

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

An Unusual Attitude in a Hawk.—In the Ibis for October, 1939 (p. 622), Mr. M. E. W. North records a curious attitude of the Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*). "In February 1937 I watched a bird, perching on a tree, which had a curious habit of raising its tail till this stood vertical, or even sloped in the direction of the back so that its under-side was uppermost." This brought to my recollection that I had seen a similar habit in the White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus majusculus*), when I was studying the species in California in 1923. Under date of August 21, I find in my diary the following note: "A White-tailed Kite is still around; when at rest it frequently elevates the tail almost like a wren." Later I saw a kite with its tail so high over its back that the outline of the bird suggested the letter "V". I sketched this extraordinary attitude (for an accipitrine bird) but cannot find the drawing now. Evidently the habit is an ancestral one. It may be well known to other observers but I cannot recollect seeing it mentioned in any published accounts; in one of these the kite is said to tilt its tail several times in the manner of a Sparrow Hawk, but the pose with the tail elevated almost vertically is nothing like the pumping action of a Sparrow Hawk's tail which is simply a wagging motion to be seen in many birds and in several other species of hawks.—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagan Landing, B. C., March 8, 1943.*

Starling in Western Montana.—The spread of the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) in the United States has recently been discussed by Wing (Auk, 60, 1943:74-87). He states that the first records in a new area are usually of a few winter stragglers. Such was the case of the first birds to come to my attention in western Montana. Five or six were seen in company with a wintering flock of Red-winged and Brewer blackbirds near Corvallis, Ravalli County, on January 25, 1941. I saw the Starlings again at the same locality the following week, but was not able to obtain specimens either time. More recently on November 14, 1942, I shot into a large flock of migrating Red-wings near Round Butte, Lake County, and obtained two Starlings along with several Red-wings. It is likely that there were several more Starlings present in this flock. I have not found recorded instances of the presence of Starlings in western Montana. Starlings were observed in eastern Montana near Billings, which is 300 miles east of the above-mentioned localities, on December 23, 1940, by Louis M. Moos and Donald Graves (Audubon Magazine, 43, 1941:135).—PHILIP L. WRIGHT, *Department of Zoology, Montana State University, Missoula, Montana, February 16, 1943.*

Flight Speed of the Mourning Dove.—On July 18, 1942, while driving between Woodburn and Donald, Oregon, I checked the flight speed of the Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*). The bird jumped off the road in front of the car and flew directly in front of it for more than three-quarters of a mile at a speed of from 30 to 35 miles per hour. It did not seem to be flying with special effort.—FRED G. EVENDEN, JR., *Oregon State College, Corvallis, Oregon, February 15, 1943.*

Speed of Flight of Mourning Doves.—Recent comment on the speed of flight of Mourning Doves (*Zenaidura macroura*) prompts me to record an observation made during a recent trip east. Just east of the Painted Desert, between Holbrook, Arizona, and Gallup, New Mexico, we were paralleled by a pair of flying Mourning Doves as we drove at 43 to 45 miles per hour. These birds flew beside us for well over a mile (noted as "1-2 miles"), finally turning aside. They were therefore flying at this rate for considerable distances, and apparently without any stimulus other than the well known "fixation of the image" which may have led them to fly beside us.—S. C. BROOKS, *Department of Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, California, February 16, 1943.*

Another California Record of the American Redstart.—On September 30, 1942, shortly after 9 a.m., an adult female American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) was found in one of our water traps at Manor, Marin County, California. This particular trap is situated next to the American warblers' aviary which contains several examples of a number of species of this family of birds.

The redstart, upon being removed from the trap, was found to be in a somewhat emaciated condition. Moreover, the bird's upper mandible was considerably shorter in length than the lower one and presented a somewhat shriveled, atrophied appearance.

Because of its comparative rarity on the California list, an effort was made to maintain it alive for the aviary collection. Notwithstanding our painstaking efforts, it succumbed three days later, on October 3.

While some difficulty was experienced in the "breaking-off" process, that is, the weaning of

newly caught insectivorous birds from their natural diet to artificial food, this initial difficulty was successfully overcome. It was noted from the outset, however, that the bird had trouble in picking up its food; the abnormal mandible apparently interfered. Only after making several abortive attempts would the bird succeed in picking up particles of "soft food" supplied it. Maimed insects, such as moths, flies, and small green caterpillars, would also present a problem and while snapped at repeatedly were, for the most part, "nosed" around. Some that were successfully picked up would be rolled around in the mandibles, with the bird apparently making every effort to swallow in the normal way. Some would finally be gulped down, while others would be dropped only to be picked at again and again in what might turn out to be a futile effort to retrieve them.

To minimize this feeding difficulty we finally placed all insects on top of the artificial food. This seemed to help and all during the third day and prior to its death the bird ate freely of not only the maimed insects but also the substitute food. Notwithstanding, we were unable to keep it alive, and it is now specimen no. 58014 in the collection of the California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.

Undoubtedly the deformed bill militated against the free feeding of the bird and produced the emaciation noted at the time of its capture. It might also have been the causative factor which prompted the bird to stray so far from its normal migration route. In captivity it proved comparatively tame for a newly caught bird, another obvious indication of its handicap.—ERIC CAMPBELL KINSEY, *Manor, Marin County, California, February 15, 1943.*

Remains of a Swan from the Miocene of Arizona.—In 1938 L. L. Hargrave forwarded as a gift to the United States National Museum some fragments of fossil bone (cat. no. 15,772) secured one-fourth mile from the Gray Ranch below Wickiup Post Office, Mohave County, Arizona. They came from a Miocene deposit. The largest is nearly one-half of the proximal end of a coracoid that is somewhat crushed and distorted but that can be recognized as belonging to the family Anatidae and to be similar to *Cygnus*. It has the size of the Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) and possibly it may represent an allied species in the genus *Cygnus*. Due to deformation of the head of the bone, however, it does not seem practicable to make a certain generic diagnosis. A smaller fragment comes from lower down on the shaft of the coracoid. Apparently this fragment formed part of the same bone mentioned above.

While it does not seem desirable to give these specimens a name at the present time, they serve to indicate the earliest record for a swan in the fossil beds of our country.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *United States National Museum, Washington, D. C., March 8, 1943.*

Food-washing Habit of the Dipper.—On April 12, 1941, I had the opportunity to watch a pair of Dippers (*Cinclus mexicanus*) feeding young at a nest on the North Fork of the Molalla River, Clackamas County, Oregon. The insects and grubs which the parents brought were washed in the water before being taken to the nest. While food was held crosswise in the bill, the head was twisted rapidly from side to side in the water. After washing the food, the bird flew directly to a ledge below the nest.

The nest was 7½ feet above the water's edge and well hidden in the moss that covered the upper reaches of the bank. It was buried deep in the soil and moss. The opening was low on the side. About 16 inches below this opening was a small ledge on which the parent birds alighted. This ledge and the nest opening were both under an overhanging projection of the bank.—FRED G. EVENDEN, JR., *Oregon State College, Corvallis, Oregon, February 15, 1943.*

White-fronted Goose in Idaho.—On December 6, 1942, one of my students brought me a White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) collected about ten miles north of Pocatello, in Bingham County, Idaho. It was an immature male. Dr. J. W. Aldrich assures me that there is no record of this species for Idaho. It should, therefore, be regarded as a new species for the state.—VICTOR E. JONES, *Southern Branch, University of Idaho, Pocatello, Idaho, March 11, 1943.*

Notes on Three Birds from Lower California.—In the summer of 1928, the late Donald Dickey spent several weeks cruising in the Gulf of California. Many mainland and insular points were touched, although usually not for more than a day or two at a time and often for only a few hours. The primary object of this trip was pleasure; and although Mr. Dickey made voluminous notes, these deal for the most part with fish and fishing, with correspondingly scant attention to birds and mammals. Little collecting was done although a number of specimens were brought home in frozen storage. The following items pertaining to Lower California are of interest.