A Fearless Great Horned Owl.—On February 23, 1929, I saw, to my great surprise, a very blackish (probably dirty) Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) roosting in a large cottonwood tree which stands about ten feet back of my sleeping porch. The bird seemed utterly unconcerned over my presence and scrutiny, only following my movements with characteristic owl-head twistings. The weather at this time was cold, though not extremely so. On April 1, I again saw a great horned owl in the same tree, presumably the same bird noted in February. It was again seen on April 8, 9 and 13. On the last date it sat, at dusk, on the cross-arm of an electric light pole, seemingly watching for prey.

While I was looking at it, the bird regurgitated a pellet, which was later on found and sent east for identification of its contents. The Biological Survey reports that this pellet was made up solely of the remains of a Western Robin.

I believe that this owl was held to the neighborhood of my house and its adjoining park because of the ease of securing gray squirrels (introduced). These squirrels, in the absence of all natural food in Denver, have been for several years past taking heavy toll of young birds and birds' eggs.—W. H. BERGTOLD, *Denver, Colorado, July 19, 1929.*

On Pellets of Hawks and Owls.—The analysis of pellets ejected by raptors, both hawks and owls, has been used again and again as an absolute record of their food. To anyone who has kept a hawk or owl in captivity and has studied their reactions to different foods the error of such a record must be apparent; but few observers have done this in America. The only published notice that I have seen is a footnote on page 235, volume II, of Forbush's Birds of Massachusetts.

The simple fact is that raptors pluck birds very carefully as a rule, or else strip the skin and feathers off together, eating the meat only. Some species commence by swallowing the head nearly entire and this gives a certain record; others like the Marsh Hawk usually reject the head and gorge themselves on the breast only, if their prey is a large bird. A few feathers may be swallowed with the meat but these do not result in a pellet being ejected.

A mouse or mole is swallowed almost entire and larger mammals have a considerable portion of the skin and fur carried down with the flesh. The result is a pellet within twelve hours.

Two years ago I collected or examined all the large pellets I could find ejected beneath the big fir trees used by Bald Eagles on the coast of Vancouver Island. Practically every pellet consisted of a solid mass of grebe feathers with some small bone remains. Only in one pellet could I find any duck bones, the mandible of a golden-eye.

Now at the time I had the eagles under observation continually, and every day I could see them capturing their prey. This for the most part consisted of ducks, mainly scoters. Why did not the pellets contain duck remains? Simply because the ducks were plucked carefully. An eagle would spend half an hour or more dressing (or undressing) his capture before commencing to feed; the feathers from the high altitude of the towering firs drifted far over the forest. But a grebe is unpluckable and the skin and feathers were swallowed with the meat, resulting in a huge pellet next day. From an examination of these pellets an entirely erroneous estimate would have been made.

Further, pellets are almost indestructible and resist weather conditions for years. As resting places and nesting sites change ownership it does not follow that the present occupant was the origin of any or all of the pellets beneath the tree or nest. A notable instance of this was related to me by one of our foremost ornithologists. He found the Long-eared Owl nesting in the aspens of almost every coulee visited by him in southern Saskatchewan. The following year these same nests were visited and in every case were occupied by Horned Owls. These ferocious marauders might easily acquire a reputation as exclusive mouse eaters under such conditions, as the pellets of the Long-eared Owl would be in evidence at each nest.

The footnote already alluded to deals with a communication from Mr. C. L. Hauthaway and the observations embodied therein are most interesting and conclusive. Mr. Hauthaway has kindly allowed me to make use of these notes and I hope to be able to publish them in full later. The main facts of his letter are as follows.

Snowy Owls were obviously living largely on ducks and other sea birds on the New England coast during the winter of 1926-27, yet their pellets contained nothing but mouse fur. Even after killing seven live duck decoys no evidence of a duck diet could be found in the pellets picked up at the owl's roosting place.

Later a captive owl was fed a variety of foods. Murres were stripped of their breast skin and the flesh only eaten, with no resulting pellet. Chicken and turkey heads and wings were picked clean, no feathers being swallowed and no pellet ejected afterwards. When these were cut in pieces and force fed, feathers and all, a pellet would result. Killy-fish in large numbers were likewise fed by force but no pellets or bones were ejected later. The heads of large fish (haddock) were picked clean —no pellets. But a meal of one mouse or more always resulted in a pellet of skin, bones and skull.

In conclusion it should be emphasized that a thorough knowledge of a raptor in life is of infinitely more value than pages of the results of stomach analysis even when these have been made by the most competent authorities.—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, June 9, 1929.*

The Texas Nighthawk in Santa Clara County, California.—The Texas Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis texensis*) does not appear in the "Directory to the Bird Life of the San Francisco Bay Region" by Grinnell and Wythe. Up to that time there were no published records of this bird for the Bay counties.

This bird was first noted by the writer in Santa Clara County in 1894, when the first set of eggs was taken near Gilroy. Some eight or ten pairs bred over a distance of about four miles along the Uvas Creek. Well back from the water were dry, rather loose beds of gravel covered with a sparse growth of weeds (*Mentzelia laevicaulis.*) Here the nighthawks bred, laying their eggs on the bare gravel, generally on the north side of one of these plants.

Since then many of these eggs have been observed by the writer *in situ* and a few sets taken. In 1922, D. B. Bull was taken into the field where he collected some sets. Later he discovered another breeding ground near Coyote on the Coyote Creek. Dr. Chas. Piper Smith also visited Coyote and personally took sets. Some nesting dates are: Taken by D. B. Bull, Gilroy, June 21, 1922, two fresh eggs; June 28, 1922, two fresh eggs; Coyote, June 4, 1925, two fresh eggs; taken by Chas. Piper Smith at Coyote, July 1, 1925, two fresh eggs and two partly incubated; taken by the writer at Gilroy, June 21, 1922, two fresh eggs, and on June 10, 1923, two eggs about one-half incubated. There are also sets of eggs taken by the writer in the collections of O. P. Silliman and D. S. DeGroot. H. W. Carriger accompanied by the writer took a set at Gilroy, June 20, 1929.

The Dusky Poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii californicus*) sometimes breeds in this same association and the writer obtained one set of fresh eggs there April 14, 1926. This set is in the collection of D. B. Bull.—W. E. UNGLISH, *Gilroy, California, June 22, 1929.*

Additions to the Rancho La Brea Avifauna.—During the course of a recent examination of Pleistocene Passeriformes of Rancho La Brea, several skeletal elements pertaining to non-passerine groups of birds were prepared for study by the present writer. A study of these bones reveals the presence of three species of Recent birds hitherto unknown from the deposits. One additional Recent species is probably present but can not be identified with certainty because of incompleteness of the material. Also, a number of elements were found which belong to species poorly represented in the fossil collections from Rancha La Brea and which, for this reason, deserve mention. All fossils here noted were taken from locality no. 1059 (R. C. Stoner, Univ. Calif. Publ. Bull. Dept. Geol. Sci., 7, 1913, p. 389) and are now contained in the paleontological collections of the University of California.

Shore-birds' remains are present, though rare, in the Rancho La Brea deposits; thus far they have not been identified even to the genus. With the recognition of a few additional elements, and with a more complete assemblage of Recent skeletons than has been available for previous studies, the identification of two members of the suborder Limicolae now is possible. *Limnodromus griseus* is represented by a coracoid