

A Northwestern Robin Reaches California.—Soon after I published my question "Is the Northwestern Robin Migratory?" (Condor, 37, 1935, p. 173), I received from Mr. G. D. Sprot, of Cobble Hill, Vancouver Island, B. C., a most informative letter, setting forth various angles in the problem. Briefly, Mr. Sprot's own experience on Vancouver Island led him to the conclusion that "when prolonged periods of intensely cold weather prevail here, as they do some winters, then *Turdus migratorius caurinus* absents itself entirely until spring. If such weather starts early in December and continues more or less throughout January it usually extends far to the south of us and doubtless [Sprot says] carries *caurinus* before it even unto California. . . . It seems to me you and Jewett will simply have to let *caurinus* into your states in bad weather, for there is no other place for it to go!"

The facts Sprot gives, and the arguments he bases on them, are in themselves just about conclusive. But the clincher is his statement that there is a known "instance of a probable *caurinus* attempting to winter in California." This was altogether news to me. The particulars were not at his hand at the time Mr. Sprot wrote (under date August 22, 1935); so I turned his letter over to Mr. E. L. Sumner, Sr., of the Western Bird-banding Association. The latter at once undertook assiduous letter-writing in various directions. This brought pertinent replies from Mr. Patrick W. Martin, Mr. J. Alfred Flett, and Mr. Frederick C. Lincoln. All this correspondence Mr. Sumner has placed at my disposal and from it I offer the following summary.

On April 30, 1931, Mr. J. A. Flett placed on a nestling robin, band number A354325. This was in his own orchard, 6½ miles from Duncan, in the Cowichan district of Vancouver Island. This bird was accidentally caught in a steel trap of a fur-trapper near Point Reyes, in Marin County, California, "about" January 15, 1932. The report of this "return" came from State and Federal Deputy Game Warden Bert F. Laws, of San Rafael, California, to Mr. George Tonkin, then of Berkeley, whose letter giving these latter details is now in the files of the Biological Survey, in Washington, D. C.

Here, then, is record of a robin that could hardly fail of being of *caurinus* "blood", reaching the northwest coast belt of California in mid-winter. One thing to regret: *If only* that trapped robin had been preserved as a specimen, then its subspecific characters could have been checked. —J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, January 5, 1936.*

Occurrence of the Red-naped Sapsucker in Santa Cruz County.—While collecting birds in Scott Valley, Santa Cruz County, California, on December 11, 1934, I secured an adult male Red-naped Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius nuchalis*). The specimen is now no. 68033 in the collection of the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

The breeding range of this subspecies in California lies in the extreme northeastern portion of the state, and the fall dispersal is southward through the San Diegan and Colorado Desert faunal areas and on into Lower California. There are but four previous records for the San Francisco Bay region which the writer has been able to find, and all are more than thirty years old. Of course there has been considerable discussion of the status of this race in relation to the more common Sierra Red-breasted Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius daggetti*), but the specimen under question compares favorably with other winter-taken specimens labelled *nuchalis* in the Museum collection.

The locality of this record, Scott Valley, is situated some five miles north of Santa Cruz in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and is noteworthy for its extremely varied flora and fauna, and for the juxtaposition of life-zones. Many interesting records have come from this section in the past and the occurrence of this bird there adds another. The woodlands fringing the valley abound in woodpeckers of several species.—PAUL F. COVEL, *Oakland Public Museum, Oakland, California, December 4, 1935.*

The Rusty Blackbird in Western Montana.—Early on the morning of November 29, 1935, a flock of six Rusty Blackbirds (*Euphagus carolinus*) appeared at my ranch home near Fortine, in the extreme northwestern corner of Montana. Alighting in a cattle feed-lot, the birds fed upon refuse grain and seeds for about fifteen minutes, while I watched them from distances ranging as close as ten feet.

The two larger birds, evidently adult males, were the darkest in color, being washed with rusty only lightly above, and slightly more strongly below. The bird which appeared to be the smallest in size was much lighter in color than any of the others, being decidedly yellowish-buffy both above and below. The remaining three birds were intermediate between these two extremes both in size and in color, their plumage being strongly washed with rusty. All six birds showed a conspicuous buffy superciliary line.

In Montana this species has been known to occur rarely as a migrant in the far eastern part of the state, but has not previously been reported to occur west of the Rockies, or during the winter season.—WINTON WEYDEMEYER, *Fortine, Montana, December 8, 1935.*

Shrike Craftiness.—Today (November 18, 1935), as I went back and forth to the clothes line, I was attracted by an unusual bird call. Finally I walked slowly into the vacant lot next door toward the call. I found a shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) sitting in the shadow about half way up in a mesquite bush. When I first saw him he was giving a low plaintive call which aroused the curiosity of several birds and drew them toward him, as he had drawn me. They were a mockingbird, a thrasher, an English Sparrow and several House Finches.

He then changed to a whistling call, similar to that of the Abert Towhee, but not as loud. All this time one House Finch was working down through the branches nearer and nearer the shrike, keeping up the usual House Finch talk. The shrike kept his eye on the finch all the time and began to answer. He carried on a conversation for several minutes, in tones surprisingly like those of the House Finch.

In the meantime the shrike had moved out in the open. I was so fascinated by the shrike and House Finch that I did not notice that the mockingbird had worked around on the ground almost under the shrike. Like a flash the shrike dropped down, striking at the mockingbird, but missed. A chase by the mockingbird ensued.—RUTH M. CROCKETT, *90 Columbus Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, November 18, 1935.*

Northern Records of the Mockingbird.—During the last ten years the list of western Canadian birds has been enriched by the appearance of several unexpected species. Of these one of the most remarkable is the Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*).

On May 31, 1928, the writer was amazed to see a Mockingbird on his ranch (Eastend, Saskatchewan), and on June 4 he collected the bird (*Condor*, 30, 1928, p. 320). This record, however, was not the first; for one was seen on May 2 of the preceding year by Mr. Steve Mann, of Piapot, Saskatchewan, whose farm is about thirty miles north of Eastend. While this was only a sight record, Mr. Mann removed all doubts by securing the next bird he saw, on November 1, 1929.

During 1928 there were several reports of the Mockingbird having been seen in different parts of the prairie provinces, but few, if any, of these reports were substantiated. No doubt many of them were correct, for the species can scarcely be mistaken for any other, particularly if the bird is heard singing. Since that year, a considerable number of Mockingbirds have been seen, and the species can hardly be considered any longer an accidental visitant or straggler.

In 1931 a pair nested at Didsbury in Central Alberta (*Canadian Field-Naturalist*, 46, 1932, p. 67). In 1934 a pair was seen at Wilcox, thirty miles south of Regina, Saskatchewan, that evidently was nesting there. Mr. Mann tells me he noted the Mockingbird in 1932 and 1934 also. In 1935 there were two seen in this neighborhood. Mr. E. H. Knowles, of Regina, informs me that he saw one in 1934, and that more than one pair were seen near Truax, sixty miles south of Regina, in 1935.

In view of all these records for Saskatchewan alone, it is rather surprising to find so few records for the states that adjoin us to the south. Mr. Winton Weydemeyer, of Fortine, Montana, tells me that so far as he knows there are no records of the Mockingbird in that state; and the species is not included by Aretas Saunders in his Montana list (*Pac. Coast Avifauna* No. 14). Mr. H. J. Rust, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, writes me that he has no record for the northern part of Idaho, but thinks the bird may appear occasionally in the southern part of the state.

According to Mr. Otto McCreary, University of Wyoming, Laramie, the Mockingbird is a regular breeding bird of southeastern Wyoming, but he has no record for the northern half of the state. Mr. Pierce Brodtkorb, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, has no record for either Wyoming or South Dakota. According to Professor A. P. Larrabee, of Yankton, South Dakota, the Mockingbird is an occasional visitor to his section and other points in South Dakota. Apparently there are no records at all for North Dakota and none is given in recent issues of the *Auk* or *Condor* for that state or for any of the others mentioned.

The writer does not know whether the few specimens, about three, taken in Saskatchewan belong to the race *polyglottos* or the race *leucopterus*, a question which when decided might indicate whether our birds originate from the southeast or the southwest.—LAURENCE B. PORTER, *Eastend, Saskatchewan, January 14, 1936.*

The Little Blue Heron at Santa Cruz, California.—For a period of about three months, a small white heron has been observed almost daily, feeding along the banks of the San Lorenzo