

morning the female bird was observed approaching the nest and behaving in a peculiar manner. Instead of slinking onto the nest and settling down quietly, she walked back and forth and around the nest in a listless manner for 50 minutes, passing within a few inches of her eggs half a dozen times. Finally, she stopped and for ten minutes squatted over the nest with head erect and eyes alert. Then suddenly she flew off to join her mate at the creek 100 yards away.

Upon examination, the entire nest was found to be swarming with *Solenopsis xyloni*. One egg was nearly hatched and the chick, half out of the shell, had already succumbed; a large part of its head had been eaten away. Another egg was pipped and a dozen ants had gained access through the hole, barely two millimeters in diameter. The chick within was still alive but had been so injured by ant bites and stings around the eye and mouth that it failed to recover in an incubator to which it was removed. The remaining nine eggs were unpipped and unharmed.

After carefully clearing away all organic waste, a ring of ant powder (sodium fluoride and pyrethrum) was sprinkled in the dust around the nest to prevent further invasion. The treatment was successful, but the bird failed to return until 7:15 that evening. One of the remaining eggs hatched successfully on July 28; the other embryos had evidently died at an early stage of incubation.—JOHN T. EMLEN, JR., *Division of Zoology, University of California, Davis, California, November 23, 1937.*

Creepers Nesting in Solano County, California.—On May 29, 1937, while making a "breeding-bird census" for Bird-Lore along Green Valley Creek, about five miles northwest of Cordelia, Solano County, California, I was surprised to locate a nesting Sierra Creeper (*Certhia familiaris zelotes*).



Fig. 29. Nesting site of Sierra Creeper in a dead laurel stub (center) near Cordelia, Solano County, California.

Looking into the end of a badly decayed laurel stub, four feet high and five inches in diameter, J. D. Graham of Benicia, who accompanied me, found four young birds. They did not seem to be Western House Wrens, which were nesting commonly here, so I waited for a few minutes and was rewarded by seeing a creeper, with a spider in its bill, light on the trunk of an adjacent laurel tree three or four feet away. As soon as it saw me at the nest, it commenced to utter a *tsip-tsee* note, and several times flew toward my head as though attempting to drive me away, returning each time to the near-by tree trunk. It entered the nesting cavity only after I had withdrawn a little distance.

The nest was open to the sky in the hollow tip of the decayed stub about six inches down in the hole, the inside measurement of the cavity being approximately three inches in diameter. The nest was of fine, thread-like bark strips, matted with feathers and decaying wood dust. I recognized one of the feathers as that of a Steller Jay, and several were from a Horned Owl. The nesting stub was so badly decayed that it would have snapped off with very little pressure.

I visited the nest again on June 6 at which time the four young birds were still in the nest, though evidently about ready to leave. On that date I took the accompanying photograph (fig. 29) and noted that there was one addled egg in

the nest which I withdrew and prepared for my collection.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, September 22, 1937.*

The Timberline Sparrow in Arizona.—While collecting birds near Springerville, Apache County, Arizona, in October, 1937, I noticed flocks of Vesper and Brewer sparrows foraging in a wheat field along the Little Colorado River, 4 miles west of town. An immature male Brewer Sparrow, taken on October 8, has since been identified as *Spizella breweri taverneri* by Dr. H. C. Oberholser

of the Bureau of Biological Survey. The skin has been deposited in the Biological Survey Collections at the U. S. National Museum.

This specimen is apparently the first Arizona record for the Timberline Sparrow and one of a very few collected in the United States. The subspecies has been reported from central-southern New Mexico by Grinnell (Condor, vol. 34, 1932, pp. 231-232) and from central-western Texas by Van Tyne (Auk, vol. 53, 1936, p. 92).—JAMES O. STEVENSON, *National Park Service, Washington, D. C., November 30, 1937.*

Another Saw-whet Owl from the San Bernardino Mountains, California.—I recently examined a mounted specimen of *Cryptoglaux acadica acadica* that was taken by Roger Zachary, of Los Angeles, at Crestline, about 5000 feet altitude in the San Bernardino Mountains, October 27, 1937. The bird was taken alive, but died after a few days in captivity.—G. WILLETT, *Los Angeles Museum, Los Angeles, California, December 1, 1937.*

An Unusually Early Molt in the Ruddy Duck.—Although it is not unusual to see Ruddy Ducks (*Oxyura jamaicensis rubida*) in partial nuptial plumage by early March, Phillips (Nat. Hist. Ducks, vol. 4, 1926, p. 161) gives March 18 as the earliest known date at which this plumage has been found complete. It was therefore a matter of considerable surprise when, in the late afternoon of January 3, 1938, a male of this species was seen in the western part of Stow Lake, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, in complete breeding plumage.

This individual was no more than twenty-five yards from shore when seen, and it afforded ample opportunity for close scrutiny. The unworn and unfaded appearance of the feathers precluded the possibility that this might be an old male that had failed to molt its nuptial plumage the previous autumn.

This same individual was observed at this locality on ensuing days and on January 7 a careful check was made of all the Ruddy Ducks on the lake. On this day about 75 individuals of this species were seen, of which approximately one-half were males. A careful examination of each bird through field glasses showed only one additional male to be in other than full eclipse plumage which is normally retained during the autumn, winter and early spring until late March or April. This bird had black on the head but not as yet on the nape. A considerable spotting of chestnut was present on the mantle, scapulars and sides.—ROBERT T. ORR, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, January 11, 1938.*

An Incubating Male California Quail.—It is well known that in the California Quail (*Lophortyx californica*) usually the female alone incubates the eggs. The fact that sometimes a male quail is found incubating was noted by Grinnell, Bryant, and Storer (Game Birds of California, 1918, p. 529) who wrote: "The male bird will assume the duties of incubation if the female is done away with, but otherwise seems only to perform the duty of sentinel."

But such instances do not seem to be common, for E. Lowell Sumner, Jr. (Calif. Fish and Game, vol. 21, 1935, pp. 217, 254) in the course of thirty months of intensive field work on the California Quail never observed the male incubating and he only mentions one such case, that of a nest observed by the writer and others on the Stanford University campus in 1933.



Fig. 30. Male California Quail incubating.

It was with interest, therefore, that in 1936 on approaching a quail nest for purposes of photography I found the male incubating the eggs (fig. 30). Thirteen eggs were in the nest which was in a field just west of the Stanford campus. This nest was observed several times each day, on June 29, 30, July 1, 2, 3. Only the male was found on the eggs and nothing was seen of the female. On July 4 the nest was found broken up. Four of the eggs were missing, and many scattered feathers indicated the capture of the bird by some predatory animal.

At neither nest, in 1933 or 1936, was the female observed at any time. This fact tends to confirm the suggestion of Grinnell, Bryant, and Storer that males found incubating are not sharing the duty with the female but have taken it over after she has been killed.—JOHN B. PRICE, *Stanford University, California, November 29, 1937.*