

the living limb which I thought was the nesting site. I also saw two other pairs in the same vicinity and I have no doubt that a careful search would bring nests to light.

On May 18, 1930, the Audubon Society made an excursion to the ranch of Mr. McCoy, located about five miles south of Livermore on the road to Mount Hamilton. On the ride out I saw one pair of Lewis Woodpeckers flying over the creek where the sycamores first are in evidence. A little farther out two more pairs were seen, and I determined to come back later to make more careful investigation.

In the afternoon I walked from the ranch northerly along the creek bed and saw several of the birds and finally located a pair that gave every evidence of having young in the vicinity. One was observed carrying food, and when I was in the vicinity of the nesting site both birds kept up a constant calling. The cry was very similar to the notes of the Hairy Woodpecker except that each note was given individually and not run together as when given by an excited Hairy Woodpecker. But all my watching failed to locate the nest.

On the way home I again stopped and sat around while the parent birds kept up their monotonous cries. Finally one flew to a sycamore about fifty feet distant from the tree which I thought must be the right one and a second bird appeared a short time later. This second bird entered a hole in the sycamore. It only took a fraction of a second to feed the young and fly away after more "stuffing". The nest was in the living trunk of a sycamore and about eighteen feet above the ground. It was impossible to say whether the hole was excavated in the living wood or was just an enlargement of a rotten spot in the tree. I got the impression that the excavation was made in the living wood.

One of the young boys was hoisted up the smooth tree with a convenient tow rope. The nest hole was large enough to enable him to reach inside and take one of the young out for inspection. It appeared to be about a week old as its eyes were still closed. The little one tried to swallow the finger of its captor and we hurriedly replaced it in the nest. The little birds kept up a constant squeaking which sounded more or less like steam escaping from an engine. After the boy started to climb to the nest the parent birds kept quiet although they were in the vicinity.

We had opportunities to watch the parent birds in the vicinity, apparently getting food for the nestlings. One perched on fence posts and occasionally flew out as if catching insects. At other times it would fly down to the ground and pick up something, probably a grasshopper. We saw another one perch in an olive tree and take something from the foliage.

It is easy to overlook these birds during the earlier nesting season as they will sit for long periods on the upper sides of limbs in the oaks or sycamores and will not fly when a person is near. When the feeding period commences, however, there should be no trouble in noticing the birds, as it takes constant work on the part of the parents to keep the youngsters supplied with food. Their insect catching habits can easily be mistaken for those of the California Woodpecker, especially at a distance. It would add to our knowledge of distribution if close watch be kept for this interesting bird in the sycamore groves of our interior Coast Range streams and among the oaks where the California Woodpeckers are found.

On June 1, 1930, I went into the territory back of Sunol and found about twelve Lewis Woodpeckers breeding. The nests were in the sycamores along San Antonio Creek, with the exception of one which I suspect was in a large valley oak. The parent birds were much disturbed by our presence. I also noted the parent birds out in the open fields gathering food, probably grasshoppers.—L. PH. BOLANDER, *Oakland, California, June 5, 1930.*

**The Pintails of Northwestern Alaska.**—On my return from Alaska in 1922, I submitted from the Colorado Museum of Natural History some specimens of the pintail duck to Dr. H. C. Oberholser for identification, and he reported on them as follows: "Those from the Seward Peninsula and Wainwright are *Dafla acuta acuta*, but the one from Point Barrow seems to be *Dafla acuta tzitzihoa*." I recorded two of these specimens (Condor, XXVI, 1924, p. 195) and others (Condor, XXVII, 1925, p. 169) as *acuta*, and, subsequently, a female in the collection of the Chicago Academy of Sciences (Condor, XXXI, 1929, p. 225) which was also so identified by Dr. Oberholser.

Additional specimens have been received during the past few years, and these are in the collection of the Chicago Academy of Sciences. I sent these to Dr. Oberholser and he kindly examined them for me, advising me as follows:

"I have carefully worked over the specimens in this consignment of yours, and having this larger series of pintails, particularly of males from northwestern Alaska—evidently breeding birds, I have finally come to the conclusion that they are all the American pintail, although somewhat intermediate and showing a tendency to the European form, *Dafila acuta acuta*. I know that I have identified for you previous birds from the same region, chiefly females, which are difficult to determine, as the European bird, but I am now inclined to think that these, as well as those you now send, are all rather intermediate individuals of the American race. The latter is not a very strongly differentiated form at best, and with only one or two birds at hand to identify, it is often not easy to determine to what race they should be referred. Some of the birds that you previously sent are rather small, and from this I concluded that they probably were the European bird, but those in this last lot average so much larger that it seems to be best to call them all *Dafila acuta tzitzihoa*. In such cases it is rather unsatisfactory to have only a single bird for identification, but of course we have to do the best we can."

The specimens including those from the Colorado Museum of Natural History were sent to Mr. James L. Peters of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, for his inspection. He writes the following:

"Going over the pintails has naturally involved comparing them with good characteristic examples of undoubted *acuta* on the one hand, and with *tzitzihoa* on the other. The adult males of the latter race are easily recognized by their much longer and somewhat wider central tail feathers. I can find no color characters in the male, and no way at all of telling the females with any degree of certainty. *Acuta* averages very slightly shorter winged and with an average shorter and narrower bill, but, while these averages may be enough to help characterize the subspecies, there is so much overlapping that no individual can be identified on such a basis. And moreover, when the wings are considerably worn, as in the case of many of your Alaskan specimens, mensural characters do not help much. So you see it all boils down to adult males in fresh plumage; females, young, and males in eclipse are out of it altogether. On the strength of your males, I should say that the breeding pintails of northwest Alaska show an approach to *acuta* and are therefore not quite typical *tzitzihoa*, but are much nearer the latter race as an aggregate, although certain individuals like nos. 9305 and 9870 (Colorado Mus. Nat. Hist.) are very close to *acuta*. I think on the whole the breeding bird of northwestern Alaska should be called *tzitzihoa*."

In view of the above, then, it seems best to call all Alaskan pintails *tzitzihoa*, in spite of the fact that there is little doubt that pintails from the Asiatic side fly across Bering Strait to the Alaskan shore. Snow geese and little brown cranes regularly pass from the American side to Siberia, and Asiatic birds occur regularly at Wales when conditions are favorable; also I have seen pintails in flight over the Strait. Considering the fact that there is so little difference between the two forms, I agree with Dr. Oberholser and Mr. Peters that the identification of Alaskan birds should be based on geographic grounds, and that the specimens which I have recorded, as noted above, should be considered *Dafila acuta tzitzihoa*.—ALFRED M. BAILEY, *Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago, Illinois, July 1, 1930.*