

"This crane has been bred and brought up on my estate at Ascania Nova, in the Province of Tauride, in South Russia. Whoever catches or kills this bird is requested to communicate with me, and inform me where it occurred.

"(Signed) F. R. FALZ-FEIN.

"September, 1892.'

"I now raised my head, which hitherto I had kept closely bent down; and the Khalifa asked, 'Well, what do the papers contain?' 'Sire,' I replied, 'this case must have been fastened to the neck of a bird which has been killed. Its owner, who lives in Europe, has requested that anyone who finds the bird should let him know where it was caught or killed.' 'You have spoken the truth,' said the Khalifa, in a somewhat more amiable tone; 'the bird was killed by a Shaigi near Dongola, and the cartridge case was found attached to its neck. He took it to the Emir Yunes, whose secretary was unable to decipher the writing of the Christian, and he therefore forwarded it to me. Tell me now what is written on the paper?' I translated the message, word for word, and, at the Khalifa's command, also tried to describe the geographical position of the country from which the bird had come, and the distance it had traveled before it was killed. 'This is one of the many devilries of those unbelievers,' he said, at last, 'who waste their time in such useless nonsense. A Mohammedan would never have attempted to do such a thing.'

"He then ordered me to hand over the case to his secretary, and signed to me to withdraw, but I managed to take one more hurried glance at the paper: Ascania Nova, Tauride, South Russia, I repeated over and over again to imprint it on my memory. The mulazemin at the door anxiously awaited my return, and when I came out from the presence of my tyrannical master with a placid countenance they seemed greatly pleased. On my way to my house I continued to repeat to myself the name of the writer and his residence, and determined that should Providence ever grant me my freedom I should not fail to let him know what had happened to his bird."

On February 20, 1895, about two years later, Slatin Pasha escaped from Omdurman, and after a soul-trying flight through the desert reached Assuan, upper Egypt, on the 16th of March, proceeding thence to Cairo. The end of this incident is quoted from his own words.

"A few days after my arrival, when seated on the balcony of the Agency, and looking down on the garden all fresh with the verdure of spring, I espied a tame heron stalking across the flower-beds. Instantly I thought of Falz-Fein of Ascania Nova, in Tauride, South Russia, and I hurried to my room, and then and there wrote to him a full account of the crane which he had released in 1892, and which had been killed in Dar Shaigia. It was the greatest pleasure to feel myself in a position to give the former owner of the bird an accurate account of what had happened; and soon afterwards I received a reply from Mr. Falz-Fein, who possesses a large estate in the Crimea, thanking me warmly for my letter, and inviting me to pay him a visit, which, unfortunately, the numerous calls on my time have hitherto prevented me from accepting."—F. H. FOWLER, *Palo Alto, California, May 19, 1931.*

**The Dwarf Cowbird in San Benito County, California.**—On May 10, 1931, H. W. Carriger while collecting along the San Benito River near Betabel located a nest of the Golden Pileolated Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla chryseola*) with one egg of the warbler and one egg of the Dwarf Cowbird (*Molothrus ater obscurus*). This he left undisturbed and very kindly turned over his interest in the find to the writer who collected the completed set on May 15, when it contained two eggs of the warbler and the cowbird's egg. The egg of the parasite was found to be the farthest advanced in incubation. Four eggs constitute a normal set for this warbler and one or more eggs may have been destroyed by the cowbird at the time of its own laying. The nest was typical of this warbler and was concealed twelve inches up in poison oak. This is our first record of the cowbird for this section. As yet no birds have been noted.—W. E. ENGLISH, *Gilroy, California, June 22, 1931.*

**Black-footed Albatross on San Francisco Bay.**—For several years past I have kept careful record of the birds seen in my daily "commuting" across San Francisco Bay,

between the San Francisco Ferry Building and the Key Route terminal on the east shore. This has resulted in an accumulation of data of some interest and of possible value in the mass, but rarely is any single observation worthy of separate record. The subject of the present note, however, is distinctly of the exceptional sort that deserves some emphasis.

On May 14, about 3 p. m., as I sat on the upper front deck, my usual post of observation, the boat still in the San Francisco slip, a large, dark-colored bird swept past, headed southward, to disappear behind the projecting piling while my benumbed senses were still struggling to register and recognize the impossible apparition. As we emerged from the slip a few moments later the bird returned, skimming low over the water, at one time not more than one hundred yards distant—unmistakably a Black-footed Albatross (*Diomedea nigripes*). It circled about in plain sight for some time and then disappeared toward the Golden Gate, attended by a cloud of gulls and giving a distant impression as of a blue-bottle fly in a swarm of gnats. There was a brisk north wind blowing at the time but nothing approaching stormy weather; the bird itself did not act or appear otherwise than normal.

Years ago, on different occasions, I have seen Black-footed Albatrosses not uncommonly on the open sea between Puget Sound and Los Angeles, and the species is known of course as of regular occurrence along this coast. This is the first time, though, that I have seen one in sheltered waters. Along the "inside passage" between Seattle and Skagway, for example, shearwaters may be counted upon to appear in abundance at certain places and at certain seasons, but an albatross never, in my experience, although there are sounds where this passage is not sheltered from the ocean swell.

Our authoritative "Directory to the Bird-Life of the San Francisco Bay Region" lists three species of albatross. The Black-footed Albatross "comes occasionally within sight of land;" the Short-tailed Albatross was "observed once near Goat Island, March 10 (year unknown);" while of the Yellow-nosed Albatross "a skull was found on the ocean beach near San Francisco some time previous to 1868." The moral of my own observation may be that even an ancient picked-up skull is not deserving of scorn as circumstantial evidence apparently indicating what would really be a not impossible occurrence.—H. S. SWARTH, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, May 19, 1931.*

**Concern Exhibited by Wild Birds in the Troubles of Others.**—My house is on the top of a spur running due west from the hills in the higher part of Piedmont, Alameda County, California; a bench mark at the highest part of the garden is 504.97 feet above whatever datum is the basis of Oakland city surveys. Except for the house and garden, the spur is covered with live oaks and pines, the latter being Monterey pines planted probably about thirty years ago. The natural undergrowth is hazel, toyon, blackberry, gooseberry, currant, California sage, etc. I have also planted quite a lot of shrubbery of various kinds, fruit trees, small fruits, etc., have plenty of water for the birds, kill the cats and certain hawks, and when I catch the snakes around the nests I escort them to other fields of activity. Hence the birds seem to like it here and I have counted twenty different kinds (July 4, 1930) at one time without moving from one spot, and several kinds nest here.

A Spotted Towhee has been rearing its second brood of the season among some nasturtiums underneath an oak. This morning on inspecting the nest I found the young had left, and the parents expressed great concern at my presence, much more than usual. I first suspected a snake but could find none.

Within five minutes there were gathered within six to forty feet of me the following birds, some in the branches over my head and some in nearby trees, all either watching and sitting quietly or else hopping about near the parent birds: 2 Spotted Towhees; 4 or 5 California Towhees; 2 Juncos (Point Pinos?—they nest here); 2 Robins, with angle-worms in their bills; 4 Hummingbirds, some Anna and some Allen; 5 or 6 Purple Finches; 1 Plain Titmouse; several Bush-tits; 1 Wren-tit; 1 Vigors Wren; 1 Lazuli Bunting; 1 Song Sparrow; 2 Quail; 1 Russet-backed Thrush. There may have been more individuals and more species, but this is all I am sure of having seen definitely at this one time.