

**Notes on Some Birds Nesting in Northern Idaho.**—I have selected the following from among my field notes taken while I was stationed on the St. Joe National Forest in northern Idaho. Their particular interest lies in the bearing that they may have on the behavior of certain more or less common species of birds under unusual conditions or circumstances.

On July 21, 1932, I discovered a pair of Mountain Bluebirds (*Sialia currucoides*) feeding fledglings at Bathtub Mountain. The nest was in a wooden box which had been nailed to the outside of the log cabin occupied by the lookout man and had evidently been used previously as a makeshift cupboard. The floor space measured roughly 10 by 18 inches and the birds had filled the entire space with nesting material to a depth of three or four inches, while protruding from the mass the following foreign items were noted: A coil of insulated copper wire; six or seven sixty-penny spikes; an old telephone condenser; two large, rusty iron bolts; several pieces of chalk-line and a large chunk of blue carpenter's chalk. The nest was not disturbed and one can only conjecture what further items a careful inventory would have brought to light.

On June 19, 1934, a Western Robin (*Turdus migratorius propinquus*) was noted on its nest in a thicket of mountain hemlock near Monumental Buttes. The peculiar posture of the bird led me to investigate further and to arrive at the following deduction. The nest had evidently been built or at least started while the sapling was bent into a horizontal position by the weight of accumulated snow and ice in the top. As the sun's rays melted the ice, the sapling was gradually released until on the date noted, the nest was tilted at a precarious angle so that when the bird flushed at my approach, the eggs barely missed being dumped to the ground, eight feet below. With a stout piece of twine I secured the sapling and bending it to its former position anchored it to a nearby bush. Before I left I was rewarded by seeing the bird brooding again, this time in a normal position.

On July 17, following the robin episode, I was witness to the final stages of the following incident. While I was inspecting a road construction job at Reid's Gulch, one of the road workers preparing to blast through a rock bluff discovered a nest containing three fledglings, identified later as Townsend Solitaires (*Myadestes townsendi*) in a crevice in the rocks. The nearest powder charge was not close enough actually to destroy the nesting site, but should the charge be touched off in its then location, that the nest would be demolished and the young birds killed was a foregone conclusion. The powder man had his definite instructions to blast the cliff, so only one thing could be done. One of the men scooped the entire structure, fledglings and all, into his hat and removed it to a safe distance while the shot was fired. A large, jutting overhang which had been within six feet of the nest was completely shot away, but as I arrived on the scene the nest with its contents was being replaced in the undamaged crevice; and within a short time a parent bird appeared and began feeding the hungry youngsters.

On May 16, 1937, I flushed a female Cinnamon Teal (*Querquedula cyanoptera*) from her nest located within eight feet of the main-line track of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad just east of St. Maries. The nest contained eight eggs; when visited on the 24th and again on the 29th, the clutch had increased to eleven, the female brooding on both occasions. The remarkable fact, however, was that four regular passenger and two or more freight trains passed each day without appearing to disturb the brooding bird in the least. Standing at a distance of 75 feet from the tracks one could readily feel the ground shake as the "Olympian Express" rumbled past, and it is not difficult to imagine the sensation that this mother duck must have felt before becoming injured to the situation. When I approached on foot she would invariably flush before I was within fifteen feet of the nest, but though I often watched closely I never saw her leave at the passing of a train. Unfortunately, I was transferred to another locality on the first of June, so I did not determine whether this nesting venture was successfully completed.—R. L. HAND, *Missoula, Montana, December 8, 1938.*

**Additional Notes on the Black Pigeon Hawk.**—While on a vacation trip to Paulina Lake, Deschutes County, Oregon, during August, 1938, I was very much surprised to find *Falco columbarius suchleyi* in that region, so far east of the main divide of the Cascade Mountains. As we crossed the lake on August 5, I saw two small hawks flying close together low over the water, but as they were quite a distance away I could not be positive. Camp was established in the lodgepole pines near the shore of the lake in the isolated northeast cove where the beach is quite wide and open. Numerous small mineralized springs and seeps keep the ground moist and provide an excellent place for small birds to congregate during the heat of the day to bathe and drink. The mineral water seemed to be relished by deer, as also by many robins, crossbills, chipping sparrows and juncos. My companions, Mr. and Mrs. William L. Finley, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Smith, and Mrs. Jewett, all trained observers, and I, spent many hours watching and studying this bird concentration.

About eight o'clock in the morning of August 8, while a large number of small birds were on the beach, a sudden scurrying for cover, accompanied by many alarm notes from birds and numerous

chipmunks, attracted our attention. A small black hawk, fast on the wing, flew past and alighted on a dead pine half a mile up the beach. For some time not a bird or other small creature uttered a sound or ventured into the open. The hawk was collected and proved to be an immature female. Nearly every day from August 5 to August 25 one or more of these hawks were seen near our camp, and each time the birds and chipmunks exhibited extreme fear. Another immature female was collected on August 25.

The stomachs of the birds taken were examined and found to contain only fragments of black ground beetles. As near as I could determine there were five or six Black Pigeon Hawks at Paulina Lake during our visit. Only once before have I seen this species east of the Cascade Mountains. A specimen was collected at Heppner, Morrow County, Oregon, on July 31, 1929, by H. W. Dobyns and given to me. It also was a bird of the year, an immature male. Is it possible these could be migrants or does *Falco c. suckleyi* breed that far inland?—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, September 27, 1938.*

**Two Notable Records for Arizona.**—*Colaptes auratus auratus*. Southern Flicker. An aged female of this species was taken by me April 7, 1937, from a grove of large live oak trees in the valley of the Gardiner Wash, northern Santa Cruz County, Arizona. The Gardiner Canyon and Wash originates from the east side and slopes of the Santa Rita Mountains, coursing eastward and northeastward. Since coming to this region, I have been on the lookout for a specimen of Mearns Gilded Flicker, and presumed I was obtaining one of such until it was in hand. Said bird was excessively fat which I cannot account for excepting by its food of acorn kernels. Flickers are often seen working the acorns over, on the ground beneath the oaks. I have read that this species is likely to drift westward from the southern states, across Texas, Arizona and into southern California. Flickers of this region are resident the year round and I should not consider that this bird was in seasonal migration only.

*Chloroceryle americana septentrionalis*. Texas Kingfisher. An adult female was taken at a pond on the Santa Cruz River, seven miles north of Nogales, October 1, 1938. No others were in the vicinity at the time. A kingfisher must have a discouraging time trying to locate streams with fish in this region. The best effort they can make is hopefully to follow the dry courses of our "rivers" (so called by courtesy). It is not uncommon to see the Western Belted Kingfisher flying up and down a dry wash. Therefore an artificial pond anywhere in this region will narrow a search for a kingfisher down almost to a certainty.—FRED M. DILLE, *Nogales, Arizona, January 11, 1939.*

**Telephone Wires Fatal to Sage Grouse.**—On October 20, 1938, Mr. W. S. Long and the writer found three Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) that, evidence indicated, had been killed as a result of striking telephone wires. One adult hen was found beneath a telephone line five miles north of Beaver, Beaver County, Utah; and four miles farther south under the same line a cock and a hen, both adults, were found. All three apparently had been dead about twenty-four hours, and were in excellent plumage which showed little evidence of external damage. The crops of the three birds and the skins of the two hens were preserved. While skinning the specimens they were examined carefully for signs of injury. There were no broken bones and the skulls were not damaged, but the throats of both hens were bruised and contained clots of blood, and the shoulders and fore part of the breast of one showed slight bruises. The position of the birds beneath the telephone line and the fact that the skins were not torn and no bones were broken would indicate that they had flown into the telephone wires rather than having been struck by automobiles. The skin of the male was intact and no bones were broken except the skull which was crushed; tracks indicated that the head of this bird had been stepped upon by a cow after the bird was dead.

The situation along this stretch of highway is such as to be conducive to this type of avian accident. The west side of the highway is bordered by uncultivated flats which extend back to sagebrush-covered mesas. On the east side are pastures, grain fields and alfalfa patches. Along the edge of the fields that adjoin the road is a fence and the telephone line. The telephone poles support ten wires, eight of which are attached to the top cross-bar and are approximately eighteen feet above the ground; below these are two wires about a foot apart which are attached to the poles.

Under these conditions it appears that the likelihood of Sage Grouse striking the wires as they fly back and forth between the sage flats and the alfalfa fields would be great. The greatest damage probably occurs when the birds are suddenly flushed from the alfalfa and strike the wires before they are able to gain sufficient altitude to clear them. The crop of one was distended with green forage which undoubtedly had been obtained in the alfalfa patch. Being heavy with food may also make the birds less agile at dodging obstacles.

Of course, this is only one incident and may not be significant, but it does demonstrate one more obstacle that man has introduced into the environment of this fine game bird. Further observations