

uninterrupted frieze of the Cliff Swallows' mud nests. But the really interesting feature of this colony lies in the action of a pair, or more properly a succession of pairs, of the Barn Swallow (*Hirundo erythrogaster*), in nesting on a moving train. For many years past one pair of swallows have built their nests and raised their broods on some part of the train that crosses the portage. They were first commented upon by E. M. Anderson, who, in the annual report of the Provincial Museum of Natural History (Victoria) for 1914 (1915, p. 15), describes the nest as he saw it in one of the coaches. I have seen it on each of the several years that I have visited the region, and in all probability the nesting is an annual occurrence. The train crew take a personal interest in their guests, and for some years the swallows occupied an open cigar box that was fastened for their use under the roof of the open-sided passenger-coach. In 1934 the nest was supported near the center and immediately under the roof of the baggage van, the sides of which are protected only by canvas curtains. I had occasion to cross the portage on the evening of June 21. When we embarked at the eastern end the swallows were not at home, but as soon as we arrived at the Tagish terminus both birds swooped into the car. There they settled down for the night, despite the fact that baggage was being piled beneath them to within a few inches of the roof.

I am indebted to a friend, Mr. "Bun" Hillman, of Skagway, for the accompanying photograph of the swallows' home.—H. S. SWARTH, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, January 10, 1935.*

**Barrow Golden-eye Breeding in Yosemite National Park.**—On July 24, 1934, at Table Lake, 7000 feet in elevation, near Piute Creek and about four miles below Benson Lake, members of the Yosemite Field School watched two adult female and one adult male Barrow Golden-eye (*Glaucionetta islandica*) swimming and feeding amid a mass of Indian pond lilies in an ideal nesting ground for this species. When I first discovered them, these ducks were accompanied by two partly grown young that promptly hid among the lily pads. Since these ducklings were not nearly old enough to fly, they must have been hatched at Table Lake.—JOSEPH S. DIXON, *Wild-life Division, National Park Service, Berkeley, California, October 26, 1934.*

**Coots Attacked by Herring Gull.**—A band of Coots (*Fulica americana*) usually winters on Okanagan Lake near Okanagan Landing, living chiefly on *Chara* and horned pondweed. On March 14, 1933, noticing a commotion among the flock, which on this day was feeding close to my house, I moved closer and inspected it through binoculars. It was then seen that a Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), a bird probably in its second year, was striking at the coots in much the same manner as a Bald Eagle does under the same circumstances, and the reaction of the coots was identical. That is, they gathered in a dense mass and with necks outstretched surged over the water.

While I was watching, the gull made five separate attempts to seize a coot. In doing so, it circled several times over the packed flock, then plunged down at an angle with wings set and feet extended. After each attempt the gull alighted on the water where it remained only for a moment. After the fifth downward swoop and subsequent drop to the water it made two wide circles over the coots and then flew northward across the lake.—J. A. MUNRO, *Okanagan Landing, B. C., August 8, 1934.*

**Vernacular Names Again.**—If it is necessary or desirable to have popular names for all subspecies, which I doubt, the proposal of Dr. Grinnell for their logical construction is interesting and would remove at least some of the objections to their use. However, they seem too firmly fixed in usage to be immediately abolished. Anyway, proper formation of subspecific names is not as important and pressing as is the construction of a system of specific ones for those who, for various reasons, are unable to make finer determination. Mr. Anderson's remarks in the November Condor (36, 1934, p. 245) present the case clearly.

The real difficulty in forming such a system does not arise from the uncertainty of our specific concepts, as has been implied. We are of necessity making specific distinctions in every scientific name we use. The decision we are forced to make in the scientific language should be good enough for use in the vernacular. We

may have to reconsider some of these decisions from time to time and make nomenclatural changes to correspond, but comparatively few of them are specific in concept. In any event why should stability in vulgar usage be held more sacrosanct than in scientific language established largely for that purpose?

The real obstacle to the creation of a vernacular system of specific names lies in the practical difficulty of the undertaking. I have had to provide such a popular medium of expression for the forthcoming *Birds of Canada* and have been faced with the difficulty. Ninety-five per cent of the species treated fall naturally into nomenclatural pigeon holes. The remaining five per cent give rise to some unfamiliar and awkward word combinations. If some one would tell me how to designate specifically such forms as *Oceanodroma castro*, *Aimophila aestivalis*, *Tyrannus melancholicus* and some others without violating sensibilities, I would appreciate it. Most of these difficulties deal with species that the more northern amateurs will be little bothered with; but what can be done with such species as *Hyllocichla ustulata*? These are problems that have to be faced and if the preliminary results presented do not satisfy the general public all I can say is that if it knows a "better 'ole," let's go to it.—P. A. TAVERNER, *Ottawa, Canada, November 29, 1934.*

**Bird Records from Northeastern Nevada.**—The specimens listed below were obtained for my collection in the course of a survey of the vertebrate fauna of the Ruby Mountains region in northeastern Nevada. (See *Jour. Mammalogy*, 15, 1934, pp. 12-44 for accounts of mammals.) Some of the species here recorded are ascribed to Nevada for the first time; others have been observed, some commonly, but for most of them no Nevada-taken specimen is at present easily available to substantiate earlier records. Some of the species were found commonly by us; others were represented by only the single records given here. Identifications were confirmed by Jean M. Linsdale of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, to whom I am indebted. Numbers of specimens refer to the Ralph Ellis collection.

*Ixobrychus exilis hesperis*. Western Least Bittern. Male (no. 4130) from west side of Ruby Lake, 3 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, July 18, 1927, Adrey E. Borell.

*Cygnus columbianus*. Whistling Swan. Two males (nos. 6788-89) from west side of Ruby Lake, 6 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, November 5, 1929, A. E. Borell.

*Branta canadensis canadensis*. Canada Goose. Male and female (nos. 6786-87) from west side of Ruby Lake, 6 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, November 2, 1929, A. E. Borell.

*Nyroca collaris*. Ring-necked Duck. Male (no. 4560) from west side of Ruby Lake, 3 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, December 27, 1927, A. E. Borell.

*Nyroca valisineria*. Canvas-back. Male and female (nos. 4558-59) from west side of Ruby Lake, 3 and 6 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, December 29 and 31, 1927, Ralph Ellis.

*Charitonetta albeola*. Buffle-head. Two females (nos. 4568-69) from west side of Ruby Lake, 3 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, December 17, 1927, A. E. Borell.

*Erismatura jamaicensis rubida*. Ruddy Duck. Male (no. 6980) from Hobson, south end of Ruby Lake, White Pine County, May 23, 1929, A. E. Borell.

*Lophodytes cucullatus*. Hooded Merganser. Male (no. 4538) from west side of Ruby Lake, 3 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, December 28, 1927, Ralph Ellis.

*Grus canadensis tabida*. Sandhill Crane. Male (no. 5063) from west side of Ruby Lake, 3 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, May 22, 1928, A. E. Borell.

*Totanus flavipes*. Lesser Yellow-legs. Two females (nos. 4158-59) from west side of Ruby Lake, 3 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, August 2 and 8, 1927, A. E. Borell.

*Chlidonias nigra surinamensis*. Black Tern. Two young males (nos. 4054-55) from west side of Ruby Lake, 6 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, August 2, 1927, Ralph Ellis; female (no. 4121) from west side of Ruby Lake, 3 miles north of Elko County line, Elko County, July 19, 1927, Raleigh A. Borell.

*Asio flammeus flammeus*. Short-eared Owl. Male (no. 5105) from north end