

**The Gray Gyrfalcon in Washington.**—Gyrfalcons (*Falco rusticolus*) are so rare in the United States that, as Dr. Fisher has said, a man may consider himself fortunate if he sees one in a lifetime. It gives me pleasure, therefore, to record a specimen taken near Spokane about October 15, 1925, by Mr. R. L. Peel of Deer Park, Washington, which is now in my possession and which constitutes the second state record. According to Mr. Allan Brooks, gyrfalcons are rare but of regular occurrence along the boundary line of Washington and British Columbia, and likely, therefore, to be found south of it. He has four skins in his collection, and states that there are a number of records for Alberta and a few for eastern British Columbia. Professor Wm. Rowan, of the University of Alberta, Edmonton, writes me that he knows of at least seven gyrfalcons from that province, the skins being scattered in various Canadian and American collections. There are only two records for Montana, one of them a sight record. The trouble is that, although hawks and owls are generally knocked down by hunters and the best looking ones mounted, there are so few bird students in the regions mentioned that the records never get into print.

The first for Washington was a bird discovered in a taxidermist's shop in Spokane, about December 18, 1896, by the late Dr. J. C. Merrill, U. S. A., then stationed at Fort Sherman, Idaho. According to Withers Brothers, taxidermists here, this was a light colored bird and purchased by Dr. Merrill for a friend in Massachusetts. It is now in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge. My bird, a dark colored immature which has been examined by H. S. Swarth at Berkeley, California, may be described as follows: Length 24 inches, wing 16, tail 9.50, bill 1.50, and tarsus 2.50. Plumage above slate-colored, excepting a few white feathers on head, and tip of tail white. Below heavily spotted with reddish-brown. Tarsus with large tufts of feathers on the side. Sex undetermined.

Conditions here which might account for the appearance of this bird are interesting. The whole northwest, from Washington to Alaska, is having one of the mildest winters on record. The ice on the Peace River went out in December. Eastern Washington did not have the usual fall migration of northern ducks. Canada in general is just entering on the down phase of its ten-year animal cycle, so that food for Raptores may be getting scarce. Washington State has had an invasion of goshawks and rough-legs this winter, as well as quite a few Snowy Owls and Hawk Owls, the first in three years. Besides the gyrfalcon, a Great Gray Owl was brought in, as well as a Ferruginous Rough-leg, on January 22, both rare here, there being no state record for the latter bird after July. The rolling hills and vast treeless plains of eastern Washington, with their numerous jack-rabbits, may be the attraction.—J. L. SLOANAKER, *Spokane, Washington, February 1, 1926.*

**Blue-fronted Jays in Altadena.**—It has been suggested to me that some remarks on the appearance of the Blue-fronted Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis*) in Altadena might be of interest to CONDOR readers. I have lived in Altadena for over forty years and as far as I can remember these jays were seen on this ranch only twice before the year 1900. On those two occasions they did not stay more than a month or two at each visit. I cannot recall any particular visit of these jays between 1900 and 1920, and if seen at all it was rarely. From the fall of 1921 to November, 1923, they were frequently seen at all seasons, generally around the house and barns.

In 1922 and 1923 the Blue-fronted Jays nested in eucalyptus trees and raised, to my knowledge, one brood each year, very likely more, as there were certainly several pairs about during the nesting season. None of these jays was seen here between November, 1923, and November, 1925. From November, 1925, to this date, February, 1926, they have been seen almost daily and I have taken three in my traps. The elevation here is about 1050 feet above sea level, and that part of the ranch where the jays have been commonly seen, about three-quarters of a mile from the base of the mountain at Mount Wilson Toll House, is fairly well covered with large eucalyptus, oak and citrus trees.—WALTER I. ALLEN, *Lamanda Park, California, February 27, 1926.*

**The Food of a White-tailed Kite.**—There came into my hands recently a specimen in-the-flesh of the White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*). To say that all parts of this now threatened species were of great interest would be a mere platitude, and equally superfluous would be the statement that all preservable parts of the specimen were retained. One of the surprising things about this really small bird (a male) was the

tremendous amount of food in its stomach and crop. Dr. Fisher (U. S. Dept. Agric., Div. Orn. and Mamm., Bull. no. 3, 1893, p. 23) records a solitary meadow mouse in the one stomach of the species examined by him and quotes Audubon to the effect that its food is made up of reptiles, frogs and insects. My own impression had always been of the kite as a rather effeminate bird. My interest, therefore, merged into surprise on discovering that both its appetite and its table manners are far from dainty. Remains of four meadow mice (*Microtus*) and an entire shrew (*Sorex ornatus*) were identified in the contents of stomach and crop. The shrew was absolutely entire. The largest mouse had been torn apart in the lower thoracic region and the hinder portion bolted entire with skin and fur in place. Two mouse heads had been swallowed hair and all. The fore quarters of the mice seemed to have been stripped of skin, but great masses of skin and fur had been swallowed after stripping them off. Viscera and small bones indicated that most of both mice had been eaten, and there is no reason to believe that any part had been discarded. Well cleaned bones from two other *Microtus* skulls were still retained in the stomach. Neither insects nor lower vertebrates were present. I have seen the Prairie Falcon feed with the most fastidious care, leaving even the ribs intact but picked clean. This kite, however, seems to bolt its food with almost owl-like ruthlessness.

Synopsis of food items in stomach of *Elanus leucurus*: 1 shrew (*Sorex ornatus*), entire; 2 complete heads of *Microtus* with hair on, unbroken; 2 well digested *Microtus* jaws plus one skull; 1 entire hind quarters including lumbar and some thoracic vertebrae and tail, all with hair on; 4 front legs (skinned) including scapulae; sections of spinal column with ribs, great masses of skin with long hair, and visceral parts, miscellaneous. Estimated volume, 130 cubic centimeters.—LOYE MILLER, *Los Angeles, California, March 9, 1926.*

**Late Nesting of Cedar Waxwing.**—While looking over my hunting grounds, on August 23, 1924, I was surprised to come upon a Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) sitting on two incubated and two infertile eggs. The nest was seven feet up in a myrtle tree. It was composed of coarse grass and weeds and was lined with fine dry grass and hair that hung in a slovenly manner over the edge of the nest. A few dry leaves had apparently fallen into the nest.

The eggs were bluish-gray, marked with spots of sepia and dark purple. A further search disclosed two more nests, both with young. All three were in myrtle trees within the limits of this city.—J. THOMAS FRASER, *Eureka, California, February 15, 1926.*

**The Voice of the Old-squaw.**—The call of the Old-squaw (*Clangula hyemalis*) has probably been rendered by observers in more different ways than that of any other duck, and with a little help from the imagination, all of them are more or less recognizable by anyone who has heard the call. It is a difficult matter to reproduce sounds of most bird voices on paper. However, in my opinion the voice of the Old-squaw does not belong in the difficult class. It is one of the few that can be set down almost exactly in writing. It has been my experience that in order to get a correct idea of many bird notes it is necessary for the observer to be quite close to the bird. I believe most of the written renderings of the call of the Old-squaw have been obtained by observers who heard the call from a considerable distance; otherwise there could not be such a variety of renderings.

The Old-squaw is a regular spring migrant here and for a period of about ten days in the first half of May the musical call of the birds can be heard from far out on the lake. On May 11, 1920, the ice on Lac La Nonne shifted about half a mile off-shore, an unusually late date for this occurrence. In the evening I paddled out in my canoe to observe the different waterfowl. There were numbers of Old-squaws sitting on the edge of the ice and swimming in the water beside it, and I had no difficulty in approaching to about thirty-five yards in several instances without alarming the birds. There was not a breath of wind and I had an excellent opportunity to listen to their call, which I had never heard previously, except from far out in the lake. The call was *unk-on-alik*, the second syllable pronounced like the French "on". *Unk-on-alik* is almost exactly the call as near as any bird call can be set down on paper. On becoming aware of my presence they also uttered a low conversational *uk, uk*, as they took to the water and swam away.—A. D. HENDERSON, *Belvedere, Alberta, February 25, 1926.*