

ADDITIONS TO THE KNOWN AVIFAUNA OF THE  
SANTA BARBARA ISLANDS

WITH TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

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**T**HROUGH the generosity of Mr. Silsby M. Spalding who placed at our disposal his splendid cruiser "Padariva II" the writer accompanied by H. W. Carriger, Dudley DeGroot and O. W. Howard was enabled to spend the period from March 25 to April 5, 1927, inclusive, among the Channel Islands off the coast of southern California. Howard alone had visited the islands during the nesting season some twenty years before, the rest of us had long craved a chance of clambering over their rugged slopes, and Howard was eager to revisit the spots he had seen so long ago. To those who have made expeditions to any of these islands in fishing boats or small pleasure craft, done all their own work including the cooking and dishwashing, we boastfully record that we were called each morning by the steward, served our meals in courses by a decorous butler and escorted ashore each morning in a swank launch by two uniformed sailors and a regular engineer. About the only thing left undone for us aboard ship was the blowing of the eggs, and the steward even offered to try this for us. So of course we all had a wonderful time, one of those kinds of times that a fellow always remembers. Carriger ate so much that he never was able to go over cliffs after Duck Hawks' eggs as he ought to have been able to; DeGroot had to train off superfluous fat after he got back to romping with the Santa Barbara college boys; Howard, cursed with insomnia ashore, snored all night and must have slept in the daytime when ashore, to judge by his tardiness in returning to the yacht each night; and the writer had to tell a bed-time story every night about who Santa Claus really is.

We visited all of the islands excepting San Nicolas. With the exception of two rainy days on Santa Cruz and two windy ones on Santa Rosa we could not have asked for better weather. Through the courtesy of Edward and Mahlon Vail we were allowed to roam at will the ornithologically unexplored Santa Rosa Island, so we spent three days there. Field notes were kept by DeGroot and Pemberton and nightly discussions of the birds seen, coupled with an examination of Howell's "Birds of the Islands off the Coast of Southern California", enabled us to fix new birds for the list. This paper is a summary of all our notes and observations.

Eighty-two species in all were noted, of which four, the Willow Goldfinch, California Woodpecker and Townsend Solitaire on Santa Rosa, and the Black-and-white Warbler on Santa Barbara, are new birds to any of the islands. Occupied nests were found of twenty-five species. Discoveries resulting in additions to the known fauna of the various islands were three on Catalina, one on San Clemente, seven on Santa Barbara, four on Anacapa, six on San Miguel, and forty on Santa Rosa. The pertinent data concerning these additions follow.

SANTA CATALINA ISLAND

We spent the afternoon of March 25 at the Isthmus and in country immediately to the west for a few miles on both slopes.

*Oxyechus vociferus*. Killdeer. Four birds were seen by DeGroot and Howard.

*Calypte costae*. Costa Hummingbird. A single individual adult male in breeding plumage sat on a bush within a few feet of Carriger and Pemberton and was positively identified.

*Ixoreus naevius meruloides*. Varied Thrush. Two birds were seen by DeGroot and Howard.

SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND

*Colaptes cafer collaris*. Red-shafted Flicker. Several birds were seen by all of us on March 26 in the woods of the canyons on the eastern side of the island.

SANTA BARBARA ISLAND

We spent March 27 here and visited practically every part of this small island. *Falco sparverius phalaena*. Desert Sparrow Hawk. We all saw four birds and believed them to represent two pairs.

*Speotyto cunicularia hypugaea*. Burrowing Owl. Carriger and DeGroot saw two birds on the southern part of the upland slope.

*Colaptes cafer collaris*. Red-shafted Flicker. Two Flickers were seen by all of us. *Passerella iliaca* (ssp?). A single Fox Sparrow was seen on the ground beneath a dahlia thicket by Pemberton.



Fig. 56. NEST OF OSPREY ON SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND.

*Mniotilta varia*. Black-and-white Warbler. An adult male of this species was seen by Pemberton at a distance of less than fifteen feet and positively identified. The bird was working its way through the dahlias and its habit of creeping around the trunks of these plants after the manner of creepers established its identity beyond a doubt. This is a new species for the islands. The bird has been recorded from the Farallones and a few places along the southern California coast.

*Thryomanes bewickii charienturus*. San Diego Wren. Several of these birds were seen by all of us.

*Turdus migratorius propinquus*. Western Robin. Several were seen by Howard.

ANACAPA ISLAND

We spent March 28 here and visited nearly every part of this island.

*Buteo borealis calurus*. Western Red-tail. A pair of these hawks were seen by all of us as they circled high over the crest of a cliff, and later they were seen building a nest on a steep rocky slope on the south side of the main island.

*Sayornis saya*. Say Phoebe. A single bird was noted by Howard.

*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*. Gambel Sparrow. These birds were found abundantly where ever suitable cover existed on the island.

*Melospiza melodia clementae*. San Clemente Song Sparrow. Following the treatment by van Rossem (CONDOR, XXVI, November, 1924, p. 219) the Song Sparrows which we noted commonly in the dahlia thickets are referred to this race.

## SAN MIGUEL ISLAND

We spent the afternoon of March 31 on Prince Islet and all the day of April 1 on the main island.

*Colymbus nigricollis californicus*. Eared Grebe. A flock of about twenty-five of these birds was seen by all of us on March 31. They were swimming close together in the quiet waters of Cuyler Harbor close to the yacht.

*Mergus serrator*. Red-breasted Merganser. Two were noted by DeGroot and Pemberton close to Prince Islet.

*Aeronautes melanoleucus*. White-throated Swift. DeGroot noted swifts high in the air over the west end of San Miguel Island.

*Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus*. Western Savannah Sparrow. DeGroot noted these small sparrows in the grass with the Horned Larks on the western end of San Miguel Island.

*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*. Gambel Sparrow. Abundant in the dahlia thickets on both Prince Islet and on the main island.

*Hirundo erythrogaster*. Barn Swallow. Noted by all of us on both days.

## SANTA ROSA ISLAND

With the ship anchored in Belcher's Bay we spent April 2, 3 and 4 exploring the canyons and higher ridges reached from this bay. We probably examined the most interesting fourth of the entire island. Howell gave an erroneous impression of this island in his book when he stated that "the island is covered with vegetation but there are no large trees". The part visited by us is fully as attractive as some of the best parts of Santa Cruz Island and the deep canyons are thickly wooded with immense oaks, sycamores and willows, while at their heads are considerable numbers of Monterey pines. The iron-wood tree, *Lyonothamnus floribundus*, grows in large groves near the center of the island. The ridges between some of the canyons are covered with thick oak brush associated with many other shrubs. Water is abundant in all the canyons. There is a small grove of Torrey pines on the edge of the sea cliff in the eastern part of Belcher's Bay. The western and southern parts of the island are wind-swept to such a point that no



Fig. 57. NEST AND EGGS OF BALD EAGLE ON SAN MIGUEL ISLAND.

heavy woods or brush is to be found excepting in the sheltered canyons. The following list of birds is an indication of the diversity of this island.

*Aechmophorus occidentalis*. Western Grebe. Two were seen by Pemberton and Howard swimming in the sea, April 2.

*Colymbus nigricollis californicus*. Eared Grebe. A flock of less than twenty birds was noted by Howard and Pemberton at the same time as the last species. These birds frequently all dove together and would reappear at some distance still in flock formation.

*Gavia pacifica*. Pacific Loon. Several loons were noted on April 3 by Pemberton.

*Larus heermanni*. Heermann Gull. Four were seen by Pemberton on April 3.

*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*. Brandt Cormorant.

*Phalacrocorax pelagicus resplendens*. Baird Cormorant. Many of these two cormorants were seen on April 3. Both species were observed nesting on San Miguel and Santa Barbara islands and no doubt were nesting here also.

*Totanus melanoleucus*. Greater Yellow-legs. A single bird was seen by Carriger and DeGroot on the sea-shore on April 3.

*Zenaidura macroura marginella*. Western Mourning Dove. Four doves were seen by Pemberton on April 3, and three the following day by DeGroot.

*Accipiter cooperii*. Cooper Hawk. A male and female were seen by Carriger and DeGroot on April 2 in heavy timber near the head of one of the canyons.

*Buteo borealis calurus*. Western Red-tail. Two pairs were seen, both nesting. Carriger took a set of eggs on April 3 from a nest on a cliff in a canyon west of Belcher's Bay.

*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*. Bald Eagle. Ten eagles were counted and three nests found, two of which contained small young. All of the nests were placed in trees, two of them in small trees well down in sheltered canyons and the third in one of the Torrey pines at the sea-coast. Apparently the strong winds of this island prevent the eagles from building their nests on cliffs and pinnacles as they do on the other islands.

*Falco peregrinus anatum*. Duck Hawk. Three pairs were located, two of which were far inland in canyons. We believed that we located their nests but no eggs had yet been laid in them.

*Falco sparverius phalaena*. Desert Sparrow Hawk. A single bird was seen by Pemberton on April 2 in a sycamore near the mouth of one of the canyons.

*Tyto pratincola*. Barn Owl. Two birds were flushed out of a cave on April 3 by Carriger and DeGroot, and some boys from the headquarters ranch described the birds to Howard as living in the top of the tank house.

*Asio wilsonianus*. Long-eared Owl. A single bird was seen several times by Pemberton on April 2, as it flew in advance of him under heavy oak timber.

*Speotyto cunicularia hypugaea*. Burrowing Owl. None of these birds was seen by us, but the species is included here because of an accurate description of it which was given by the ranch boys. The birds have been recorded from all the other islands and should be present here. The opportunity did not present itself for any of us to accompany the boys to the place where these owls lived.

*Melanerpes formicivorus bairdi*. California Woodpecker. On April 2, Carriger and Pemberton heard the call note, and on the following day Howard saw two birds several times as they flew about in heavy oak timber. The presence of this bird here was a distinct surprise to all of us and probably constitutes our most satisfactory addition to the avifauna of the islands, because the bird has not heretofore been noted on any of them. We could have collected both birds but refrained for obvious reasons.

*Colaptes cafer collaris*. Red-shafted Flicker. We all saw several in the oak timber.

*Selasphorus alleni*. Allen Hummingbird. Carriger and DeGroot found many nests of this species, containing both eggs and young birds. It was numerous along the water courses lined with willows.

*Calypte anna*. Anna Hummingbird. DeGroot saw one bird close enough to make for positive identification.

*Sayornis saya*. Say Phoebe. DeGroot saw a single bird on April 3.

*Empidonax difficilis*. Western Flycatcher. A few were seen by Carriger and Pemberton in deep shady canyons on April 2. One old nest was found.

*Passer domesticus*. English Sparrow. Quite a little colony of these birds exists about the ranch buildings at Belcher's Bay.

*Spinus pinus*. Pine Siskin. DeGroot saw a few on April 3.

*Astragalinus tristis salicamans*. Willow Goldfinch. DeGroot saw at close range an adult male of this species on April 3. This is a new bird for any of the islands.

*Astragalinus psaltria hesperophilus*. Green-backed Goldfinch. This was a common bird along the more open parts of the lower courses of the canyons. Howard took a set of their eggs on April 2.

*Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus*. Western Savannah Sparrow. Carriger and Pemberton on April 2 noted quite a number of these birds in company with the Horned Larks on the grassy uplands.

**Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii.** Gambel Sparrow. Abundant everywhere in thick brush and in fields near brushy patches.

**Zonotrichia coronata.** Golden-crowned Sparrow. DeGroot saw one bird of this species on April 2.

**Aimophila obscura.** Santa Cruz Island Sparrow. Howard noted a pair of Rufous-crowned Sparrows on April 2, which may be assumed to have the same characteristics which typify the race living on Santa Cruz Island and described by Dickey and van Rossem under the above name.

**Hirundo erythrogaster.** Barn Swallow. Many of these swallows were seen by all of us as they flew in small flocks over the more elevated portions of the island.

**Vireo huttoni.** Hutton Vireo. Frequently seen on April 2 by Carriger and Pemberton, and one fresh nest found.

**Dendroica auduboni.** Audubon Warbler. Three birds were seen by Pemberton on April 3.

**Anthus rubescens.** Pipit. Pemberton saw a few of these birds on the higher plateaus with the Horned Larks on April 3.

**Mimus polyglottos leucopterus.** Western Mockingbird. A common bird. Carriger took a set of eggs on April 2.

**Myadestes townsendi.** Townsend Solitaire. A single bird was collected on April 3. This is a new species for any of the islands.

**Hylocichla ustulata.** Russet-backed Thrush. Pemberton saw two birds on April 3 and, except for a few tail feathers, was unsuccessful in collecting one of them. They were seen in deep canyon oak brush and positively identified.

**Hylocichla guttata guttata.** Alaska Hermit Thrush. Quite common in the canyon bottoms and frequently seen as we looked for the nests of the Dusky Warbler.

**Turdus migratorius propinquus.** Western Robin. DeGroot saw on April 4 a flock of about twenty on the higher ground of the western side of Belcher's Bay.

**Ixoreus naevius.** Varied Thrush. Four dead birds were found and examined by all of us on April 2.

In addition to the above list of new birds for Santa Rosa Island we noted all of the species of land birds listed by Howell for this island with the exception of the Bell Sparrow, which had been noted here by Willett.

*Beverly Hills, California, November 11, 1927.*