

occasionally; but once, when patience ceased to be a virtue, she pursued a noisy robin. The male was dedicated to the chase and would leave immediately after delivering his plunder. Naturally his arrivals were extremely irregular. The best record noted was on June 7 when, besides an early call, he brought in between 7 A. M. and 2 P. M. two lizards and two mice.—F. C. HOLMAN, *Berkeley, California, November 28, 1925.*

**"Evidence" in the Case of the House Wren.**—On page 242 of the November CONDOR there appears editorial comment on the soundness of Mr. Baldwin's statements on the fallibility of evidence from a legal standpoint, in the case of the House Wren. With all deference to Mr. Baldwin, both as a naturalist and a lawyer, I would like to point out that in his own evidence in defence of the wren he admits that most birds mob it or recognize it as an enemy. Is not this very strong evidence of its destructiveness? Other birds do not attack Catbirds, Robins, Red-headed Woodpeckers or other species which he considers should share the odium attached to the House Wren, nor do they in my experience recognize the English Sparrow as an enemy except when he is actually engaged in destroying their homes.

This almost universal recognition of House Wrens, Jays, and Grackles by most small birds as objects to be attacked and vituperated is surely the best of all evidence of their destructiveness, based on centuries of experience by the sufferers. Also the fact that Mr. Baldwin has numbers of birds nesting in the vicinity of his wren boxes is not actual evidence that he would not have many more if the wrens were not encouraged. In this connection the experience of Dr. A. A. Allen with his nesting Screech Owls should be considered. The resident nesting population was not appreciably lessened in spite of the tremendous slaughter perpetrated in the immediate vicinity by the owls.

I am not a lawyer but as a humble juror I could say of Mr. Baldwin's plea, "no evidence for the defence."—ALLAN BROOKS, *Nanaimo, British Columbia, November 21, 1925.*

**Nesting of the Great-tailed Grackle in New Mexico.**—There are but few authentic records of the occurrence of the Great-tailed Grackle (*Megaquiscalus major macrourus*) in New Mexico. Mr. R. T. Kellogg has collected the bird near Silver City (Condor, vol. 24, 1922, p. 30), and it has been reported from the Rio Grande Valley, near Las Cruces.

In all of my travels, extending over a period of more than ten years, I have not seen the bird in the Rio Grande Valley, either of New Mexico or Texas; but I have known of a single occurrence at Fort Stockton, Texas, about 250 miles southeast of El Paso. On July 21, 1924, I collected a female, in the molting plumage, in the Pecos Valley of New Mexico, about 35 miles south of Carlsbad; this was the first time I had seen the bird in the state.

On July 24, 1925, to my surprise, I found a breeding colony of these birds in a marshy, cat-tail filled draw, eight miles south of Carlsbad. At the point where these birds were located the Carlsbad-Malaga Highway parallels the railway line, only a wire fence separating the two right-of-ways. While passing along the road I noticed a male grackle, with the conspicuous drooping tail, flying low from a nearby cotton field to the cat-tail filled drain I had just crossed about 200 yards back. I stopped my car and walked back to the draw. On the roadway is only a low concrete bridge, while just above is a twelve-foot trestle where the railway line spans the drain. The thick cat-tails extended above and below as far as I could see, from a few feet wide at places to more than 150 feet at the widest points.

By the time I had reached the trestle a half dozen of the adult grackles, which were protesting my intrusion, were in sight, perched on the low telegraph posts and wires (which offered excellent look-outs) and on the cat-tails nearby. Great numbers of Red-winged Blackbirds were also sitting about. The unusual luxuriance of the cat-tails offered excellent protection for the birds; a little water was visible here and there in the bogs where the cattle had eaten down the grass. As I moved about quietly, I discovered several young grackles in the cat-tails, almost as large as the parent birds and flying easily. The adult birds that arrived after I returned to the nesting site, held food in their beaks. It was difficult to determine just how many birds were

present; but I saw as many as a dozen, including the young. As I had collected a bird just south of this point, and since this is a fitting nesting place, it is probable that the birds have nested there in previous years. The strange part is that they have not been observed in migration, farther south, in western Texas. An observer who was not looking for grackles could easily have passed by in an automobile without detecting them, with the redwings and other birds, just as I came near doing although I was on the lookout for them at the time.—J. STOKLEY LIGON, *Ft. Stockton, Texas, October 7, 1925.*

**Scarcity of Certain Australian Birds.**—The fact that some Australian birds are becoming increasingly scarce has given concern to our ornithologists, and special efforts are being made to find out the reasons. The main factors are no doubt settlement of the country and the introduction of the rabbit, fox and cat; for it can be noted that only ground birds are affected. One species that only diligent search can find is the Black-throated Coach-whip Bird (*Psophodes nigrigularis*). This species has a comparatively small range in southwestern Australia, inhabiting dense brush where it is probably safe from introduced enemies; but the settlers destroy its habitat by fire in order to clear the land for more useful herbage. *Atrichornis clamosa*, inhabiting the same districts and something of the same class of country, but with a more restricted habitat, is seemingly even more scarce, and may be extinct. This bird draws attention to its whereabouts by its song, and has likely been an easy prey to *Felis domestica*.

Some of our ground parrots, which forty years ago were very numerous, are now reported only occasionally, and this scarcity extends, not only over settled districts, but also to uninhabited country. The Scarlet-shouldered Parrot (*Psephotus pulcherrimus*) is now apparently confined to one small district. It would seem that its habit of nesting in ant hills, in a position exposed to enemies, has been the cause of its undoing, for practically all its habitat is settled. Other birds of the same genus, and much the same habits, but nesting in trees, are as numerous as ever they were in settled districts. Grass parrots of the genus *Neophema*, quiet and retiring little birds, were the first to go before advancing occupation of the land by sheep and cattle. The habitat of some species, however, extends into the uninhabited wilds, but even here it would seem that the alteration of the herbage by the introduced rabbit has had its effect. The Ground Parrots (*Pezoporus* and *Geopsittacus*), entirely terrestrial in their habits, are now, as far as we can ascertain, only found in a few restricted localities, though they may be holding their own in parts of the interior.

The great majority of our birds, however, are not affected by any delimiting factor, and are still extremely numerous. Even in our cities many indigenous species accept the changed conditions without any difficulty or protest. In this we are very fortunate, for it is a great pleasure to have the wild birds give us their confidence, thus adding to the interest of our parks and gardens.—A. S. LE SOUEF, *Taronga Zoological Park, Sydney, Australia, December 2, 1925.*

**Lesser Yellow-legs in Western Oregon.**—On September 10, 1925, I took at Tillamook, Tillamook County, Oregon, one of three Lesser Yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*). Mr. S. G. Jewett has kindly given me the following previously published records for the state: Abundant at Malheur Lake during migration (Bendire, Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., vol. 19, 1877, p. 141); specimen taken July 10, 1899, near Corvallis (Woodcock, Birds of Oregon, 1902, p. 20); seen at Malheur Lake, August 18 and 24 (Willett, Condor, XXI, 1919, p. 202).

Three Greater Yellow-legs (*Totanus melanoleucus*) which were present in the same slough were pursuing small fish by running rapidly through the shallow water, keeping the bill and so much of the head under water that a thin silvery wave was constantly breaking over their heads.—RALPH HOFFMANN, *Carpinteria, California, November 14, 1925.*

**A Prolific Anthony Green Heron.**—On June 5, 1913, Mrs. May Canfield and Walter Mackinon, while searching for birds' nests along the Sweetwater River at Bonita, San Diego County, came upon the nest of an Anthony Green Heron (*Butorides virescens anthonyi*) about fifteen feet above the ground in a willow tree. Investigation revealed