

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Immature Song Sparrow in Full Song.—On July 9, 1926, I was surprised to see and hear an *immature* Rusty Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia morphna*) in full song. The performance was also witnessed by Prof. M. E. Peck of Willamette University, an experienced observer. We were on the porch of a residence a few miles south of Portland, Oregon, when we noticed a young Song Sparrow attempting to sing. It was so close that there could be no question but that it was immature. At first the song was subdued in volume, as though the bird were merely trying out its voice. It fitted from branch to branch, attempting to sing a couple of times, till within about eight feet of us, then burst forth into full, unrestrained song, not by us to be distinguished from the song of an adult. This was repeated several times.—WM. E. SHERWOOD, *San Fernando, California, April 22, 1929.*

The White-tailed Kite in Orange County, California.—Recent records of the White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) in southern California are so few that it seems worth while to publish the following observations. On February 22, 1924, a White-tailed Kite was seen in the willows near the mouth of San Juan Creek, about three miles south of San Juan Capistrano. On December 2, 1924, and again on the following day, one was seen hunting over a weed covered field, three-quarters of a mile northeast of Cypress; and on January 7 and 23, 1925, what was presumably the same bird was seen at the same place, sometimes in one of several small eucalyptus trees at the edge of the field and sometimes flying back and forth or hovering on vibrating wings. On January 6, 1928, one was seen flying steadily in a north-westerly direction, about two miles southeast of Buena Park; and on December 24, 1928, one was seen hunting over weed covered fields about two miles southwest of Buena Park.—JOHN MCB. ROBERTSON, *Buena Park, California, April 11, 1929.*

Poor-will Noted in San Francisco County, California.—On April 20, 1929, a Dusky Poor-will (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii californicus*) was shown to a group of students by Dr. H. C. Bryant in southern San Francisco County. The bird was located under a bush, a mile from Daly City, in the canyon leading from the old pumping station to Lake Merced. It was so protected by its coloration that it was not easily distinguished. A search disclosed no nest. Finally disturbing it, a glimpse of white on the tail feathers was seen as it flew low over the bushes, alighting several times, each time on a bare spot on the ground. When flushed again, it came back to within a few feet of its starting point, completing a circle about 100 feet in diameter. There it settled down on an exposed sandy spot in plain sight of all, paying no heed to the group which approached within ten feet of it. The only signs of agitation were a blinking of the eyelids and a vibration of the throat, the latter making the white throat feathers ripple like a curtain in a breeze. There it was left, in view of all passers-by, but so camouflaged that only the quick eye of a bird student would find it.

After careful search I have found no record of a Poor-will for either of the counties of San Mateo or San Francisco. Could this have been a first instance of occurrence?—SELMA WERNER, *San Francisco, May 2, 1929.*

A Record of the Red-breasted Goose in California.—In 1893, while looking over some of the late additions to the collection of birds in the California Academy of Sciences, I saw a specimen of goose that was new to me as well as to the curator, Mr. W. E. Bryant. The label, in the well known writing of Lyman Belding, stated that it had been purchased in the local market. Mr. Bryant told me it had recently been prepared by himself and that he, so far, had been unable to identify it. There was no trouble in locating the species as *Branta ruficollis*, the habitat of which is given in the Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum as "Western Siberia, Northern Turkestan and Caspian Sea. Accidental in Europe and Egypt". Four specimens, only, were listed as in the British Museum, indicating that it was not then a common species in collections.

Mr. L. M. Loomis, who succeeded W. E. Bryant at about this time, refused to

consider the matter of sufficient value to place it on record, saying to me that it was only a cage bird, imposed on the Museum by the previous curator and it should be destroyed. Having a desire to get to the bottom of the matter, I inquired of both Belding and Bryant, asking for full particulars. It was well known to many of Mr. Belding's friends that while in San Francisco he made daily calls at the game market, to see what strange species might be found. He said that the Red-necked Brant was tied with several of the local species, received from the hunters, supposedly from the wheat fields of the country to the north of the city. Mr. Bryant said that when he skinned it he found plenty of shot in the body, indicating that if it was a cage bird someone went to the trouble to take it out and target a shotgun on it before putting it in with the regular shipment of native geese! Neither of the above men were in doubt but that the bird was an accidental visitor to our shores and the species fully entitled to a place among our birds. The logical theory was that it had become separated from its fellows in Siberia and joined a flock of our native species, migrating south along the North American coast with them. Unfortunately, the skin was lost in the fire that destroyed the entire Academy collection, and it will never be known, further than these few notes, just the status of that specimen.—A. W. ANTHONY, *San Diego Museum of Natural History, San Diego, California, May 6, 1929.*

A Record of *Tyrannus melancholicus occidentalis* for the State of Washington.—The recent record by Kermode (CONDOR, 30, July, 1928, p. 251) of the taking of "*Tyrannus melancholicus satrapa* (Cabanis and Heine)" on Vancouver Island, recalls the fact that there is in the Dickey collection at the California Institute of Technology, a male of the year of *Tyrannus melancholicus occidentalis* Hartert and Goodson, collected by Carl Lien in "Jefferson County", Washington, on November 18, 1916. It is now no. 22269 of the Dickey collection. This specimen was purchased by Mr. Dickey from Paul Trapier as part of a general collection of Washington birds mostly taken by Mr. Lien. It was labelled by the original collector as "Ash-throated Flycatcher".

The specimen here recorded is somewhat soot-stained, but is clearly of the west-Mexican race which differs from the Central American in having paler, less intensely yellow underparts and slightly larger bill. Except for the darker tinge caused by soot-stain, it is very similar to two birds from Escuinapa, Sinaloa. It may be pointed out that Hellmayr (Birds of the Americas, 1927, p. 109) has shown that *Laphyetes satrapa* Cabanis and Heine is a synonym of *Tyrannus couchii* Baird and that the proper name of the race ranging from southern Mexico south through Central America is *Tyrannus melancholicus chloronotus* Berlepsch.

In view of the subspecific status of the Washington bird, it would appear that a re-examination of Mr. Kermode's specimen is desirable. Logically, it should be of the north-west Mexican race rather than the Central American race.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, May 25, 1929.*