

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Western Red-tailed Hawk Nests on High Voltage Tower.—On March 11, 1939, Mr. J. D. Graham, of Benicia, and I were endeavoring to locate the nest of a pair of Golden Eagles which we had seen several times a few miles north of Benicia, California. Upon inquiring of a rancher we were told that a pair of eagles had a freshly built nest in the tower of an electric power line two or three miles back in the hills. He said that his son had very foolishly risked climbing to it a week before and that the boy had reported there were no eggs at that time.

We drove as far as we could by car, walked about two miles farther, and located a nest which we concluded must be the one to which the rancher had referred. However, it was not an eagle's nest, but that of a Western Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo borealis calurus*). A pair of red-tails was in the air about the nest, circling at times in company with three other individuals of the same species which appeared on the scene from an adjacent canyon. The location was six miles north of Benicia in Sulphur Springs Valley, about a hundred yards from a small creek of the same name. The height of the steel tower (fig. 38) was computed to be eighty feet, and we fixed the height of the nest at seventy-five feet from the ground.

On March 27, in company with Mr. Gunnar Larson, of Berkeley, I again visited the location. A red-tail was perched near the top of the adjacent tower to the north, and while I was taking photographs of the site, it sailed above and screamed. A notice at the bottom of the tower warned that, "These towers carry high voltage electric wires. It is dangerous to climb them." We decided to heed the warning and to forego closer inspection of the nest. — EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, April 20, 1939.*

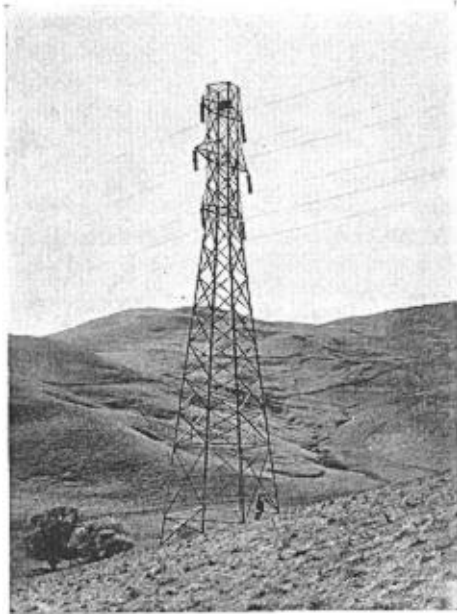


Fig. 38. Nest of Western Red-tailed Hawk on steel tower near Benicia, California.

Fork-tailed Petrels from the Coast of San Diego County, California.—Grinnell and Test (Condor, vol. 41, 1939, pp. 170-172) recently revived the name *plumbea* for the southern form of the Fork-tailed Petrel (*Oceanodroma furcata*) and gave descriptions of the southern and northern races and a table of measurements. Thus has been provided the basis for determining the identity of two petrels of this species, taken at the extreme southern coastal end of its range, which are in the collection of the San Diego Society of Natural History.

One of these birds proves to be a typical specimen of the southern race. It was recently sent in the flesh to the San Diego Natural History Museum by J. F. Hagerty. He had found it lying, in an exhausted condition, beside the coast highway at Cardiff, San Diego County, on June 9, 1939. The situation would suggest that the bird had been struck at night by an automobile, but in preparing the specimen the writer found neither broken bones nor abrasion of any sort. The bird was in very poor physical condition, either through sickness or lack of food, but was in good plumage. The body feathers, tail coverts and tertials appeared to have been recently molted; only the wing coverts and flight feathers showed the effects of a season's wear. This specimen is no. 18075, S.D.S.N.H.

The other bird (S.D.S.N.H. no. 2031) has been previously recorded (Stephens, Condor, vol. 21, 1919, p. 87; Willett, Pac. Coast Avifauna No. 21, 1933, p. 16) as *O. furcata*. It was found dead on the beach near San Diego on December 23, 1918.

The measurements of these two birds, both of which are females, are as follows:

	Wing	Tail	Tarsus	Middle toe without claw	Culmen
June bird	145.0	77.8	24.3	24.0	14.0
December bird	150.0	82.2	26.2	24.7	13.7

Comparing these measurements with the table made by Grinnell and Test, it is seen that the June bird falls in the range of measurements given for the southern race, *plumbea*. It also is of the darker, more plumbeous type, matching the color description given of *plumbea*.

The December bird is larger, though not large enough to be called *O. f. furcata*. It fits well into the intermediate classification exemplified by birds from Sitka. This bird is lighter in color, yet not light enough for the northern race, and must still be called *plumbea*.

Dates of capture of the two San Diego birds may bring out an interesting point. Are we to infer that the Fork-tailed Petrels that breed in the southern section of their nesting area (coast of northern California, Oregon and Washington) may be expected at this southernmost end of their known coastal range in summer, whereas the intermediate bird from Alaska represents the winter visitors in the same section? Only time and additional specimens will throw definite light on such questions as to the wanderings of these ocean waifs.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, July 21, 1939.*

The Piping Plover in Colorado.—We wish to report a Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), no. 20066, ♀, Colo. Mus. Nat. Hist., taken May 6, 1939, at Barr, Adams County, Colorado. This plover has been recorded (Dawson, Wilson Bull., 1899, p. 49) once before from Colorado, but on rather questionable evidence. A specimen was said to have been killed near Julesburg, Sedgwick County, Colorado, in May, 1899, but the bird was not saved. Sclater (1912) did not include this record in his book, "A History of the Birds of Colorado." Consequently, this recently collected specimen adds another interesting species to the list of Colorado birds.—ALFRED M. BAILEY and ROBERT J. NIEDRACH, *The Colorado Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado, May 19, 1939.*

Another Record of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak in California.—On April 23, 1939, Mr. Vincent Yoder and I discovered an adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Hedymeles ludovicianus*) feeding in the branches of a live oak tree in Scholl Canyon, near Glendale, California. We were fortunate in seeing the bird at very close range with nine power binoculars, and we were able accurately to note all points of identification in the course of the fifteen minutes that the bird remained in the tree.

There are a few other recorded occurrences of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak in California. C. H. Gilbert took several specimens of this species in Humboldt County, July 1, 1897 (McLain, Auk, vol. 15, 1898, p. 190); an immature male was taken by M. F. Gilman at Palm Springs, Riverside County, September 10, 1897 (Grinnell, Pac. Coast Avifauna No. 3, 1902, p. 59); Grinnell (Condor, vol. 33, 1931, pp. 254-255) records one taken at Quincy, Plumas County, August 5, 1891; and Carter (Condor, vol. 39, 1937, p. 217) reports one at Twentynine Palms, San Bernardino County, May 13, 1934.—WILLIAM G. WEBB, *Eagle Rock, California, June 7, 1939.*

Galapagos Shearwaters Killed by Man-o'-war Birds.—While collecting in the Galapagos Archipelago for the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, in February of 1937, the following observations of man-o'-war birds and shearwaters were made at Tower Island.

On the morning of February 18, 1937, while at anchor close to the beach in Darwin Bay, violent squalls and torrential rains raged intermittently. The nearness of our schooner to the beach and the stormy weather seemed to cause the greater part of the large colony of Ridgway Man-o'-war Birds (*Fregata minor ridgwayi*) and Red-footed Boobies (*Sula sula*), which were nesting in the low bushes at the head of the bay, to mill about in the lee of our boat.

Numerous Galapagos Shearwaters (*Puffinus lherminieri subalaris*) were skimming about and plunging into the roughened water at this time. When a shearwater dove near the soaring man-o'-war birds, several of the latter dropped near the surface of the water and seized it when it reappeared at the surface. The struggling shearwater was carried some twenty feet in the air and then tossed from one man-o'-war to another. After a few minutes it was dropped to the water from where it was immediately retrieved, fluttering feebly, and again tossed about in the air until it appeared nearly dead. At the end of about ten minutes of "playing" with the shearwater, it was again dropped into the water. Thereupon a number of other man-o'-wars which had not taken any part in the preceding fray swooped down at the apparently lifeless form floating on the surface, but they made no attempt to seize it.

At least four shearwaters were thus beaten to death within an hour, after which the gales diminished and we left for other parts of the island.

In the course of other observations on man-o'-war birds, in various places in the Galapagos Islands and eastern Polynesia, the bullying of boobies and terns frequently was seen, but in no instance were there attacks so severe as those noted on the shearwaters at Tower Island.—RONALD W. SMITH, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, California, July 10, 1939.*