

A United States Record of the Pacific Golden Plover.—The Dickey collection at the California Institute of Technology contains a specimen (no. 21286) of *Pluvialis dominica fulva*, which was collected at Clallam Bay, Clallam County, Washington, on October 28, 1921, by Carl Lien. The original source of this specimen was the D. E. Brown collection, which was purchased by Mr. Dickey in 1927. It may be added that Major Allan Brooks has recently examined the bird (a male of the year) and has verified my own identification.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, March 29, 1936.*

What is the Status of the Inland Crested Cormorant of California?—The recent article concerning the cormorants of Great Salt Lake, Utah, by Mr. William Behle (Condor, vol. 38, 1936, pp. 76-79) was of more than casual interest to the present writer since it brought vividly to mind the conditions which existed at Buena Vista Lake in Kern County, California, in the summers of 1922 and 1923. When I made observations at the lake in late June and July, 1922, the scores of adult cormorants then present had long since dropped their nuptial plumes. The single adult collected at that time (July 1) retained three short plumes worn down to but a fraction of their original length. These remaining stubs were black. A juvenile (July 26) is darker below than five *albiciliatus* from the seacoast of southern California and is similar in this respect to five juveniles of *auritus* from the Atlantic coast. However, the relatively few specimens examined in this last connection make me hesitant about suggesting this feature as a racial character.

In April and early May, 1923, I again visited the lake, in company with Major Allan Brooks, and at this time the vast majority of the adult cormorants bore nuptial plumes. So far as we could determine by visual means—and we observed a great many birds at very close range—the plumes varied from pure black to pure white, although most individuals showed a mixture. The four specimens collected in 1923 are characterized as follows: adult female (April 27) with plumes entirely black save for a few minute white streaks behind the eyes; adult female (April 27) whose plumes were mixed in the proportion of two white to one black; one-year-old female (April 27) with plumes about equally black and white; adult female (May 6) whose plumes were entirely white.

Summarizing the above evidence and basing subspecific determination only on the color of the nuptial plumes, it would appear that the cormorants of Buena Vista Lake are intermediate in characters between *Phalacrocorax auritus auritus* and *Phalacrocorax auritus albociliatus*, with certain individuals showing the extreme characters of either race, and that the mass average is slightly in favor of the white-plumed *albiciliatus* type. Whether this average would be maintained were an adequate series of specimens collected is, of course, problematical.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *San Diego Society of Natural History, San Diego, California, May 12, 1936.*

Two New Records for Zion National Park, Utah.—In checking over a card index of the avifauna of the Zion Canyon region, Utah, I find the following unpublished records.

Long-tailed Chickadee (*Penthestes atricapillus septentrionalis*). On February 9, 1936, Mr. W. S. Long observed one on the Narrows Trail, at the head of Zion Canyon. Mr. Long is familiar with this species, and was able to observe this individual for five minutes at a distance of thirty feet.

Black Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte atrata*). On February 3, 1936, Mr. Long, at that time Wildlife Technician in the park, collected an adult male from a large flock near the Mount Carmel Highway, 5500 feet altitude, a few miles east of Zion Canyon. The specimen is now in the Zion Museum, number 125.—C. C. PRESNALL, *Zion National Park, Utah, April 4, 1936.*

Observations on the Food of the Duck Hawk.—Twenty-six pellets were taken from under the regular winter roost, near Santa Barbara, California, of an adult female Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus anatum*). The roost was on an old wooden tower on the beach, near a small slough which is frequented by ducks and other water birds. The pellets were taken in March, and showed the following contents. (Numbers are of pellets and not of individuals represented.)

- 5 grebes, probably all the Eared Grebe (*Colymbus nigricollis californicus*)
- 8 almost certainly same as above
- 11 American Coots (*Fulica americana americana*)
- 1 yellow-legs (?) (*Totanus*, sp.)
- 1 rabbit (*Sylvilagus bachmani*)

Partly eaten birds found under the roost were two Eared Grebes and a Killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus vociferus*). Since a Duck Hawk will rarely strike a bird except on the wing, the large number of grebes is remarkable. The same Duck Hawk was seen to kill a Ruddy Duck (*Eristamatura jamaicensis rubida*) earlier in the year.

An immature male Duck Hawk spent from early November to near the end of February at another slough near Santa Barbara, in which water fowl are protected and fed. The attendant saw

the hawk with prey, or making a kill, on about two or three days out of each week. Its prey was in every case a coot. It was seen one day stooping at the head of a domestic (Chinese) goose, but it did not actually strike the bird.—RICHARD M. BOND, *Oakland, California, December 3, 1935.*

Records of Two Species New to Arizona.—In the course of making a more detailed examination of certain species in the Thayer collection than was possible when it was first presented to the Museum of Comparative Zoology by the late Colonel John E. Thayer in the autumn of 1931, I find two Arizona records that seem to be worthy of note.

Dryobates nuttallii. An adult female in rather worn plumage was collected by G. F. Breninger at Phoenix. On the original label the month has been blotted and it is not certain whether "Jan." or June is intended, but from the worn condition of the plumage I judge it to be a summer bird. If this assumption is correct then the date of collection is June 24, 1901.

Tyrannus melancholicus occidentalis. A female taken by H. H. Kimball at Fort Lowell, May 12, 1905. This specimen is very obviously not a Couch Kingbird, *T. m. couchii*, but agrees in smaller size and in other details with a series of the race *occidentalis* from western Mexico (Sinaloa to Guerrero.)—JAMES L. PETERS, *Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 1, 1936.*

Tribulations of Thorn-dwellers.—To explore a Cactus Wren's nest in a cholla bush seldom fails to engender speculation on the ways and means by which the birds safely build and use the structure. Such meditation associated with the prick of cactus spines does not lead to any simple answer. Surprisingly little is known about the foot-work of thorn-frequenting species that might be vital to their successful negotiation of these hazards. A part of the problem is the frequency with which animals become entangled in thorns. Is the hazard one easily surmounted or does it require constant vigilance and special dexterity? Any harmful agency such as thorns will rarely be seen in operation, for, barring mass destruction, loss to a species of bird can not ordinarily be sustained at a high rate.

During a month's field work in the Arizona desert I felt especially fortunate in four times seeing interference with the routine activity of animals by thorns or spines. A certain unworthy satisfaction also was felt that I was not the only animal being caught by these prominent features of the xerophytic flora.

One morning, the 13th of May, 1936, on Rillito Creek at Fort Lowell, Arizona, I stopped close to the nest of a Verdin (*Auriparus flaviceps*) situated in a mesquite bush. Although I neither touched the nest nor shook the tree, an adult bird, surprised at my presence, attempted to leave the nest. At the entrance it became entangled in the canopy of thorny twigs. One wing was hooked in the tangle, some of the primaries protruding outward. The bird fluttered, but made no progress in freeing itself. I moved toward it and slowly reached out, touching its wing. At that moment a final effort freed it from the twigs, but its position for some time had been extremely hazardous. Was the bird so much hurried in its departure that it failed in some detail of its customary action?

The next day, along the Rillito, a nest of a Palmer Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre palmeri*) was found in a large cholla. The three young were mature enough to take notice of my approach fifteen feet away and to start moving out of the nest. Under no special coercion, they tried to run along the cholla limbs. Most young passerines at this age, though awkward, would have progressed satisfactorily through the twigs of a bush. The thrashers had evident trouble with the thorns. Many times their feet were caught, throwing their bodies forward onto the thorns. There must be some particular way of placing the feet to avoid the spines. One of the young continued on until it became badly entangled with a burr on the side of the body that would seem certain to have resulted fatally. These thrashers were in serious danger at a critical period. They had much to learn, or else they needed to develop much further in neuromotor control to escape the peril of the cholla.

Two weeks later near Picacho, Pinal County, my field companion, Mr. William L. Engels, brought in a mummified juvenal Cactus Wren (*Heleodytes brunneicapillus*) that he found impaled on thorns at the entrance of a nest. The bird was entire, not partly eaten, and it was of just the age at which young wrens first venture out of the nest. Apparently it had failed to solve the cholla problem. E. C. Jaeger in his "Denizens of the Desert" (p. 73) mentions one similar accident.

In the vicinity of Picacho were many round-tailed ground squirrels (*Citellus tereticaudus*) that frequently foraged among cholla burrs on the ground. Near camp one morning I saw, at a distance of fifty feet, a tumbling mass of cactus burrs and animal. I approached quickly and found one of these small squirrels attempting to run with three large cholla joints stuck to its body. The burrs repeatedly upset the squirrel, painfully rolling it over and setting the spines deeper. Finally it reached its burrow, ten feet away, but the burrs stuck in the entrance and the animal lay there squeaking. After I pried at the burrs with a stick, the squirrel made another effort and pulled all the cactus joints down a couple of feet to a turn in the hole. There it lay helpless. It is unlikely that it could