

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Audacity of a Sharp-shinned Hawk.—On the morning of October 28, 1928, in a line of bird banding traps in operation at Woodacre Lodge, Marin County, California, a wire netting, funnel type trap, 24 x 36 inches in size, was placed on the ground on the sunny side of a long pile of cordwood, the interstices of which afforded comforting protection to a flock of Golden-crowned Sparrows. Sharp-shinned Hawks (*Accipiter velox*), although nearly every trap had over it a cover made of 2-inch mesh wire netting to allow small birds to enter but to keep out cats, quail, etc., had been making efforts to get at the birds in some of the more exposed traps, but had succeeded only in causing more or less panic among the captives.

On one of my rounds that morning the trap at the woodpile was found to contain some sparrows. After removing the protective cover I was standing over the trap, with my feet rather wide apart for better balancing, with my soft hat in hand gently "shooing" the captive birds into the small catching box at the farther corner. In the midst of this operation I was startled by a feathered bolt, as it were, flashing past me from behind with incredible speed, that brushed my right knee as it passed and came suddenly to a full stop on top of the trap and only a few inches from my hand, with both talons trying to grab a sparrow through the wire netting.

I was so taken by surprise that almost involuntarily I struck at the hawk with my hat to save the birds from possible injury. This was an unfortunate impulse, for it would have been much better to have kept still so as to watch further developments, as the birds were not in any actual danger except through fright. Possibly my khaki-colored clothing blended sufficiently with the woodpile to make me inconspicuous, or else the hawk, a very small one, was made so bold by hunger as to be indifferent to the presence of a human being.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California, October 31, 1928*.

British Columbia Records of Certain Unusual Sparrows.—We report the following more or less unusual records of sparrows in British Columbia during recent years.

Zonotrichia querula. Two immature birds captured and banded at Indianpoint Lake, September 24, 1926.

Zonotrichia albicollis. One individual captured and banded October 7, 1926, at Indianpoint Lake. Our neighbor, Mrs. Joseph Wendle, of Bowron Lake, also permits us to record the capture by her of two of this species during the spring of 1928, one on May 11, the other on May 14.

Spizella pallida. An immature male collected at Indianpoint Lake, October 9, 1928.

Melospiza georgiana. An immature male collected at Indianpoint Lake, October 9, 1928.

Mr. J. A. Munro has very kindly examined detailed large-scale photographs of the Harris Sparrows, and finds the identification unquestionable. Similar photographs of our White-throats were not very successful, but Mr. Munro finds identification from them "reasonably certain".

At the time of publication of Brooks and Swarth's "Distributional List" (September, 1925), only "eight or ten specimens" of the Harris Sparrow had been recorded in British Columbia, the northernmost of them at least 200 miles south of our record. By the same date only three White-throats had been recorded, only one Swamp Sparrow, and two Clay-colored Sparrows.—THOMAS T. MCCABE and ELINOR BOLLES MCCABE, *Indianpoint Lake, Barkerville, B. C., October 15, 1928*.

Notes from Napa Valley.—The Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) has been nesting at my two-acre residence in the heart of Napa for some years past. This year there were two pairs, not far apart, one about 18 feet up in a hanging string of English Ivy; the other in the forks of the outer branches of an elm, about 25 feet from the ground.

Nuttall Poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) was noted as resident at Samuel

Springs on Pope Creek about ten miles from Pope Valley, in Napa County. They are reported as abundant in the canyon at Walters Springs nearby.

Western Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea obscura*) was nesting (two nests) at Samuel Springs, and the bird had been noted this year at Napa Valley Country Club, four miles east of Napa.

White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*). This bird was first seen by Boy Scout students on both sides of Napa Valley this summer. Nests (two) were found at "Congress Springs," about three miles west from Napa. As the farmer on whose ranch they nested maintains a bird sanctuary, they were saved from the fate which befell two other pairs at Browns Valley, about two miles north, where they were killed by a boy (not a member of B. S. A.) who claimed they were killing his pigeons. Report to the resident Game Warden was apparently ignored.

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*). Mr. H. C. Bryant observed these with me three or four years ago at a little wooded lake in the Valley floor about three miles north of Napa. Since that time they were scattered by poachers, despite the efforts of the farm owner to protect them; and they were not seen there in 1927. They are reported as having reappeared this September, about fifteen in number.—E. L. BICKFORD, *Napa, California, September 26, 1928*

Land Birds of a Pacific Coast Sea Voyage.—On September 22, 1928, the writer left San Francisco on the Mexican steamer "Bolivar" for La Paz, Lower California, via Mazatlan, Mexico, this being the first stage of a year's collecting trip in the interests of the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. It may be of interest to CONDOR readers to hear of the land birds that actually came on board the steamer, or were seen in close proximity to it, during the fifteen days it took to complete this journey. The steamer kept at a distance of from eight to twenty miles off-shore most of the way. The weather was windless and the sea calm the whole distance.

Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia hypugaea*). When I went on deck at 7:00 a. m., September 22, I saw the owl. It was quite wild and would not allow a close approach. When disturbed, it would fly off the vessel and, skimming low over the water, would soon alight on another part. This owl came aboard when we were some eight miles off southern Monterey County, California, and remained with us all day. At 5:00 p. m., off Santa Barbara County, another Burrowing Owl came aboard, but stayed only a few minutes.

Audubon Warbler (*Dendroica auduboni*). At 7:30 a. m., September 25, as we were passing about two miles to the westward of Los Coronados Islands, Mexico, I noticed five of these birds flying on and about the steamer. They remained about an hour.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula*, subsp.?). At 9:00 a. m., the same day, four were seen on the steamer, and they were with us till the anchor was dropped, off Ensenada. None of these birds seemed at all exhausted, but were sprightly, flitting around in search of food.

Western Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus*). At 6:00 a. m., September 26, when I went on deck, two were seen hopping around the deck cargo. At this time, the steamer was about ten miles off San Antonio del Mar.

Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas [occidentalis?]*). A fine male was seen among some potted plants on deck, at the same time that the Savannah Sparrows were noted.

Western Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura marginella*). At 9:30 a. m., a single bird came aboard, to stay only a short time; it took off, flying high, toward shore.

Western Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*). At 3:30 p. m., some ten miles off Rosario, a tailless, though energetic, individual was seen busily catching flies among the deck cargo.

The two Western Savannah Sparrows were not seen after 10:00 a. m., but the flycatcher and the yellowthroat remained on the steamer the rest of the day. September 28, at 8:00 a. m., off Magdalena Bay, another Western Savannah Sparrow came aboard, but stayed only two hours.

Turkey Buzzard (*Cathartes aura*). While lying off San José del Cabo, I could see, at most any time, twenty-five or more sailing about or sitting on the beach.