

Robins Nesting in Monrovia, California.—About June 25, it was reported to us by neighbors in Monrovia, Los Angeles County, that a pair of Robins (*Planesticus migratorius propinquus*) was nesting in their yard. We investigated and found that the adults, accompanied by four speckled-breasted youngsters, had been seen frequently by the owner of the property. They fed on a lawn near a grove of trees. Previously, the parents had been observed carrying food away from the yard, although the nest was not located. We were able to see the parents digging for worms on the lawn, but in the limited time available for observation, the young birds did not appear. As the description given us of the young birds is correct and the older birds were positively identified, there seems little cause to doubt that the young were raised in this vicinity.—IRENE WILSON and BERRY CAMPBELL, *Monrovia, California, August 18, 1931.*

American Egret in Colorado.—While making motion films for the Chicago Academy of Sciences and the Colorado Museum of Natural History, on the property of the Mile High Gun Club, near Denver, we saw an American Egret (*Casmerodius albus egretta*) feeding along the shores of one of the lakes. A Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula brewsteri*) and several Treganza Herons (*Ardea herodias treganzai*) were within a few feet, giving us an excellent opportunity to compare the sizes of the different birds. So far as we know, this is the first record for Colorado.—ALFRED M. BAILEY and R. J. NIEDRACH, *August 1, 1931.*

Cowbirds in the Sacramento Valley.—In studying the bird life of the marshes at Marysville, since October, 1930, I at first had no thought of the Cowbird, for some reason thinking that it did not inhabit this area. A surprise was experienced therefore when on November 7, 1930, while collecting blackbirds for food-habit studies I fired into a flock of Red-wings, and upon picking up the kill found two Cowbirds. A few days later I collected another. I sent a skin to Dr. Joseph Grinnell and inquired about the matter. Under date of January 19, 1931, I received a letter from Dr. Grinnell stating that the skin sent him was *Molothrus ater artemisiae*, the Nevada Cowbird, and recommended that I report the find.

The following records of Cowbirds taken or observed during the period between November 7, 1930, and June 1, 1931, are now presented:

November 7, 1930, 7 miles northeast of Marysville. Adult female killed when I shot into a flock of *Agelaius phoeniceus californicus* and *A. p. nevadensis* feeding in rice stubble. An adult male was wounded at the same shot, but as I stooped to pick it up it flew away.

November 15, 1930, 6 miles northeast of Marysville. Adult female shot from flock of blackbirds of mixed species feeding in rice stubble.

December 10, 1930, 9 miles northeast of Marysville. Adult male shot from flock of blackbirds feeding in rice stubble; this was the specimen sent to Dr. Grinnell. Another male was collected in an adjacent field.

January 30, 1931, 8 miles northeast of Marysville. Two adult males shot from flocks of blackbirds in the rice stubble.

February 25, 1931, Spaulding Ranch, 8 miles south of Willows. Four males and three females were seen to leave a group of blackbirds feeding in the rice stubble and fly into a large pear tree immediately over my head where I watched them for a time and listened to their calls.

March 28, 1931, 5 miles east of Woodland, on Conoway Ranch. One adult male was seen perched on the brace wire of a power pole.

April 2, 1931, Conoway Ranch, Woodland. Heard and saw Cowbirds several times, but I was unable to estimate their numbers.

April 3, 1931, Conoway Ranch, Woodland. Collected one male and heard several others.

April 8, 1931, 5 miles northeast of Marysville. One male observed perched on a tall cat-tail stalk.

April 10, 1931, 4 to 8 miles northeast of Marysville. Five Cowbirds were seen in three different parts of the rice area, all in company with *Agelaius tricolor*.

April 12, 1931, 7 miles northeast of Marysville. One adult female collected in a rice field where it was feeding on seed rice.

April 13, 1931, 4 miles northeast of Marysville. Two males were seen and heard on the wing.

April 14, 1931, 4 miles northeast of Marysville. One male was collected, two males and three females watched feeding on the bare checks in a rice field.

April 15, 1931. One female collected 4 miles northeast of Marysville, and three were seen perched in a dead willow in a pasture about 10 miles from town.

April 16, 1931, 5 miles northeast of Marysville. Two collected; one female showed considerable development of ovaries. Saw at least six others flying about or perching on fence posts near an adjacent rice field.

April 17, 1931, Marysville rice area. Two males seen on fence 4 miles from town; two males, 1 female seen feeding in rice field 9 miles from town.

April 18, 1931, Spaulding Ranch, 8 miles south of Willows. Three males were observed perched in the same pear tree as those noted in February.

April 19, 1931, Marysville rice area. Two males were seen perched in a dead willow in a slough 10 miles from town.

April 21, 1931. One male seen in the same tree as noted on April 19.

April 22, 1931, 4 miles northeast of Marysville. Two males perched on a wire fence.

April 23, 1931. At various points in the Marysville rice area I observed a total of eleven Cowbirds.

April 24, 1931, Marysville. Three females.

April 25, 1931, Marysville. Seven birds.

April 27, 1931, Marysville. At one point I counted five on a wire fence; at another I collected five, three males and two females, and in a dead tree close to the latter I counted twenty-two at one time.

By this time I tired of recording daily numbers, as they seemed to be too abundant to warrant it. From May 1 to May 14 nearly every morning I heard, and often saw, a pair which seemed to have a definite patrol through the residence area of Yuba City, generally alighting in some of the taller trees on my lawn. During this period I also saw variable numbers every day in the rice area.

On May 14, I went to Berkeley and did not get back into the rice area until May 18. I failed to find any more Cowbirds until May 21 when I saw four, three males, one female, in a barnyard feeding almost under the feet of a Plymouth Rock hen which was scratching in a chaff pile with her chicks.

On May 22 at Abbott Lake, Sutter County, I was attracted by the agonized calls of a Yellow Warbler, and on approaching could see the pair of warblers fighting some larger bird high up in a cottonwood tree. After a time the invader flew, dropping downward immediately over my head; it proved to be a female Cowbird. Here, I thought, was my chance to locate the eggs of the Cowbird, but a long search failed to locate the warbler's nest. However, from the actions of the Cowbird I had no doubt as to her purpose, as so many times I have watched the eastern form at its sneaking work.

On May 23, I again heard the pair in the trees on my lawn in Yuba City, and saw or heard them almost every morning until June 1. On May 26 in the rice area northeast of Marysville I saw three birds on a dead tree in a ranch yard, two on a fence along a rice field, and a pair hunting in a cat-tail area to the acute distress of a pair of Song Sparrows. On May 27, on the same area, about seven birds were seen.

The specimens collected in April were used for food studies and the skins were not saved, since available books listed *M. a. californicus* as ranging far to the south of this area, and I thought all the birds were of the *artemisiae* group. After my return from Berkeley I obtained a copy of the paper by Dickey and van Rossem (Condor, xxiv, 1922, p. 206), and upon first opportunity to study it I discovered that these authors prophesied that the *californicus* type would be found in the Sacramento Valley. This information caused renewed interest in the status of the Cowbirds here, and I regretted very much that I had not saved skins of the spring visitants.

On May 28, I saw seven birds in the rice area, and was able to collect a female. This bird contained one egg fully developed except for the shell. I sent this skin

to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology after my own personal examination had suggested that its measurements checked closely with *M. a. californicus*; under date of June 4, Dr. Jean M. Linsdale advised me that this specimen proved surprising, falling more nearly into the average of the race *obscurus*, and stated that "your bird is actually smaller than the average given for *obscurus* in all the measurements listed by Dickey and van Rossem". However, considering all the circumstances he referred the specimen to *californicus*.

The Cowbirds present during the winter, and until late April, consorted entirely with the flocks of blackbirds, flying, feeding, and roosting with them. In late April, while continuing to be with the blackbirds, they began to drift apart in groups of their own kind. Late in May they appeared in pairs. The first sign of the nest-hunting instinct was that described on May 22. Continued search has failed to reveal their eggs, but the female collected May 28 proved the breeding status.

It appears that a considerable series of skins must be collected before we can definitely report the exact status of these birds, and give definite information on the two races. In any case the summer type will prove quite an extension of the breeding range. I hope to be able to present further data in a later report after I have studied these birds through another migration period. Other observers in the Sacramento Valley should also accept this opportunity to clarify the status of this group.—JOHNSON A. NEFF, *Bureau of Biological Survey, Marysville, California, June 10, 1931.*

Red-breasted Merganser in Orange County, California, in June.—Rather hasty reference to available literature indicates but one summer record of the Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) for California (see Squires, *Condor*, XVIII, 1916, p. 232). Therefore it seems desirable to record four individuals of this species positively identified on the grounds of the Bolsa Chica Gun Club, Orange County, California, June 9, 1931. The birds were swimming on a slough one mile south of Sunset Beach and were scrutinized at close range through binoculars. All appeared to be immatures in ragged plumage; one male had assumed but a trace of breeding plumage. No doubt immature and non-breeding individuals of this species remain along most of our coastline in summer, as do scoters and other ducks that breed far north but do not mature until the second summer.—JAMES MOFFITT, *510 Russ Building, San Francisco, California, August 3, 1931.*

Re-use of its Nest by Spotted Towhee.—An instance in which a San Francisco Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus falcifer*) re-used its first nest for a third brood was brought to my attention in Palo Alto, California, by a friend, Miss Olga Bandel, who followed very closely the "doings" of a pair of this species which nested and raised three broods in her yard during the season of 1931.

The first nest was constructed early in May among some geranium bushes growing against a private garage. After the young had been successfully reared and had left this first nest, a second nest was built closer to the house in a hedge of cherry oak some thirty feet from the first one. The young left this second nest about July 10. Within a week after the departure of the young from the second nest, the parents returned to the first nest and successfully raised a third brood therein, the young of the third brood leaving the nest on August 9.

Miss Bandel closely observed these birds daily, sometimes for several hours at a time, and became so acquainted with their individual actions and characteristics that she knows definitely that it was the same pair of birds that raised all three broods in her yard.

It has been my impression and I believe that of others that our native song birds which build nests in the open, seldom use a nest again after the young have left. This instance shows the value of continued observation of a pair of birds throughout their nesting season—without which, occurrences of this kind would not be known.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, August 25, 1931.*