part of its shore is leveed and all of it covered with a thick growth of trees and brush.

We approached this pond from the north in the late forenoon, making as little noise as possible, in the hope of getting a look at Wood Ducks. We went along the west side of the pond and around to the south side, whence we saw a pair of birds at the opposite (north) side, which turned out to be Coots and not Wood Ducks. We then stepped out onto the bank and flushed a Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax n. naevius*), which rose from the water on the north side of the pond and perched in a tree about 25 feet from the water and perhaps 125 to 150 feet from us. I watched this bird carefully for several minutes, with and without field glasses. It then flew to another tree about the same distance away. While perching it faced us and was quite stationary, with the bill turned down and to one side. The size of the bird, its