

A Tree-nesting Colony of White-crested Cormorants in Trincomali Channel, British Columbia.—As far as I am aware, only one pair of Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) has been recorded as breeding on the British Columbian coast, on the rocks of Bare Island, Haro Straits (Munro, Condor, vol. 30, 1928, p. 327). It might therefore be well to record a tree-nesting colony in Trincomali Channel.

In the early spring of 1934, while passing down the channel in his launch, Mr. F. C. Barrow observed several large nests on some scrubby juniper trees on the northernmost of two small rocks known as the Twins or Ballingall Islets. These he reported to Mr. W. A. Newcombe who on May 8 of that year returned with him and identified the owners of the nests as of the species *Phalacrocorax auritus*. On June 14, 1936, I accompanied these gentlemen on a visit to the colony. We arrived off the rocks about 11:30 a.m., in a heavy rainstorm and dropped anchor about 50 yards from the nests. The cormorants showed some slight uneasiness as the anchor was gently lowered, but as we remained in the cabin watching them through the open hatch, they soon settled down, their chief concern at the moment being the heavy downfall of rain.



Fig. 51. One of the Ballingall Islets, Trincomali Channel, British Columbia, where White-crested Cormorants nested in 1936.

Subspecific identification was not attempted on this trip as it was thought unwise to disturb so small a colony while incubating. [However, later, two examples were obtained and forwarded to the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, where they were identified definitely as of the race *cincinatus*.] About 23 cormorants were observed in four or five half-dead junipers at the time of our arrival, but as the rain ceased others of the species kept flying in until as many as 30 could be counted in the trees at a time, some incubating with their mates standing on the edges of the nests, others perched on the higher branches carrying on a noisy gargle of conversation, or waving their necks in play or argument over those in the nests below.

After closely observing the birds from the cover of the launch for an hour or more, we landed on the rock and inspected the nests. Twenty-three nests were counted, all strongly constructed of sticks and seaweed, a few lined with wintergreen (*Pyrola*), and two holding several primary feathers of Glaucous-winged Gulls and immature cormorants. Of the ten nests that it was possible to see into, four were empty, three held four eggs, and the remainder two to three eggs each. A number of the eggs were pale blue, but most were stained buff or pale green, according to the nature of the lining of the nests.

Among the roots of the junipers on which this species was nesting, and on the rough rock ledges below, were six or eight empty nests of *Phalacrocorax pelagicus*. These and three or four others, belonging to this latter species, on the South Twin, were substantially built of seaweed and green herbage, and all were less than six feet above high water. These nests were only just completed and held no eggs.

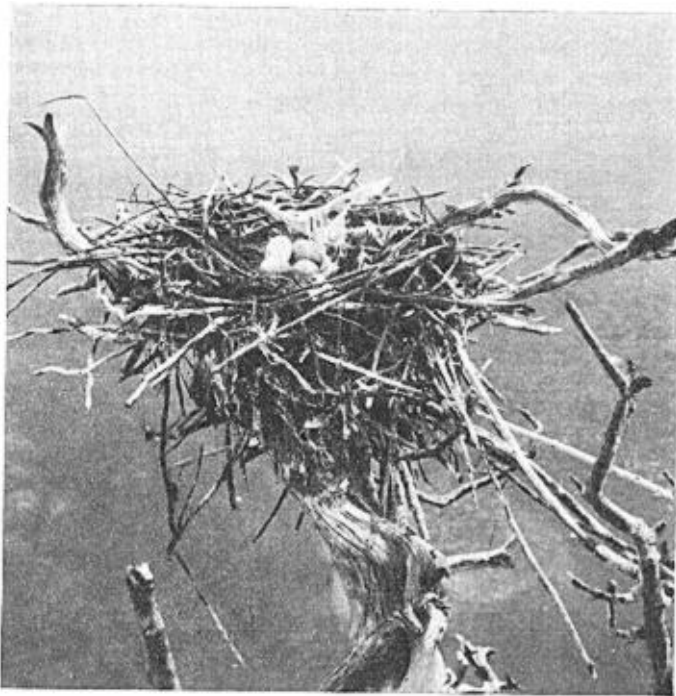


Fig. 52. Nest of White-crested Cormorant in a juniper tree on a rock in Trincomali Channel, British Columbia.

Of other birds, it was estimated that about 200 Glaucous-winged Gulls were present; fifty nests of this species were found on the north, and 35 on the south, rock, all with eggs. One pair of Pigeon Guillemots was suspected of nesting on the north rock and about half a dozen corvine gangsters were carrying on their nefarious work among the birds of both rocks.—G. D. SPROT, *Cobble Hill, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, July 20, 1936.*

Surf Scoter and Caspian Tern in Arizona.—In the Jacot collection of birds acquired by the University of Arizona in 1932, there is a specimen of Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*). The bird was taken by Mr. E. C. Jacot at Hillside, Yavapai County, Arizona, on October 20, 1929. It is an adult female, now no. 113 in the University collection. This is believed to be the first record for the State.

On April 30, 1936, the writer was traveling by auto through Yavapai County. As we approached a small reservoir recently formed by a dam across the upper Verde River close beside the highway about twenty miles north of Prescott, we noticed some conspicuously white birds. A stop was made to identify them, and about ten individuals were observed in flight over the small lake. With 8-power binoculars the birds were carefully studied for some time, during which interval a few came close enough to permit of a careful check of their markings.

They were, unmistakably, large terns, and the red beaks, black caps, black feet, black wing tips, and large size were clearly distinguished. I believe they were undoubtedly Caspian Terns (*Hydroprogne caspia imperator*), not hitherto recorded in Arizona. I would hesitate, even so, to present the record without a specimen, were it not for the fact that only two weeks previously I had carefully studied Royal Terns in flight at Puerto Libertad, Sonora, Mexico, so that the differences in the two species were clearly in mind. Two specimens of the Royal Tern were secured at that time. The birds now reported were so much like the Royal Terns in beak, black cap, and black feet, as to be indistinguishable on those points, but the conspicuously dark wing tips, and the large size were distinctive. (Royal Terns in flight overhead appear to have wholly white wings.) That the tail was forked was certain, but sufficiently satisfactory views of spread tails were not secured to determine the degree of forking as compared with the Royal Tern.