

on a limb or trunk but quite as often sit horizontally on the smaller branches, often at the top of the tree, and there remain motionless for considerable periods, after the manner of the Sparrow Hawk. The flight is crow-like. Near the ranch house there was a fence post, with a shallow notch in the flat top. This these birds used for opening acorns, which were fitted into the notch and opened with the bill. At almost any time a bird could be seen at this business, which evidently had been going on for a considerable time, because the ground about the post was covered with empty acorn shells. The top of the post was invariably left quite clean and free from shells, except when a bird was disturbed and forced away before the meal was finished and the table cleared. The use of this crevice or notch to secure acorns while being opened, suggests one of the reasons for the habit of the California Woodpecker, of placing acorns and nuts in holes drilled in wood and bark of trees. At least it is one of the advantages secured.

No evidence of nesting was found, but the birds were often seen in pairs and some of them probably breed in this region.—CLAUDE GIGNOUX, *Berkeley, California, April 8, 1925.*

**Western Martin Colonies.**—In the CONDOR for September, 1924, p. 195, Dr. H. C. Bryant mentions certain cities in which the Western Martin (*Progne subis hesperia*) colonizes. I should like to add the two colonies found at Santa Barbara and Balboa, respectively. The latter colony originated in 1919 with one pair of birds, according to J. P. Greeley, secretary of the Newport Bay Investment Company. The birds nested in the large boat-house and pavilion owned by this company, and from the first were given protection. English Sparrows and Linnets have been discouraged from nesting by the Company, and boys and others warned of molesting the martins. Early in July of 1920 I, personally, first discovered the martins there. Since then I have kept track of them and have found the colony increasing each year in number of breeding pairs. In July, 1924, there were fourteen nests. It is interesting to note that the nests are located on rafters over the boat slips, some of them being directly over water. The feeding parents do a good deal of their hunting over the waters of Newport Bay. The trash and "sweepings" cast out from the nests, especially in early mornings, make quite a litter on the dock, and consist mostly of the wings of dragon flies, damsel flies and some lepidoptera. The excreta seem to be carried away from the vicinity.

Dr. Bryant recalls a single pair of birds on Mt. Wilson; that colony also has thrived and is most vigorous and noisy in the breeding season, being one of the conspicuous features of the top of Mt. Wilson.

William L. and Irene Finley (*Condor*, xxvi, 1924, p. 7) ask if anyone has seen Western Martins nesting in bird houses. A friend informs me that in Sierra County, California, a colony nested in a bird box on the roof of the ranch barn, and did so for years. In the CONDOR for March, 1919, page 76, a colony is reported as nesting in the center of a town in bird boxes.

Believing with the Finleys that Western Martins will eventually adopt artificial nesting cavities, I assisted the Park Department of the City of Pasadena, California, in planning and locating a martin house. The local colony is at present nesting in the cornice of the Security Bank Building and we sought to place the house, for the sake of gaining success for the experiment, on the roof of the same building. Neither the Board of Directors of this nor of any other nearby down-town building would accept our donation for a sky-piece, basing their objections variously: unsightliness, wind-hazard, insurance, vermin and botheration. The house has lost a year's trial in the meantime, but is going up in Central Park in time for 1925 inspection. We feel that our chances for success are much lessened by the removal of three blocks from the selected haunts. The house follows government specifications, is equipped for lowering and inspection, but has not the sparrow trap-doors.—ROLAND CASE ROSS, *Dept. of Nature Study, Los Angeles City Schools, May 10, 1925.*

**Pigmy Owl Killing a Quail.**—Meeting Mr. Bentley of the forest service at the Portal Ranger Station, Chiricahua Mountains, on the afternoon of January 21, he informed me that on the previous evening he had been attracted by a commotion on the hillside nearby and upon investigation he had found a female Gambel Quail grasped by the