

have extricated itself from such an entanglement.—ALDEN H. MILLER, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, July 7, 1936.*

Notes on Some Nests Found in Eastern Riverside County, California.—In company with Mr. W. J. Sheffler and Mr. Robert Hannum of Los Angeles, California, a trip was made to the vicinity of Blythe, Riverside County, California, in the spring of 1936. The object of the trip was the collecting of eggs of the Harris Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus harrisi*) and Treganza Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias treganzai*).

On April 21, 1935, a similar trip had been made and, after much difficult "slushing" through tule thickets and flooded mesquites, a nesting colony of Treganza Blue Herons was located, but all nests on that date contained young birds. A set of two hawk eggs, incubation advanced, was taken on this date, but it was not certain in our minds that the eggs were those of a Harris Hawk.

On March 21 and 22, 1936, we returned to the vicinity and found that the dead cottonwoods in which the herons had nested in 1935 were blown down. However, after a further search, a colony of about twenty-five pairs of breeding birds was found. In the short time at our disposal, we investigated about half of the occupied nests and found two nests with five well-incubated eggs, four nests with four eggs each (two sets fresh and the other two sets half incubated), and several nests containing three eggs each. The sets of three eggs taken were well incubated, proving that they were full complements. The nests were all placed in dead flooded mesquites, about ten to fifteen feet above the surface of the water, which in many places was well over our heads in depth.

While we were approaching the heron rookery, a hawk was seen to leave a nest placed in the same sort of situation as the heron nests in the dead mesquites. Upon investigating the nest, a set of seven eggs, ready to hatch, was found. We were able to observe the hawk closely and positively identify it as a Harris Hawk. This set of seven eggs appears to represent the laying of two females, for three eggs are easily picked out from the remaining four in size and shape, although all seven eggs were equally well incubated. This set of eggs is now in the collection of Mr. Sheffler. On the same day, March 22, another nest of Harris Hawk was found, containing two eggs slightly incubated, which eggs are now in my collection. These two sets and the set of two taken last year which now may be positively identified establish the Harris Hawk as a regular breeding bird in California.

Regarding the nesting of the Treganza Blue Heron in California, Mr. Sidney Peyton informs me that some years ago he found three nests placed in the tules of Salton Sea, Imperial County, all containing young birds. He attributed these nests to this race, but no specimens were taken for positive identification. A nesting female taken by Mr. Hannum at the colony which we visited has proved to be *Ardea herodias treganzai*. There is some difference in size of the heron eggs, the smallest egg measuring 62×46 mm., and the largest measuring 66×52 mm. The Harris Hawk eggs are indistinguishable in size from those which I have taken in Lower California, Mexico.

An unusual nest of a Plumbeous Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila melanura melanura*) was found on March 21 in a mesquite near Coachella, Riverside County. The bird had used the base, feather lining and outer thorny twigs of a Verdin's nest; she had shaped it a bit to suit her fancy, but had failed miserably to uphold the standard of construction of gnatcatcher nests in general. There apparently had been no attempt made by the gnatcatcher to build her own nest, as the eggs were laid in a lining of Gambel Quail feathers, typically a Verdin trait.—J. STUART ROWLEY, *Alhambra, California, July 11, 1936.*

A Pacific Golden Plover Reaches California.—Whenever Allan Brooks visits the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, as he last did early this year, he never fails to find something in our collection that has escaped the notice of bird students resident here. This time it was a previously misidentified skin of Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica fulva*)—California-taken at that! And when once pointed out, there is no doubt about the identification.

The bird had, of course, been concealed in a series of Americans. It is no. 43999, Mus. Vert. Zool.; collected by Donald D. McLean on Bay Farm Island, Alameda County, California, January 15, 1922. It is naturally in winter plumage, and it is a close match for a specimen of *fulva* (no. 12519) taken by Miss A. M. Alexander on Molokai, Hawaiian Islands, February 12, 1910. These two *fulva* contrast with California-taken *Pluvialis dominica dominica* most conspicuously, as pointed out to me by Major Brooks, by the coloration of the lower surface; in *fulva* there is a well defined dull brownish chest area set off rather sharply against the extensively clear white abdominal area, whereas in *dominica* the lower surface is mottled grayish brown from the lower throat clear back to the lower tail coverts. In *fulva*, too, there is more extensive pervasion of clear apricot yellow throughout the dorsal surface; also this color extends dilutely over the sides of the head, and even tinges the pectoral area. There are dimensional differences, also. In *fulva* the wing is shorter, the bill longer, than in *dominica*. No. 43999, the California-taken male, gives the following measurements: Wing 166 millimeters, tail 65, culmen 24.4, tarsus 45.0, middle toe without claw 22.9. These measurements have

meaning when compared with the tables for *dominica* and *fulva*, respectively, in Ridgway (Birds N. and Mid. Amer., vol. 8, 1919, pp. 84, 89).—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, May 28, 1936.*

California Thrasher Nesting on the Mohave Desert.—A nest of the California Thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum redivivum*) was found May 3, 1936, on the Mohave Desert about half way between Summit and Hesperia in San Bernardino County, California. The nest, containing three almost fresh eggs, was placed two feet above the ground in *Artemisia tridentata* and was of normal construction. In other years I had seen both California and Leconte thrashers in this vicinity and had seen nests of the latter about two miles farther out on the desert, but this was my first breeding record for the California Thrasher on the desert side of the San Bernardino Mountains. The brooding bird was observed at close range, both while on the nest and while making a fuss. The eggs were normal for shape, color, and markings, but the weights in grams were only 5.63, 5.27, and 5.11. For a close neighbor the thrasher had a Scott Oriole with a nest in a Joshua tree a few feet distant.

The average weight of 103 eggs of this thrasher from nests on the Pacific side of the mountains, mostly in the San Bernardino Valley, is 6.58 grams; maximum, 8.06 grams, and minimum, 4.90 grams. Fifty-nine nests with complete sets of eggs observed in the San Bernardino Valley contained from two to four eggs each. The average number of eggs per set was found to be 3.07, and 83.1 per cent of the nests had three eggs.—WILSON C. HANNA, *Colton, California, June 16, 1936.*

The Present Status of the Great Salt Lake Bird Colonies.—A changing environment continues to affect the birds nesting on the islands of Great Salt Lake. This is shown by recent data gathered by Mr. Milton T. Rees, of Salt Lake City, and members of the Utah State Fish and Game Department. The information presented here applies to the 1935 and 1936 nesting seasons, thus bringing our meager knowledge of the fluctuations of the local populations down to date. As compared with his counts of 57 occupied cormorant nests and 11 heron nests on Egg Island, April 10, 1935, Mr. Rees found but 39 cormorant nests and 7 heron nests occupied at the same island on April 18, 1936. On this date there were eggs only, in the cormorants' nests. Six of the heron nests contained eggs; the seventh had three young. However, on May 9, 1936, when the island was next visited, the number of occupied cormorant nests had increased to 59. Many had large young, while others had eggs. The herons also had increased on the island since his earlier visit, for 15 occupied nests were counted. Certain herons that had been disturbed at Hat Island earlier in the season may have come over to Egg Island for a late nesting. At the nearby White Rock colony in the spring of 1935 Mr. Rees found one heron nest amid all the gulls. This was abandoned in 1936. The gulls had not yet commenced to lay on either Egg Island or White Rock by April 18, 1936, but there were hundreds of eggs on May 9, at Egg Island. Many adult cormorants were noted with nuptial plumes on April 18, 1936, all of which were coal black. These plumes were all gone by May 9, 1936.

The situation on Hat Island is somewhat discouraging. When Mr. Rees visited this island on June 1, 1935, he saw about 400 pelicans loafing on a sand bar, but not a pelican nest was to be found. Many herons were nesting, but the exact number was not determined. However, the observation was made on this date that about half of the heron nests contained eggs, the other half young. As usual, thousands of gulls were present and it was estimated that about a third of their eggs had hatched. This island also was visited in 1935 on June 4 by members of the Fish and Game Department, who also found the island deserted as a nesting site by the pelicans. Members of this last party counted 17 nests of the Treganza Blue Heron. This year, on May 3, 1936, Mr. Rees again visited Hat Island. For a second year no pelicans were found nesting there. Not a heron was seen, nor were there any eggs in the heron nests. However, in one nest were some broken shells, undoubtedly remnants of eggs laid earlier in the season. Gulls were as numerous as ever. A few gull eggs were seen but most of them were broken. A crow or raven was seen to leave the island as the boat approached. More significant was the finding of coyote tracks on the island; also automobile tracks approaching from the southwest, thus indicating that man had disturbed the colony some time earlier in the season.

In this connection it should be recalled that the level of the lake, although fluctuating a little each year, has nevertheless been dropping steadily for several years and reached a new low last year. As early as the summer of 1933 one could have walked to Hat Island on sand bars by way of Carrington and Stansbury islands. Since then there has been dry lake bed between all these "islands" and the mainland. Even this year, with a 26-inch rise in the lake level, the island is still connected with the land. The lowering of the lake waters has removed the isolation and protection from the Hat Island colony by allowing easy access to predators, both man and beast. Thus is nature adding to man's toll on the herons and pelicans.

No one knows as yet what has become of the thousands of pelicans that once nested on Hat Island. They might still be present in the region but not as nesting birds. The Gunnison Island colony did not seem to have been augmented in 1935, for A. M. Bailey (Bird-Lore, vol. 37, 1935, p. 331)