

**A Water Ouzel Uses Wings in Swimming.**—The interesting note by Charles W. Michael (Condor, vol. 40, 1938, pp. 185–186) on the habits of the Ouzel elicits the following. Like Mr. Michael, I had frequently seen in print the statement that the Ouzel (*Cinclus mexicanus*) uses its wings in swimming under water, and therefore when I saw an Ouzel swimming under water in what was, to me, the expected fashion, it did not seem especially noteworthy. The individual in question was a young bird, just out of the nest, and it was unable to fly more than a few feet. I made an effort to capture the bird with a landing net, and in its successful efforts to escape it walked on the bottom, swam on the surface (feet only), and also swam under water, always in the latter case using its wings, apparently to good effect. The wing strokes were slow enough to distinguish easily, and I should guess were made at a rate not far from two a second. The wings were extended only part way, apparently much less than in aerial flight. The observation was made in the Elwha River in Washington, and part of the time the bird was in a pool of clear water 18 inches to 2 feet deep with a very moderate current. I was part of the time standing directly over the bird which swam (with its wings) within inches of my feet. I did not note down, and do not recall, whether or not it used its legs while it was using its wings. There is the possibility that this action was that of a young bird, but I suspect it was rather characteristic of a desperate one. Perhaps Mr. Michael's example that failed to use its wings was exhibiting the normal, undisturbed behavior of the species.

Other birds that I have seen use their wings under water when hard pressed by danger are a downy young Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*), Pintails (*Dafila acuta*), and Baldpates (*Mareca americana*). The sandpiper did not seem to get any appreciable help from its wings, which were spread out and fluttered, nevertheless. The ducks of both species were suffering from botulism and could not fly, though they were otherwise active. Other Pintails and Baldpates, at the same time and place, and under the same conditions of illness and terrain used their feet only in escaping under water.

I have had excellent views through strong binoculars of Pigeon Guillemots (*Cepphus columba*) and murrelets swimming under water in Deception Pass, Washington, under a highway bridge. They were undisturbed and appeared to be feeding, and they invariably used their wings.—RICHARD M. BOND, *Santa Barbara, California, September 1, 1938.*

**The Petrels of Castle Rock, Del Norte County, California.**—Jackson S. King and the writer spent the nights of June 23 and 24, 1938, on Castle Rock, off the coast of Del Norte County, to the north of Crescent City. Our primary purpose was to listen to the nocturnal songs of the Beal Petrels (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa beali*). The petrels responded nobly with a continuous performance from about ten o'clock until shortly before dawn. Our beds were placed on the long wiry grass, which covers about an acre of high central plateau. We were aroused by a startling burst of sounds. The air was filled with innumerable birds, zigzagging in flight so closely and erratically that they often struck each other and the boards of our windbreak. King, as he came out of his first sleep, called out realistically, if somewhat inelegantly, "The gibbering bats of Hell!" With a board he tried lustily to collect a few but failed. It was like trying to smite floating bits of thistledown. From all over the tract arose answering calls, sputtering from burrows and grass. We could hear them even below our blankets. We had been sleeping on them! Several, as they emerged from beneath us, fluttered into the air from our beds, several times hitting our faces and hands. It was weirdly uncanny in the misty darkness.

Their notes covered a considerable range of pitch, breaking and blending into unceasing calls, squeaks, twitters, groans, mournful cries and crowings, much like the efforts of young bantam cockerels, save that labials (p's and b's) not palatals (k's and g's) were used. The vowels were definitely short e's. We felt, at times, that individual virtuosi could be segregated. There were diminuendos and crescendos of volume. There came occasional contrapuntal bass runs from a few scattered, seemingly larger birds, judging from the depth and power of tone. These notes often seemed to be a progression from tonic to sub-dominant, for example from C to F, with a dotted eighth and a sixteenth on each pitch, ending with a full stop on F. King thought some of these bassos used occasional sliding chromatics and were often a bit off key. He remarked that all the ensemble lacked was a tom-tom to give their amazing symphony a sense of rhythm. It is impossible to describe and analyze the whole complex, as it will doubtless seem different to every hearer, but it remains as an unforgettable experience, once heard.

The flashlight seemed to indicate a few lighter birds in the air. Were they Fork-tailed Petrels (*Oceanodroma furcata*)? Were some of the bass singers Cassin Auklets (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*)? A hurried and very superficial search of burrows in the daytime revealed only the Beal Petrels.—E. W. MARTIN, *Stanford University, California, August 2, 1938.*