

common, with a few Lesser Snow Geese in evidence. On October 27, perhaps a thousand Cackling Geese were seen in flocks south of Colusa and two birds were collected. The next day more were found near Willows, and two more were taken. By November 20, 1928, Cackling Geese were abundant about Willows; over 10,000 were seen and 120 shot by gunners I accompanied. The birds were then abundant elsewhere in the Valley and continued so through at least January 12, 1929. No Cackling Geese were seen in a visit to the Butte Creek area, or in the vicinity of Willows, February 16-17, 1929, although a thousand Lesser Canada Geese were noted in the first locality. March 3, 1929, a single flock of 15 Cackling Geese was observed in flight near Butte Creek with flocks of Lesser Canada Geese totalling 300 birds. Scarcity of the birds at this season is comparable to experiences with other geese of the region. From March to early April, huge numbers of Cackling Geese have been observed in the fields of the delta region west of Sacramento and south of Davis, Dixon and Elmira.

The autumn arrival of Cackling Geese in the Sacramento Valley in 1929 was much as in the preceding season. On October 31 only five to six thousand were found about Colusa. The birds were extremely abundant about Willows by November 3. Here, the abundance of Cackling Geese at periods of heavy concentration belies attempts at census taking. The birds were always found most abundant on the 12,000-acre Spalding Ranch, now a Federal Wildlife Refuge. Here, in November, 1928, I once saw a solid cloud of Cackling Geese arise at daybreak, that extended at least four miles across the horizon; certainly many hundred thousand birds were involved. Geese remained abundant in the Valley through December, 1929, but a decided reduction in numbers was observed on January 12, 1930, when few of any kinds were seen. March 30, 1930, only 20 Cackling Geese were encountered among about 2,000 Lesser Canada Geese noted on the Spalding Ranch.

The area of winter habitation of the Cackling Goose in California is similar to that of the Lesser Canada, with the metropolis in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley; but there is no evidence that the present subspecies now migrates to southern and southeastern California, as does the Lesser Canada. Cackling Geese are now rare on the Suisun marshes and San Francisco Bay, in fact anywhere along the coast. I have seen typical examples taken on Humboldt Bay, in the collections of C. I. Clay and Dr. B. M. Marshall, of Eureka. Evidence that there is a small but regular (formerly large) migration down the coast to the vicinity of Eureka, thence inland, up the Trinity and Eel river valleys, probably east to the Sacramento Valley, was provided by the late F. J. Williams, of Ferndale, Humboldt County, who stated he had for years observed such autumnal flights, now much reduced in numbers.

The Cackling Goose is about fourth in point of numbers of the kinds wintering in California, being exceeded by Lesser Snows, White-fronts and Lesser Canadas. It is an abundant bird on Tule Lake from early October to December, and in the central valleys from late October to early April.—JAMES MOFFITT, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, May 15, 1939.*

"The Mississippi Kite in Spring."—The fine paper of this title by George Miksch Sutton (Condor, vol. 41, 1939, pp. 41-53), like all work of this well-known ornithologist and artist, is a valuable contribution. But rewording of the last four paragraphs with greater accuracy in view could easily have improved the paper.

That "black picture" of oologists has absolutely astounded me! I am an ardent oologist of over fifty years' field experience and have been personally acquainted with numerous collectors of eggs. Being a western oologist who has never collected a bird or egg of this fine species and with but two sets of the eggs in my collection, I feel that I am qualified and should make some defense of the oologist. If I were not reasonably certain that I had done no harm by collecting eggs, I certainly would try to make my studies without collecting.

It has never been my misfortune to meet any oologist in these United States who would behave as claimed in these four questionable paragraphs. On the other hand, I have found them to be eager conservationists, serving all of us in the protection of the hawks, owls, and other birds which have so often been persecuted. They are busy with their cameras, instead of guns, and you will find them helping to direct boy scouts, teachers, and others in bird study. They seldom kill a bird, as they well know that this is not apt to be conservation. They also know that the taking of a few sets of eggs will do no harm, as the birds will normally in almost every case soon have another set. They would be the first to give protection to the Mississippi Kite and would be the first to detect any threatening danger to that bird.

What has our friend Sutton done to help the Mississippi Kites around Arnett? **KILLED SIXTEEN BIRDS!** On the premise that these birds were of average age and that they nest each year after they are one year of age and up to the age of ten years, we find that the killing of these sixteen birds would in only ten years be equal to 400 sets of eggs for only the first and second generations of birds. Why figure the third or more generations? The figure is large enough without doing so!

It will be well for all of us to base our papers on facts and not to condemn all scientists in any branch because of some single representative who is a "black sheep"; for we can find such in any class.—WILSON C. HANNA, *Colton, California, March 29, 1939.*

Old-squaw and American Scoter in San Diego Region.—Mr. J. W. Sefton, Jr., has recorded (*Condor*, vol. 41, 1939, p. 83) the first capture of an Old-squaw (*Clangula hyemalis*) in southern California since 1921. Even though his note is not concerned with sight records of this species, the implied rarity of the Old-squaw at San Diego may justify the publication of two very satisfactory observations of the bird from my own notes. On March 18, 19, and 20, 1928, a bedraggled individual, in an indefinite plumage but approaching that of the adult female, was seen on the edge of the "Strand" in San Diego Bay near Coronado. This bird was most unsuspecting, and since I have been familiar with the Old-squaw since my childhood, the record was as positive as a sight record can ever be.

On June 20 and 21, 1937 (and therefore slightly more unusual a record than the above), another very dishevelled Old-squaw was seen in San Diego Bay, in an obscure buffy plumage frequently found in summering birds in the East. It also was very tame, and spent most of its time on shore, within a few yards of the spot where the 1928 bird was noted. It seemed to be in unhealthy condition.

My notes contain references to other northern ducks in the San Diego region, but none seems worth giving in detail except the following, since they concern such species as the American Golden-eye and Red-breasted Merganser. On March 27, 1928, a female American Scoter (*Oidemia americana*) was observed with great care from a short distance as she fed in the surf just off the breakwater at Coronado in company with many Surf Scoters. This bird was observed almost daily until April 18, when I left California. On April 6 she was joined by an adult male in excellent plumage, and this individual also remained at Coronado until my departure. Even had this unmistakable male bird failed to appear, the female American Scoter is more easily identified at sight than females of either of the other two species when the birds are resting on the water and the white wing-patch of *Melanitta deglandi* scarcely visible. Like the Old-squaw, the scoters are extremely abundant winter ducks on Long Island, New York, and I have known them all well for many years.

Although the attitude of western ornithologists is more conservative toward sight records than that of the easterners, the observations cited above should not, it seems to me, invoke more than a minimum of uncertainty in the minds of even the most cautious.—WILLIAM TOD HELMUTH, III, *East Hampton, New York, April 9, 1939.*

Some Unusual Arizona and New Mexico Bird Records.—The following records were obtained in the course of field observations made during the period September, 1936, to December, 1938, inclusive, by the writer on the Navajo and Hopi reservations in Apache, Navajo, and Coconino counties, northeastern Arizona, and in parts of McKinley, Valencia, and San Juan counties in northwestern New Mexico. Most of these records represent the first published occurrences of the species in the respective parts of these two states.

Haliaeetus leucocephalus. Bald Eagle. An adult observed October 29, 1937, at Long Lake in the Lukachukai Mountains, New Mexico; Transition Zone.

Pandion haliaetus. Osprey. One flying over the San Juan River at Farmington, New Mexico, October 7, 1938.

Dendragapus obscurus. Dusky Grouse. A pair seen in Lukachukai Mountains above Sanastee, New Mexico, October 26, 1937. This big upland game bird is rare in these mountains that lie along the New Mexico-Arizona state line. Seen in forest of aspen, Douglas fir, and ponderosa pine.

Numenius americanus. Long-billed Curlew. One seen August 3, 1938, at a small reservoir near Mexican Springs, New Mexico; another August 11, 1938, at Ganado Lake, Arizona.

Limnodromus griseus. Dowitcher. One seen at a small reservoir near Bodaway House, about ten miles southwest of Gap Trading Post, Arizona, March 24, 1937. Still in gray plumage.

Lobipes lobatus. Northern Phalarope. One observed at an almost frozen-over pond about eight miles north of Sanastee, New Mexico, November 19, 1937. This, the only record I have for the species, is apparently an unusually late one.

Chlidonias nigra. Black Tern. A flock of six flew over Ganado Lake, Arizona, August 11, 1938.

Coccyzus americanus. Yellow-billed Cuckoo. One seen and others heard at Waterflow, New Mexico, July 20, 1938. Waterflow is in an irrigated district, with many cottonwoods and other trees.

Asio flammeus. Short-eared Owl. One observed September 30, 1938, near Egloffstein Butte, about twenty miles southwest of Keams Canyon, Arizona; Upper Sonoran grassland.

Megaceryle alcyon. Belted Kingfisher. One seen September 25, 1936, at Laguna Creek Dam near Dinnehotso, Arizona; another on October 9, 1937, near a small lake in the Lukachukai Mountains above Crystal, New Mexico.