

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Nesting of the Piñon Jay in Oregon.—During the early spring months of the past few years, I had become interested in the great number of Piñon Jays (*Cyanocephalus cyanocephalus*) that occur in the juniper forests of western Deschutes County in central Oregon, but it was not until early April, 1930, that an opportunity presented itself to search for their nests.

Arrangements were then made to have an assistant with me on the ground by April 1. After going over the territory, we found the jays in considerable numbers and on April 5 located the first nest, then under construction, in a small yellow pine close to a road. During the same day, seven other nests, all in course of construction, were located in pine or juniper trees in the near vicinity of nest no. 1. These nests were all visited again on April 10, when they contained from one to three eggs each.

On April 9, a veritable colony of nests was found near the town of Grandview in the adjoining county of Jefferson. These nests were all in small junipers from three to seven feet above the ground. During our investigations we found over fifty nests of these birds, the great majority in juniper trees from three to eighteen feet up, while a few nests were found in yellow pine trees up to eighty-five feet. Nests were built on horizontal limbs or in thick twig growths and composed for the most part of dry twigs and coarse grasses and were lined with fine, dry grass, sheeps' wool and horse hair. The following notes taken verbatim from our notebook throws some light on the habits of these jays.

"Some of the Piñon Jay females, on being flushed from their sets of eggs, got clear out of the country and they did not come back under twenty minutes to half an hour. Two females were lifted off their eggs by me and these eggs were only slightly incubated. Still others came back into the nest tree and stayed close around, calling continually. At no time, did the male bird come in when the female called. The males usually fed in a large flock one-fourth to three-fourths of a mile distant, sometimes in one direction and again in another, from the nests. On coming in with food, a male usually perched on the top of a tree forty to fifty feet distant from the nest and called the female off to be fed. While being fed, she made a screeching series of calls similar to those of a young bird and continually fluttered her wings, and if the male flew to another tree, she followed, begging for more food. Having finished feeding, the male flew back to the feeding ground and the female flew directly to the nest, making it very easy to find. The feeding was closely observed and was solely by regurgitation, an unusual procedure for any of the crow or jay family. The female has a call given when near her nest, that closely resembles *krook, krook*. The male has a peculiar whistle-like note when one is near a completed nest and a very jay-like note when the female is disturbed from her nest."

To sum up, full sets contained three, four or five eggs each. Eggs collected April 10 to 14 were in full sets and were fresh. The Piñon Jay colonizes during the nesting season; sometimes three occupied nests were found in one tree.—J. C. BRALY, Portland, Oregon, September 24, 1930.

Wood Ibises Summering in San Diego County, California.—Appearances of the Wood Ibis (*Mycteria americana*) in the coastal region of southern California are sufficiently uncertain and irregular to warrant their being recorded. During the present summer (1930) these birds have been continuously present in Mission Valley, San Diego County, for several months. A flock of fourteen individuals was first observed there, feeding in a gravel pit in the bed of the San Diego River, in "late May" by R. E. Officer, a resident of Mission Valley, and reported to the Zoological Society of San Diego. The birds did not come to my notice until June 24, when I saw what was presumably the same flock of fourteen flying down the valley toward Mission Bay. On June 25, I observed several of the ibises circling over the houses in Old Town (North San Diego), apparently unconcerned by human population and the stream of automobile traffic. The same afternoon the entire flock settled at the edge of a small pool in Mission Valley plainly visible from my home. Here all fourteen remained at least until June 29, when I went away for several

weeks. During these four days the ibises were never seen to leave the little pool, which hardly seemed capable of providing sustenance for so many large birds. Many persons drove to the pool to watch the "cranes," the latter showing no alarm at their presence on the roadway close by.

Upon my return to San Diego in the middle of August, the Wood Ibises in Mission Valley were still being reported. The latest record which I received was of three birds on September 13, from Mrs. Belle R. Benchley of the Zoological Society of San Diego. These were in the same pool where the first birds were seen in May. Incidentally, all the occurrences of this flock were well within the city limits of San Diego and near built-up residential districts.

Other San Diego County observations of Wood Ibises this summer to come to my notice have been: 3 birds in a small pond near Ramona on June 26, by L. M. Huey, of the San Diego Society of Natural History; 2 birds in Chollas Canyon (eastern outskirts of the city of San Diego) about the end of August, by Webb Toms, Deputy State Fish and Game Commissioner; and the following by E. H. Glidden, Deputy U. S. Game Warden and Deputy State Fish and Game Commissioner: about 10 birds in the San Bernardo River near San Pasqual battlefield on August 6; 6 or 7 birds at Lake Hodges on August 6; 11 birds in the San Luis Rey River near Monserate on August 19; 15 birds at Lower Otay Lake on August 23. Mr. Glidden also stated that on August 28 he saw between 200 and 225 Wood Ibises five miles north of Calexico, Imperial County, California. These birds were feeding in a damp field and circling in the air above.

There has been no previous visitation of Wood Ibises in San Diego County, of which I have knowledge, since 1925. In the summer of that year a flock of about 100 birds came to Lake Hodges, from which five specimens were collected on August 11 for the San Diego Society of Natural History. The birds at that time displayed the same disregard for human beings that was noted this year. Also a large proportion of the individuals, both years, were immature.

Prior to this, I have the record of Thomas Weddle, rancher-naturalist of the Sweetwater River valley near Dehesa, who on August 30, 1923, saw "hundreds" of Wood Ibises at his home. On the day previous only 7 or 8 had arrived. The sight of the many supremely graceful white birds soaring above the river, and outlined against the mountains beyond, left an indelible impression on his mind.—CLINTON G. ABBOTT, *San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, October 11, 1930.*

The House Sparrow and the Motor Car.—The great increase in the number of motor vehicles and the consequent disappearance of the horse has resulted, we are told, in a considerable diminution of the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) population in our cities and towns. In view of this fact, while walking recently along the main street of Eastend I was interested to watch a hen sparrow procuring food for her young by picking grasshoppers off the radiator of one of the cars parked against the sidewalk.—LAURENCE B. POTTER, *Eastend, Saskatchewan, Canada, September 8, 1930.*

Pliocene Bird Remains from Santa Barbara, California.—Over one hundred species of birds have been found in fossil deposits in California. Of these, however, only two, each described from a single specimen, have been reported from the Pliocene: *Mancalla californiensis* Lucas, taken from a marine deposit at the site of the Third Street tunnel, Los Angeles, and *Branta howardae* Miller recently described from the Ricardo land laid beds in the Mohave Desert. Considering the scarcity of Pliocene bird remains, therefore, the discovery of additional specimens from this period is of particular interest and importance.

The first of the present specimens to come to the writer's attention, was collected in August, 1930, by Mr. A. M. Strong, a conchologist of Los Angeles, who donated this bone and two fragments of marine vertebrates, along with a number of marine mollusks, to the Los Angeles Museum. These specimens were all collected in an embankment at the foot of Victoria Street, Santa Barbara. According to Dr. U. S. Grant, Invertebrate Paleontologist at the Los Angeles Museum, this deposit is undoubtedly close to Arnold's Packard's Hill locality (Mem. Calif. Acad. Sci., 3, 1903, pp. 50-53) and may be definitely considered as uppermost Pliocene on the basis of its molluscan content.