

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Varied Thrush Trapped by Acorn.—On the day after last Thanksgiving (November 24, 1939)



Fig. 46. Varied Thrush with acorn on bill.

my wife and I were driving through thickly wooded hills on a road running between Ukiah and Mendocino, Mendocino County, California. There were numerous Varied Thrushes (*Ixoreus naevius*) flying away from the dirt road as we drove along. Stopping to investigate one which did not fly, we found it to be embarrassed by a large acorn which had become fastened on the bill with a sharp corner forced into one nostril. The bird was very weak, and, although it must have gone without food for some time, it managed to fly feebly off when we had cut the acorn free with a pair of scissors.—DAVID GELSTON NICHOLS, *Berkeley, California, January 23, 1940.*

The Arctic Tern at Portland and Diamond Lake, Oregon.—Records of the occurrence of Arctic Terns (*Sterna paradisaea*) in Oregon are so few and scattered that it seems appropriate to record a number of these birds seen in the State during the fall of 1939. On September 10, 1939, Mr. Harold Gilbert and a party of the Oregon Audubon Society, while observing birds on Sauvies Island, in the Columbia River, near Portland, saw and studied "about a dozen terns" at close range. On September 11, Mr. Gilbert gave the writer an excellent description of these birds, which checked with *paradisaea*. On the same day Mrs. Laura Bingham, a school teacher in Portland, brought me a dead immature *Sterna paradisaea* that one of her pupils had picked up dead on a vacant lot while on her way to school in the early morning. With this specimen in hand my tentative identification of the flock on Sauvies Island was strengthened.

During the period from September 25 to 29, 1939, while I was at Diamond Lake, at an elevation of 5,182 feet, in the Umpqua National Forest, Cascade Range, Oregon, terns were almost always in sight near the boat landing at the resort camp. As *Sterna forsteri* is a common summer resident at the nearby Klamath Lakes, little thought was given these birds until the morning of September 29, when just before leaving the locality I picked up a dead tern that had been recently shot by some thoughtless gunner. Much to my surprise, the bird proved to be an adult *Sterna paradisaea*.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, November 27, 1939.*

Food Habits of Horned Owls in the Pahranaagat Valley, Nevada.—A nest of a Horned Owl, *Bubo virginianus* ssp. (*B. v. occidentalis* occurs in this locality according to Linsdale, *Pac. Coast Avif.* No. 23, 1936, p. 62), was found near the highway, about 4 miles south of Alamo, Lincoln County, Nevada, on May 16, 1939. Apparently the young had just left the nest since there was reasonably fresh prey present, including a cottontail (*Sylvilagus auduboni*). A dead fledgling owl, about a week old at the time of death, was picked up under the nest, and this, together with feathers and egg shells, served to identify the birds. The nest was a hole in a low cliff, and the site was in the Lower Sonoran desert, although within about 300 yards of the wet meadow lands which constitute the floor of Pahranaagat Valley.

Two hundred and thirty-four whole pellets were picked up, all of them reasonably fresh. Most of them came from the ground below the nest, but a few from a wood rat (*Neotoma*) nest to which they had apparently been carried. The cliff contained only the one hole, so that there is no question as to the origin of the pellets. On examination, the pellets were found to contain remains of 407 prey items as shown in the table.

The pellets used in this study were examined separately, and any diagnostic element in a pellet was recorded as one individual prey item. This method gave higher counts of prey individuals by as much as 10 per cent than would have been obtained by the bulk method used by the author in a former investigation (*Condor*, vol. 41, 1939, pp. 54-61). Most of the discrepancy appears to be a result of the parents' tearing up prey and feeding parts of the same individual to different young, or to themselves and young. A smaller part of the discrepancy apparently results from loss of jaws or other bones in the cleaning process.

Chicken ticks (*Argas persicus*) occurred in several of the pellets. One pellet contained almost nothing but the skull of a pocket gopher and 42 ticks! I have no idea how so many ticks got into a pellet together with a normally tick-free animal. Four or five pellets each contained a large cocklebur (*Xanthium*) which probably had become attached to a mouse at the time of capture. No reptiles, amphibians or invertebrates (unless the ticks) were taken for food.

It is interesting to note that of the 378 individual mammals of species rather closely restricted either to a damp or to a dry habitat, 319, or 84.39 per cent, were inhabitants of the meadow land and only 59, or 15.61 per cent, were desert forms, although both habitats were equally available. Probably the number of suitable prey individuals is much greater in the meadow land, but there are no exact figures available. It is impossible to determine whether the owls hunted more hours over the meadows, or whether the difference in the percentages is a result of the different population densities only, or whether it is a combination of both factors.

In the vicinity of the nesting site, Ring-necked Pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) were common, and Gambel Quail (*Lophortyx gambelii*) and Mourning Doves (*Zenaidura macroura*) were very abundant. The fact that not so much as a feather of any of these was found at the nest would indicate that in this region during the nesting season the Horned Owl is entirely beneficial to man in its food habits.

	Mammals	Number of items	Percentage of total items
Bat.....	<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>	1	.25
Pocket gopher.....	<i>Thomomys bottae</i> (<i>centralis</i>).....	32	7.86
Pocket mice.....	<i>Perognathus</i> sp.	1	.25
	<i>Perognathus longimembris</i> (<i>panamintinus</i>).....	5	1.23
	<i>Perognathus parvus</i> (<i>olivaceus</i>).....	1	.25
	<i>Perognathus formosus</i> (<i>formosus</i>).....	2	.49
	<i>Dipodomys</i> sp.	9	2.21
Kangaroo rats.....	<i>Dipodomys microps</i>	16	3.93
	<i>Dipodomys merriami</i> (<i>merriami</i>).....	2	.49
	<i>Dipodomys ordii</i> (<i>fetusus</i>).....	1	.25
Harvest mouse.....	<i>Reithrodontomys megalotis</i> (<i>megalotis</i>).....	46	11.30
White-footed mice.....	<i>Peromyscus</i> sp.	8	1.97
	<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i> (<i>sonoriensis</i>).....	6	1.47
Wood rats.....	<i>Neotoma</i> sp.	2	.49
	<i>Neotoma lepida</i> (<i>lepida</i>).....	20	4.91
Meadow mouse.....	<i>Microtus montanus</i> (<i>fucusus</i>).....	217	53.32
House mouse.....	<i>Mus musculus</i>	24	5.90
	Rodent (young)	1	.25
		<hr/>	
		394	96.81
	Birds		
Rail.....	<i>Porzana carolina</i>	2	.49
Owl.....	<i>Bubo virginianus</i> (just hatched).....	1	.25
Swallow.....	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	1	.25
Bluebird.....	<i>Sialia currucoides</i>	1	.25
Wren.....	<i>Telmatodytes palustris</i> ssp.	2	.49
Blackbirds.....	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i> (<i>nevadensis</i>).....	2	.49
	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	1	.25
Sparrows.....	<i>Amphispiza belli</i> (<i>nevadensis</i>).....	1	.25
	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i> ssp.....	1	.25
	<i>Melospiza lincolni</i> ssp.....	1	.25
		<hr/>	
		13	3.19
		<hr/>	
		407	100.00

The bat is a new record for Lincoln County. Parts of scientific names in parentheses are assumed on the basis of specimens collected in the vicinity by the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California.

My thanks are extended to Dr. E. Raymond Hall, of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, for the use of space and specimens, and to Drs. Seth B. Benson and Alden H. Miller of the same institution, who respectively, identified the bat and the sparrows for me.—R. M. BOND, *Soil Conservation Service, Berkeley, California, October 30, 1939.*