

Mid-winter Nesting in Southern California.—On December 24, 1925, I flushed a young Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) from the grass on the shore of Sweet-water Lake, San Diego County, California, whose almost tailless appearance, and the solicitous attention of one of its parents, indicated that it was but recently out of the nest. It could already fly too well for me to catch it, but the presence of young meadowlarks at this unusual date was further proved by Mrs. May Canfield, a member of the San Diego Society of Natural History, who, on December 27, 1925, collected near Mission Gorge, San Diego County, a young meadowlark even less developed than the one I had seen. Perhaps the heavy autumn rains of 1925 induced abnormally early nesting, for specimens of the San Clemente Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii leucophrys*) taken by Laurence M. Huey, of the Natural History Museum, on San Clemente Island, December 12, 1925, showed unmistakable evidence of breeding. As I saw a Green-backed Goldfinch (*Astragalinus psaltria hesperophilus*) feeding her young, still in their nest in a pepper tree at the old San Diego Mission, on October 31, 1925, and as John von Bloeker, Jr., a member of the San Diego Society of Natural History, reported finding the nest of an Anna Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) containing well-grown young on February 16, 1926, it can truthfully be said that, some seasons at least, nesting is a year-round proposition for the birds in southern California.—CLINTON G. ABBOTT, *Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, September 21, 1926.*

Additional Breeding Records of the Spotted and Saw-whet Owls in California.¹—The Spotted Owl (or Northern Spotted Owl, *Strix occidentalis caurina*, if this subspecies continues to be recognized) is extremely rare in Marin County. In the many years passed in that county, on hundreds of nights with the sky, a tree, or a bit of canvas for a roof, I never heard a note that could distinctly be attributed to this owl. Farther north along the coast it becomes more common. At the Bohemian Grove, Sonoma County, in some years its notes occasionally may be distinguished during intervals in the ululant chorus that resounds through the woods of a summer night—after the Bohemians have ceased ululating.

In Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties this owl is much more numerous, and seems to be fairly well distributed throughout the coniferous forest association. In fact, it has been heard at practically every camp that I have made in these three counties. It was also noted on the South Fork Mountains, Trinity County, in June, 1926, 45 or 50 miles directly east from the coast. In these camps it was often heard but never seen, even when an individual was barking and whining one night over our heads in a tree by the camp fire. On one occasion Chester Lamb and I made patient but unavailing attempts to "flash" the owl's eyes.

In the various published attempts to describe in words the notes of the spotted owl, the descriptions of the whining and barking notes have been as nearly accurate as might reasonably be expected, but the only description that accurately fits into my experience of its call note, or hoot, is that given in the very interesting account of the habits of the Spotted Owl by J. Stokly Ligon (*Auk*, XLIII, October, 1926, p. 423). In that paper the call is expressed by *coo-coo-coo-coo-o-o*. Here the proper intervals are clearly shown, the second long interval being nearly twice the length of the first. The only suggestion that I might make in regard to this description is that it has always seemed to me as if the sound were more like *coop*, or possibly *cwoop*, with the last letter barely sounded. This is the call that I have used in imitating the spotted owl, when one was hooting and I could get the proper pitch of its note. It often seemed as if the bird were answering me, but then again, perhaps it wasn't, for my best efforts never brought one into view!

For this state, breeding records of spotted owls are rare, and the published records are confined to the southern half of the state. There is in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, an adult female that was taken in Marin County, May 23 (1896); but this does not constitute a breeding record, as the bird may have been a non-breeder that season. In view of our limited knowledge regarding the nesting of birds of this species in northern California, the following record for Mendocino County should be of interest.

¹ Contribution from the Museum of the California Academy of Sciences.

On July 6, 1924, one of my nephews, with a friend, was fishing in a small stream near the headwaters of Garcia River. As the two fishermen were walking through a gloomy stretch of the narrow, wooded cañon, they saw a fluffy owl on a low limb of a near-by Douglas fir. Upon their approach, the bird left its perch and flew, about six feet above their heads, across the small stream, and landed in another fir on a limb about ten feet from the ground. My nephew threw a stone and hit the owl, injuring one wing so that it could not fly. It was brought alive to San Francisco, and proved to be a female spotted owl, not long out of the nest. The remiges and rectrices are almost fully developed, but otherwise, with the exception of the scapulars and a few feathers on the sides of the breast and around the eyes, the bird is yet in downy plumage. This specimen is now number 26832 in the collection of the Museum of the California Academy of Sciences.

The Saw-whet Owl (*Cryptoglaux acadica acadica*) is supposed to breed locally along the Sierra Nevada, and there are nesting records from this range for central and southern California; but there is no breeding record, to my knowledge, for the northern part of the state west of the Sierras. There is now in the Academy collection, the dried remains of one of these owls, that was brought in on June 18 by Raleigh A. Borell, my field assistant during the spring and summer of 1926. The mummy was picked up by H. Kohenberger, owner of the ranch on which we were encamped, as he was showing the mountain trails to Borell. It was found among the pines on the southwesterly slope of the South Fork Mountains (about ten miles northwest of Forest Glen post office), at a point considerably above our camp, which was at an elevation of about 3100 feet.

Although rather dilapidated, this specimen is in sufficiently good condition to show that it is nearly full sized. The tail is missing, but the wings are intact, and the primaries are about four-fifths grown. There is no sign of white anywhere except for the markings on the wings, and on the head, where the white "eyebrows" are well marked. The specimen is number 29085, Academy collection.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California, January 11, 1927.*

Pigmy Owl: The Little Demon.—On the morning of May 24 I was up early for my weekly trip to the rim of the valley. I had planned to go up the Ledge Trail to Glacier Point and, on leaving the house, I decided to go by the way of Sentinel Bridge and the south road, hoping to have a visit with the Saw-whet Owl. The young Saw-whet Owl was not at home; or, if he was he was still sleeping, for he did not respond to my knock. I passed on up the road.

I had not traveled a hundred yards when my ear caught the single, hollow whistled note of an owl. The sound seemed to come from directly overhead. Then there came gentle tapping sounds and a subdued trill. While I was gazing up into the branches of a tall Kellogg oak a Willow Woodpecker flashed into my range of vision. My eyes naturally followed the woodpecker which flew to a nest where he fed the occupant without entering the hole. This action would indicate that either the young were well grown, or that the female bird was being fed by her mate. The woodpecker flew away at once and I sat down to await his return that I might learn whether or not young birds were being fed.

I had not long to wait. In less than a minute a strange bird flew to the nest hole. At first I was puzzled; the new arrival appeared to be struggling to get into the hole. Soon, however, I realized that he was tugging violently in an effort to withdraw his head from the hole. The struggle continued. There was no sound. Perhaps a minute passed and then the bird withdrew his head and in his bill he held a woodpecker. With the limp body of his victim he fluttered down to a lower branch. Now, perched on the branch with the victim held in place by strong talons, the Pigmy Owl, as the strange bird proved to be, proceeded to tear away feathers from the throat, apparently to make sure that his victim was dead; for in a moment he flew to another perch, this time carrying the woodpecker in his talons.

Soon he flew a little farther and attempted to gain a toe-hold at the entrance of another woodpecker hole. His burden was too much for him (the woodpecker was almost as large as the owl) and he was forced to flutter down to another perch. Here the owl rested a moment, took a new grip on his victim and flew upward into the cedar boughs opposite the nest hole he had so recently visited. In the cedar boughs he was discovered by a Tolmie Warbler which instantly sounded the alarm. The distress cries