

Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*). Many sets of eggs of both these species were scattered over these islands. The highly interesting sight of a pair of Snowy Plovers acting as though they had a nest started an eager search and in a very short time a set of three eggs was found on the shore near-by. As it was nearly dark no further search was made.

On May 30, 1937, the writer, accompanied by H. R. Eschenberg and Geo. Brem, Jr., both of Gilroy, again went to the pond just referred to. A heavy wind was blowing and birds would not fly unless forced to do so. By working both sides of the pond and the islands, a small band of plovers was slowly worked to one end where a count was made. Eschenberg counted eleven birds at one time, which was the largest number noted. A nest on one island held a single egg and on another Brem found three heavily incubated eggs almost entirely covered with flakes of dirt carried by the wind. June 6, 1937, again found us at the pond, with J. G. Tyler added to our party. Here Tyler (after nearly forty years of field work in this section) found his first set of eggs of the Snowy Plover and recorded this species for the second time in the San Joaquin Valley. Eschenberg also found a full set. These were on small islands, and small flakes of dirt were used to line the nesting hollows. This is the first time the species has been noted by the writer in fifteen years of field work around Los Baños.—W. E. UNGLISH, *Gilroy, California, October 6, 1937.*

California Ground Squirrel Robs Nest of Valley Quail.—On May 17, 1937, a California Ground Squirrel (*Citellus beecheyi*) was caught in the act of robbing the nest of a Valley Quail (*Lophortyx californica vallicola*) on the San Joaquin Experimental Range in the Sierra Nevada foothills about 20 miles east of Madera, California. The nest (S.J.E.R. No. 24, 1937) was built under a clump of *Lotus scoparius* near a granite outcrop. The clutch of 16 eggs had been incubated since some date prior to May 14, when the nest was first seen.

At 10:15 a.m., from an observation point 60 yards away, loud and rapid scolding notes attracted attention to the pair of quail hotly pursuing a ground squirrel across the granite boulders near their nest. Both birds had their tails raised and widely spread over their backs, their heads lowered, and their wings drooped to the ground as they rushed after the squirrel. Ten feet from the nest they abandoned the chase; the female dashed back to her eggs, while the male, less excited than his mate, took a perch on a rock about 15 feet from the nest and about 10 feet from the squirrel. There he stood scolding anxiously for five minutes while the squirrel took a large, light-colored object from his mouth or cheek pouch and proceeded to eat it. Later search revealed half of the shell of a quail's egg at this spot, rather crushed but roughly held intact by the adhering shell membrane. There is little doubt that this is what the squirrel had been eating.

Having finished the egg, the squirrel worked slowly back toward the nest, nibbling here and there on heads of wild oats and brome grass which overhung its path. Coming to the rim of a rock about 3 feet from the nest, it was met by a sudden charge from the female. The bird, in her excitement, mounted the squirrel's back and clung tenaciously as the latter spun around trying to shake her off. The male quail rushed about in a threatening attitude with tail and wings stiffly spread, but remained aloof from the tussle. After ten seconds of wild scuffling, the squirrel was temporarily repulsed, and the female, wings and tail widely spread, rushed back to her nest. But within two minutes the squirrel had returned and was feeding casually about three feet from the nest. Again the female charged, but this time she was not so successful. The squirrel, ridden by the frantically fighting bird, made a dive for the nest, hastily snatched an egg in its mouth and retreated 8 feet before shaking her off. The male joined in the fracas this time but was not nearly so aggressive as his mate. Twenty feet from the nest the female abandoned the chase and dashed back to her nest, the male retired 5 or 6 feet to the top of a rock where he scolded anxiously while the squirrel leisurely consumed the second egg.

Once more the squirrel turned toward the nest, and just 9 minutes after the last encounter was within 3 feet of the incubating female. Again she rushed out, but like a flash the animal shot past her, snatched a third egg and made off with it. Harried for 8 feet by the female and for another 6 feet by the male, the squirrel retreated across the rock pile to a point out of view and fully 30 feet from the nest.

The squirrel did not make its appearance again during the next 45 minutes. Upon investigating the scene of activity, there was little that could be interpreted as definite evidence of the predator's identity. The inconspicuous egg shell fragments already mentioned and a half dozen small body feathers were the only signs of the recent conflict. There were, however, 8 eggs in the nest, instead of the 16 which had been present three days before. On May 21, at 10:00 a.m., the nest was visited and found to be completely empty; the lining and roof were left intact, but a number of contour feathers were scattered about, indicating further struggle, presumably with ground squirrels.

A number of other quail nests showing evidence of a similar fate were found and examined by Glading at the San Joaquin Experimental Range during the 1937 nesting season. A report on these

observations is now in preparation.—JOHN T. EMLÉN, JR., *Division of Zoology, University of California, Davis*, and BEN GLADING, *San Joaquin Experimental Range (U. S. Forest Service), O'Neals, California, October 5, 1937.*

An Early Spring Migration Record for Calliope Hummingbird.—Prior to this year the migrating Calliope Hummingbirds (*Stellula calliope*) have not been observed to arrive in the San Gabriel Valley (Los Angeles County, California) until some time in April, my earliest record being April 8, 1926. Willett states (*Pacific Coast Avifauna* no. 21, 1933, p. 99) that an adult male was taken by L. H. Miller at Riverside in late March, 1892. This was probably the only published occurrence earlier than April in the United States, as the Arizona and New Mexico records almost entirely pertain to the southward migration.

At mid-afternoon on March 6, 1937, only a minute or two after noting the first Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) of the season, I saw in the same flowering quince bush a male Calliope Hummingbird. The Calliope was tame and unhurried, and alternately fed and rested in the quince for the remainder of the afternoon, but it did not reappear on the following day or thereafter. The maximum temperatures on March 6 and the several preceding days were slightly above 80 degrees.—ROBERT S. WOODS, *Azusa, California, October 26, 1937.*

Calliope Hummingbird at Zion National Park.—At the request of Mr. Clifford C. Presnall, Park Naturalist, Zion National Park, Utah, I am recording the observation of a Calliope Hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*) made by Mr. Stephens and myself, April 22, 1937. A bird of this species was seen several times on the mountain slope just back of the Museum. We noted its small size, greenish back, the white tips of the tail, and the bill black above and yellowish below. Mr. Presnall states that it migrates through that part of the country, since it has been seen at Bryce; but this is a new observation for Zion.—LAURA A. STEPHENS (Mrs. Albert B.), *San Francisco, California, October 6, 1937.*

A Black Phoebe's Nest with Eggs of Three Species.—One and one-half miles north of Manka, Solano County, California, I stopped my car at a concrete bridge, on June 26, 1937, a very hot day, and looked underneath for a nesting Black Phoebe. A nest of phoebe construction, plastered into the angle formed by a concrete pillar and the under-surface of the bridge, was about twelve feet over the small stream. The first egg I withdrew from this nest was a Dwarf Cowbird's (*Molothrus ater obscurus*), then three of the Western Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*), and finally, under a scanty lining of fine hairs, three eggs of the Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*).

A Western Flycatcher, intermittently perching on a fence post near-by and flying back and forth beneath the bridge, with its beak open because of the heat, was the present caretaker of this domicile. The flycatcher had added to the lining of grasses and weed stems installed by the phoebe, a few hairs, bark strips, weed stems, grasses, a feather, and cobwebs matted about the rim, these additions reducing somewhat the size of the nesting cup.

Subsequent preparation of the eggs showed that the phoebe's eggs had not started to incubate and were very slightly "caked." Incubation in the cowbird's and flycatcher's eggs were at about the same stage, some three or four days. There was nothing to indicate whether the phoebes had met with an accident, or had been driven away by the flycatchers.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, September 23, 1937.*

Safe Packing of Dry Study-skins of Birds for Shipment.—Packing dry study-skins of birds is a matter of considerable importance on account of the hazards to which specimens are subjected during transit. Care and time expended upon details will save valuable specimens from damage. Individual skins should be placed in containers in such a way that neither bills, tails, nor feet shall be in contact with sides or ends of the packing box, and so that they will not be crowded against one another or subjected to excessive pressure. Therefore, containers must be large enough to allow for sufficient padding on all sides, top and bottom, and each skin must receive special attention as to wrapping and placing within the well-padded box. Cotton, of a cheap grade, is the best packing material for all bird-skins, with the exception of very large specimens such as geese and eagles. For large birds, shredded tissue paper, newspaper, or excelsior is satisfactory for padding. Containers must be firm; light-weight wood is preferable to cartons; ordinary cardboard boxes are entirely unsuitable unless reinforced with corrugated cardboard.

Several satisfactory methods are in current use. By one method specimens are placed directly upon layers of cotton, with cotton pads over and between heads, tails, and feet. This insures safety in transit but is open to the objection that shreds of cotton catch on claws and bills and adhere to feathers, and must be plucked off when specimens are removed from container. Another method