

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Third Record of the King Eider in California.—I collected a juvenal female King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*), now preserved as no. 1659 of my personal collection, at the mouth of Tomales Bay, Marin County, California, on December 16, 1933.

The bird was shot at 9:30 a.m. in the middle of the narrow channel which forms the entrance to Tomales Bay, about 200 yards east of Avalis Beach (see U. S. G. S. map, Point Reyes Quadrangle), at a point where the water is 45 feet deep. It was one of a group of three eiders which was found resting on the surface there. One of the other birds was either a juvenal or immature male and the third, a female of undetermined age. An hour later, I crippled but lost either the latter or another female eider as it flew along close to the shore a hundred yards north of Avalis Beach. This bird was hit hard by a charge of shot while it was flying about ten feet above the surface, whereupon it dropped to the water and dove immediately. It apparently swam so far under water that it was not seen when it finally came to the surface.

The specimen that was secured is mainly in the first plumage and is definitely a bird of the year. A small percentage of the flank feathers, most of the contour feathers of the back from the interscapular region to the rump, and the scapulars are of the succeeding plumage. This bird measured 550 millimeters in length and weighed 3 pounds 1 ounce; it was in rather lean condition with nearly empty stomach.

There are but two published records for occurrences of *Somateria spectabilis* in California. Henshaw (Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, vol. 5, 1880, p. 189) recorded a young male from near Black Point, San Francisco Bay and Loomis (*vide* Grinnell, Bryant and Storer, Game Birds Calif., 1918, p. 193), a female from the Suisun Marshes, Solano County. Neither of these localities presents eider habitat and the birds were doubtless vagrants. The environment at Tomales Bay where my bird was taken is more characteristic of the species' maritime winter habitat and the fact that three or more individuals were seen indicates that at least a small company of King Eiders had migrated far south of their normal winter range. Ornithological observations are so few off the California coast in mid-winter that it is possible that this eider is a more regular visitant than the few records would indicate. Other observers should be on the lookout for this species. Judging from my experience with these birds, eiders are easy to recognize by one familiar with other ducks. While I had never before seen wild, live eiders, I instantly recognized these birds as such when I first saw them a hundred yards distant. Their carriage is quite distinctive and not at all scoter-like, as might be supposed.—JAMES MOFFITT, 1879 Broadway, San Francisco, September 19, 1940.

Western Mockingbird and Desert Sparrow in Southeastern Oregon.—During a brief stop at Burns, Harney County, Oregon, on May 25, 1940, the first bird notes that struck my ears came from a Western Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*) in full song. The bird was observed for fully ten minutes by several members of the La Grande Nature Club. Since Gabrielson and Jewett (Birds of Oregon, 1940, p. 462) record five specimens from the Steens Mountains and Blitzen Valley, it is not surprising to find that the species, possibly by following the Blitzen and Silvies Creek valleys, has found a welcome in the few shade trees of Burns.

Later the same morning, in the course of a half-hour stop at Wright's Point, a few miles south of Burns, an adult Desert Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata desertyicola*) perched on top of a bush in front of me for perhaps a minute. It was at Wright's Point that Finley and Bohlman collected two of the three Oregon specimens recorded by Gabrielson and Jewett (*op. cit.*, p. 565).—A. S. HYDE, La Grande, Oregon, September 16, 1940.

American Redstart at Redlands, California.—On September 11, 1940, an adult male American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) was observed by us in a small group of pecan trees in Prospect Park, Redlands, California. The bird was extremely active, constantly fluttering through the green foliage, and flashing all the while its flaming red sides and orange wing and tail patches. Its sharp insistent call note was given at regular intervals. The bird was observed each day in the park from September 11 to October 21, 1940, and it seemed to restrict its activities to the same group of trees during the entire period, making accurate observation comparatively easy. The bird was also seen and identified as such by Herbert Hill who is familiar with the bird from observations made in the eastern states.—MILTON MOORE and DONALD MOORE, Redlands, California, October 21, 1940.

Sound Produced in the Nuptial Dive of Young Anna Hummingbirds.—Much thinking and some talking has been indulged in with reference to the source of the climax sound produced by the male Anna Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) during its remarkable nuptial diving performance.

The only experimental work that has come to my attention is that of Rodgers (Condor, vol. 42, 1940, p. 86). He has brought forward strong evidence to show that the note is the result of vibration set up in certain of the tail feathers, particularly the outer ones, of the adult male.

When on Santa Ana Mountain, Orange County, California, this spring (May 21) I observed an interesting performance by an immature bird that bears somewhat upon the subject. Two birds of the year, with male characteristics of tail and gorget only partially developed, were rivals for the honey crop produced by a small patch of blossoming penstemons (*Penstemon spectabilis*). There was much charging and counter charging. Finally a series of typical nuptial plunges was indulged in by the more aggressive youngster. He rose to full height and came down with the characteristic speed to the same abrupt turn, which in this case was less than ten feet from where I stood. At this climactic point a distinct *flick* was heard. It was just as definitely marked off from any swish of the bullet-like descent as in the adult bird's performance, but it lacked altogether the approach to vocalized character that is characteristic of the adult of the species. It impressed me freshly with each performance as being a feather vibration and not a vocal note. His musical reed had not yet ripened to the full tonal possibility.—LOYE MILLER, *University of California, Los Angeles, California, September 19, 1940.*

A Saw-whet Owl Nest on Mount Pinos, California.—On June 9, 1940, Frank Brundige and I were collecting on Mount Pinos, Ventura County. While I was climbing to a Red-breasted Sapsucker's nest in the dead top of a tall pine tree, Frank scouted out some likely woodpecker holes in the near vicinity; two in particular looked very promising. After hitting one of the dead pine stubs twice with large rocks a small head appeared in an enlarged flicker hole. It so camouflaged the hole that when I came to see what the bird was, I was unable to find the previously prominent hole. With great difficulty Brundige was able to point it out to me.

Dead limbs formed a frail ladder to the nest, and soon we were on the way up. A Saw-whet Owl (*Cryptoglaux acadica*) flushed heavily from the hole, but stopped in a near-by tree affording us a good look at her. Her breast showed signs of incubation so we were heartened at the prospect of a breeding bird. The hole had been enlarged by decay and was only about five inches deep. It contained a newly hatched chick and five eggs. Because of constant pestering by a female Western Tanager, the owl flew away and did not return while we were at the nest.

The following week Brundige and Sidney Peyton returned to the nest and banded three of the young birds. The two others were too small for banding. Mr. Peyton removed the sixth egg, which was added, and after some careful washing found that it was a light-colored Sparrow Hawk's egg.

The Saw-whet Owl is a rare breeder in southern California.—EDWARD M. HALL, *Whittier, California, July 22, 1940.*

Black and White Warbler in Northern Lower California, Mexico.—Records of the Black and White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) for Lower California are few. According to Grinnell (Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., vol. 32, 1928, p. 197), the four recorded instances, all from the Cape region, were made in the months of September, November, December and February. The birds were either fall migrants or sporadic winter visitants.

The surprise of the writer may be imagined, when at dawn on June 13, 1940, he was awakened by the rather loud and often repeated song of a Black and White Warbler coming from a small willow tree beneath which he had spent the night. This was at a locality called Guatay, 5 miles south of the site of Mission San Miguel, or some 18 miles north of Ensenada, Lower California, Mexico.

The writer was unarmed and was obliged to content himself with a day-long visit with this vociferous rarity. The bird spent the greater part of the morning within a hundred feet of camp, where it was seen many times searching for insects over the limbs of the willows in its creeper-like manner. It sang almost continuously until the day became warm about 10 a.m., after which it was heard no more until past midafternoon, when it sang again less volubly. During the sunset hour it moved farther off into the dense willow thickets away from camp and next morning was not heard, although I listened carefully. Apparently it had departed in the night.

The locality of this observation was only about 35 miles from the California border. There are a number of published occurrences of the Black and White Warbler in southern California, but all, as far as the writer is aware, were in the fall or winter months. It is believed, therefore, that the Guatay bird provides the first spring record of this species not only for Lower California but also for the entire area of southern California and Lower California.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *San Diego Society of Natural History, San Diego, California, September 4, 1940.*

Black-crowned Night Heron Nesting in San Bernardino Mountains.—It was with considerable surprise that Mr. W. D. LaNiece and I found a small colony of Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax hoaccli*) nesting in Big Bear Valley, San Bernardino County, California. The