

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Western Robin Eating Ivy Berries.—Since reading final proof of my paper entitled "Happenings in a Robin Household" (Condor, XXXII, 1930, p. 77), before its going to press, where the finding in the robins' nest of the seeds of the English ivy (*Hedera helix*) was mentioned and their presence there was spoken of as a "mystery unsolved", the matter has been satisfactorily cleared up. In fact, several people have helped in the clearing, these being members of the Cooper Ornithological Club to whom I had told the story of the ivy seeds and who had been fortunate enough to see robins actually eating the ivy berries.

In addition to this evidence, a day or two after the appearance of the paper, Mrs. Charles S. Newhall, another Cooper Club member, kindly wrote me a letter containing a detailed account of having found ivy seeds in her yard in Berkeley, under redwood trees which robins had been frequenting, of her going to the University botanical gardens and of having there seen the Western Robin taking berries from the ivy. Mrs. Newhall went on to say that after these birds had visited the redwood trees she found evidences on the ground beneath them of regurgitation of the seeds and that a "fine crop of English ivy has come up" since then.

As stated in my paper, Mr. W. L. McAtee, Food Habits Research Expert of the U. S. Biological Survey, remarked that the robin was not known to eat berries of the English ivy. As concerns the *Eastern* Robin this may be because there is no fruit on the eastern ivy at the season when the birds would want to eat it; but in California, near the actual coast, ivy is apt to fruit at almost any time and the robins evidently turn to it when other food is scarce.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, March 25, 1930.*

Further Notes on the Harris Hawk.—As a more or less tropical element in our California avifauna the Harris Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus harrisi*) holds the interest of many Condor readers. Along with the Lucy Warbler, Elf Owl, Vermilion Flycatcher and Cooper Tanager, it makes a visit to the Yuma district especially attractive. During the nesting season the tropical effect is not limited to the avian visitors, for the desert sunshine serves nobly to complete the picture. On April 18 and 19 of this year (1930) our party paid a visit to the old locality of Pot Holes (now Laguna Dam) on the Colorado River, and the Harris Hawks there gave us a brief item or two on their feeding and nesting habits.

The birds seem to be particularly localized about the California Lakes area. On four different visits to this region they have been seen in small numbers. The old nests have been noted in the tall cottonwoods on several occasions and have always been at considerable distance from the ground, quite unlike the first nest noted in 1917 and later recorded by Leo Wiley (Condor, XIX, 1917, p. 142) which was in a mesquite tree of scrubby proportions. Whether found in summer or winter, the birds seem to frequent the immediate vicinity of these nests.

The nest found this spring was at an elevation of nearly forty feet in a cottonwood and was of typical buteonine nature. In the nest there was a single chick, probably five or six days old, blind in one eye and covered with a complete coat of down of a rich brown color approaching the shade seen on the shoulders of the adult bird. Wiley described the newly hatched young as "light buff" in color.

On the edge of the nest were two fresh bird bodies, one a Florida gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*) and the other a Sora (*Porzana carolina*). The Gallinule had been quite well plucked, most of the contour feathers and all the strong flight feathers having been removed. The hawk's talons had pierced the pelvis back of the acetabulum and the rib basket in the region of the posterior dorsals. The throat had been torn out, but otherwise nothing had been consumed. The Sora was beheaded, but otherwise was quite intact.

On a previous occasion some brief mention was made of the stomach contents of this species (Condor, XXVII, March, 1925, p. 71), the evidence being that it is an aggressively raptorial bird. Green-winged Teal and Gilded Flicker were identified in the stomachs. Add to these species the Florida Gallinule and the Sora, both secretive birds of rather dense cover, and the impression grows that the Harris

Hawk is no mean hunter. Furthermore, he plucks his kill almost as completely as does a falcon, even wrenching out the strongly attached primaries.

Mr. John Cole was a member of the party and was good enough to climb to the nest and report the contents.—LOYE MILLER, *University of California at Los Angeles, April 25, 1930.*

Valley Quail and Sharp-shinned Hawk.—Some forty Valley Quail (*Lophortyx californica californica*) frequent my garden on the outskirts of Oakland, attracted by the bird-food trays. A Sharp-shinned Hawk from the nearby hills has twice been seen to fly over the flock, and then perch in a neighboring tree. The "freezing" behavior exhibited by many of the quail under the circumstances was quite interesting.

A sudden high medley of alarm calls and whirring of wings was heard—an explosion of birds—and instant quiet—as the shadow of the Sharp-shin passed over the ground. Half the quail had reached the cover of tree, shrub, or brush-pile. But half of them had not, and these were scattered about, some alongside of a tuft of grass or other slight leafage, some wholly in the open. They were difficult to see at first glance, as they were motionless, "frozen" in a peculiar posture, half-squatting and with tail held at a high angle. They looked as if they were in readiness to spring into flight. The position of the tail was notably unusual.

The hawk did not attempt to molest them, though several seemed to be in his range of vision, of the eighteen that had come to a stop before reaching cover. They kept absolutely still for a full five minutes while the hawk remained. When he flew away, a few male quails moved their heads a little and clucked softly, but that was all for another five minutes or so. Then the birds slowly "unfroze" in a subdued, hesitating manner, the males first.—HERMAN DE FREMERY, *Oakland, California, January 23, 1930.*

A Black Rail Leaves the Salt Marsh.—On August 31, 1929, a female California Black Rail (*Creciscus jamaicensis coturniculus*) was presented in the flesh to the O'Rourke Zoological Institute of San Diego and now reposes in the collection of that organization. This specimen was picked up the day previous near the towers of the U. S. Naval Radio Station just east of San Diego. There is a small fresh-water pond nearby and a considerable growth of cat-tails in adjacent cañons. However, since this location is about six miles from the normal habitat of the black rail in the salt water marshes of the coast, it seems probable that this bird was in migration at the time of its death.—FRANK F. GANDER, *O'Rourke Zoological Institute, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, February 11, 1930.*

Bird Notes from Santa Catalina Island.—More than sixty years have passed since the Pileolated Warbler and the Brewer Blackbird were reported from Santa Catalina Island by Dr. J. G. Cooper. Since then, there appears to be no other published record of their occurrence on the island. On the morning of January 2, 1930, I saw a Pileolated Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla pileolata*) gleaning insects from a cassia bush near the Avalon High School, and on the following morning, in the same bush, was the same or another male bird. On the second morning the possession of the bush was disputed by a Dusky Warbler which finally succeeded in driving the Pileolated away.

Brewer Blackbirds (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) seem to be fairly common migrants during favorable years. On March 9, 1929, I saw a lone male bird on the main street of Avalon, and on April 15 of this year I saw two males and a female at Middle Ranch. Captain McKay, an old resident on Catalina Island, has told me that flocks of the birds have been seen on the island several times. On one occasion, about 1913, he said, Brewer Blackbirds were common for several weeks around a horse corral in Avalon.

Juncos of an undetermined species were seen by Harry Harris near Avalon in March, 1919 (*Condor*, xxi, p. 172). On March 25 of last year, I saw a flock of twenty birds near the hay-press at the upper end of Grand Cañon, and a specimen collected proved to be a female *Junco hyemalis thurberi*. This definitely establishes the Thurber Junco as an Island visitor.