

Unfortunately, there was no gun in the party and it was impossible to collect a specimen. On the basis of the observations here set forth, however, I present the record for what it is worth. The range of the species is such that its occurrence in Arizona during migration is by no means improbable.—CHARLES T. VOREHIES, *University of Arizona, August 10, 1936.*

**Poor Selection of Building Sites.**—That birds often make mistakes in choosing sites for their nests is well known to egg collectors and to many observers of bird life. An instance of this sort was recently related to me by Mr. W. H. Jilbert of Palo Alto, who, as does his wife, takes a great interest in setting out free rations in their garden for bird visitors. This last spring a pair of San Francisco Brown Towhees (*Pipilo fuscus petulans*) built a nest there, selecting a small apple tree for the site and placing it in a fork a few inches from, and directly under, an apple that was hanging from a small twig. Four eggs were laid in the nest, and incubation commenced. Unfortunately the birds did not realize that the fruit was still growing, and one morning Mrs. Jilbert was greatly disturbed to find that the apple, possibly jarred by one of the birds entering or leaving the nest, had fallen on top of it. On removing the apple the eggs were found intact, but the birds were evidently so discouraged by the incident that they did not return.

This tale brought to mind a case of misplaced confidence on the part of a pair of Song Sparrows that built a nest in a large thistle plant early in May, 1895, and which, when found by the writer, seemed to be in a logical situation. A visit to it a few days later, however, showed that the selection of the site was decidedly a poor one; for the thistle had grown with such rapidity and unevenness that the nest was so tilted as to be unusable for incubating purposes though the eggs were still in the lower edge. It looked as if the birds could easily have woven in some more material on the low side so as to make it safe for use, but no attempt was made to improve matters and the nest was deserted.

A remarkable selection of nesting site was that of a California Quail (*Lophortyx californica*) that scratched out a hollow, in plain sight under the lower end of a one-horse treadmill which, before the days of widespread electric power, was daily used to churn the butter on my dairy in Marin County. The nest side of the churn was only four or five feet from the basement wall of the milk house, leaving a passage-way used by the buttermaker in his duties. In spite of the quail being frightened away every morning by the clattering of the treadmill and often disturbed by someone passing, thirteen eggs were laid before the nest was deserted.

Again, a different but very excusable sort of careless selection was that of a Western House Wren (*Troglodytes aëdon parkmanii*) that built a nest in the end of the exhaust pipe of a temporarily idle stationary steam engine attached to a large pump. Fortunately for the wren I caught sight one day of a bit of twig projecting from the end of the pipe and saved bird and nest from being blown to bits by the first turn over of the engine, which was soon to be put into use, and also saved the five eggs that were in the nest.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California, August 24, 1936.*

**A New Record for *Parapavo californicus* (Miller).**—The vigorous program of road building in southern California has resulted in bringing to light new fossil deposits. The present record is made possible by one such discovery. Mr. F. R. Pracht, State Resident Engineer, and Mr. Charles Reynolds of the R. E. Campbell Contracting Company, recently called the attention of the Los Angeles Museum to scattered fossil remains occurring in gravel beds at a depth of about forty feet, along the Imperial Highway road-cut now under construction southwest of La Habra, near the Los Angeles-Orange county line. These deposits appear to be stream laid and, according to Dr. Chester Stock, include remains of mastodon, ground sloth and horse of Pleistocene age, as well as a few well-worn fragments of shell and fish bone, and a shark tooth, which likely were washed in from an earlier marine deposit.

Of especial interest to me is a well-petrified distal end of radius of a turkey which I believe may be safely assigned to the Pleistocene *Parapavo californicus* on the basis of characters described in an earlier paper (Howard, Univ. Calif. Publ. Geol. Sci., vol. 17, 1927, p. 17, and p. 45, pl. 7) as follows: "Ridge at distal end, external aspect.—(Pl. 7 d) . . . ridge paralleling border of shaft and continuous distally with border of scapho-lunar facet, ridge long, most nearly approaching *Agriocharis*; . . ." (2) "Tendinal groove at distal end.—Pl. 7, e) Faint notch, not so deep as in *Agriocharis*; in *Meleagris*, broad and shallow . . ."

This is the first definite record of *Parapavo californicus* outside of the asphalt deposits of Rancho La Brea and Carpinteria.

In connection with this record, I take the opportunity to mention the occurrence of two other specimens of fossil meleagrid which were taken from Pleistocene deposits in a storm drain

excavation at Workman and Alhambra streets, Los Angeles, in 1933. The specimens, a distal end of tibiotarsus and complete pedal phalanx, both petrified, may be assignable to *Parapavo*, but unfortunately they do not possess any diagnostic generic characters by which to make definite identification. For this reason they have been heretofore unrecorded.

The only other fossil meleagrids which have been recorded from California are from the Pleistocene of Potter Creek Cave and of Mission San José. Eight specimens from the former locality were originally recorded as *Meleagris* sp., though later Miller, Carnegie Inst. Wash., Publ. 349, 1925, p. 67) indicated that they were "referable either to *Parapavo* or to *Meleagris*." The fragment of sternum from the Mission San José locality is the type specimen of *Meleagris richmondi* Shufeldt.—HILDEGARDE HOWARD, *Los Angeles Museum, Los Angeles, California, July 14, 1936.*

**Pasadena Screech Owl and Desert Sparrow Hawk in the Same Nest.**—A most interesting set of eggs was found on the Mohave Desert north of the San Bernardino Mountains on May 5, 1935. I discovered a bird about eight inches down from an opening which was five feet up in the trunk of a Joshua tree. It was not a surprise to remove a Pasadena Screech Owl (*Otus asio quercinus*), but it certainly was one to feel the bottom of the cavity well filled with eggs.

The first egg removed was brown instead of white and I began to suspect the reason for the large set. The nest proved to hold four each of the owl and Desert Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius phalaena*), all of which were normal for size, shape, and color. The two kinds of eggs all lay on the old wood at the bottom of the hole and were well intermingled. Those of the owl showed slight incubation while those of the hawk seemed to be slightly addled. Thus the evidence indicates that the owl took possession of the nesting site before the hawk had started to incubate her set of eggs.—WILSON C. HANNA, *Colton, California, August 26, 1936.*

**Opinions Aroused by Pettingill's Monograph on the American Woodcock.**—One by one and at an accelerated rate our North American birds are being studied for the purpose of writing exhaustive accounts of their lives. On April 30, 1936, the Boston Society of Natural History published as volume 9, number 2, of its memoirs the final report based on a five year study of the American Woodcock by O. S. Pettingill, Jr. The volume contains 223 pages and 10 plates; it sells for \$3.50 in paper covers.

Dr. Pettingill's patient industry in preparing this book will be appreciated by those bird students of the future who will have to come to it for an acquaintance with this reclusive bird, especially if the whims of civilization completely exterminate it. He has made a better than average report upon a difficult topic. It is obvious, even from casual examination, that the aim primarily was to provide an instructive book, not one that would be merely pleasing to the reader. It is fair, then, to consider the work as a pattern for other serious studies of single species and to see if any improvements in method be desirable. Persons intending to prepare monographs on single species can learn much by thus analyzing the reports already in print. In the following paragraphs are indicated several opinions on the preparation of a report on the life of a given bird, along with examples, from Pettingill, which do not agree with them. According to these opinions a writer should observe especially the following rules:

*Discard any part of an original outline for which materials do not become available.*

"Defense of Nesting Territory" (p. 287) is discussed without any supporting evidence. The third major division of the book, "The Struggle for Existence", is so far below the standard of the rest as to indicate that it should have been eliminated and the usable facts placed in other sections.

*Give full details where required for clear indication of significance.*

Usefulness of the list of vernacular names (pp. 187-188) would be enhanced if we knew something about each one—the time, place, and frequency of application. Surely the most important parts of such a list would be citations to authorities.

*Base general statements on evidence presented, not on some generally accepted theory or supposition.*

It is demonstrated (p. 278) that woodcock sometimes "travel at a low level", but where is the evidence that they "generally" do? Uncertainty in treatment of the topic "Breeding Territory" is indicated (p. 280) first by declaring that the "rule" implied in the concept is in the woodcock "subject to great variation," and second by defining, in the first three paragraphs, five separate kinds of territory—breeding territory, wooded territory, open-country territory, diurnal territory, and nesting territory. Considerable influence of a traditional theory of territory is shown. Is there evidence (p. 305) that polygamy actually occurs in this bird? The explanation of injury feigning (p. 332) seems not to follow the evidence or even to agree with it. There is probably