

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

California Jay Picks Ticks from Mule Deer.—On March 22, 1944, at Potwisha at the junction of the Marble Fork and the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River in Sequoia National Park, California, Dr. C. M. Herman and Donald McLean of the California Division of Fish and Game, Ranger Clarence Fry of the National Park Service and the writer watched a California Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*) alight on the back of a mule deer and hunt for and pick off wood ticks and deer tick flies as the deer fed on green grass under an oak tree. The deer paid not the slightest attention to the bird and seemed to welcome rather than to resent the tick-picking jay, even when it alighted on the deer's neck. A deer is usually quite sensitive about its ears, but not in this instance. According to local people this was a daily occurrence but it was the first time in over 45 years of field experience that I have ever actually seen a California Jay in the act of picking ticks off a deer under natural conditions in the wild. Have other members of the Cooper Club observed this habit in our California Jay? Where? When?—JOSEPH S. DIXON, *United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Berkeley, California, April 25, 1944.*

A New Record of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow in California.—On January 16, 1944, at the Recreation Gun Club near Venice, Los Angeles County, California, my attention was attracted by the bright coloration of a small sparrow which flew from under my feet as I walked along a dike between an old unused duck pond and the salicornia flats. The bird took refuge in an isolated clump of tules (*Scirpus*) at a corner of the dike between the pond, flats, and a weedy field. I "squeaked" and presently the sparrow slid obligingly up a slanting tule stem and remained in my view for some time, while I noted all details of its plumage that I could using 8× binoculars at about 20 feet. Checking in all the books I had available I could make it out to be nothing but a Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammospiza caudocula*).

On January 30, together with Frank G. Watson and Arthur L. Berry, I revisited the locality and found the same or a similar bird near the same spot. Again we noted coloration and markings at close range, including the rich buffy wash over the entire breast, flanks and surrounding the gray cheek, the almost black crown stripes separated by a narrow light gray one, and the short black stripe running horizontally back from above the ear region. On this date also we first obtained a view of the bird's back with its prominent white stripes. We were now quite sure of the bird's identity; but since the only previous records of this species in California, and in fact west of the Rockies, were prior to 1900 (Barlow, Condor, 2, 1900:132), we wanted to check our observation further. Early in February several other amateur ornithologists visited the area and found the bird from our directions; and on February 8, in the same clump of tules as before, Mr. George Willett of the Los Angeles Museum and I found not one, but two birds of this species. Mr. Willett confirmed our identification, saying that the sparrows were one of the prettiest and brightest he had ever seen and that there was no mistaking them.

Both birds were again seen on February 12, 1944, by about ten members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, who watched them feeding on the salicornia flats at high tide, running mouselike over the tangled stalks and apparently eating the seeds. When the area was revisited on February 24 after several days of rain and wind, the sparrows were not found.—HOWARD L. COGSWELL, *Pasadena, California, May 17, 1944.*

Additional Records of Uncommon Birds in Utah.—Behle's recent "Check-list of the Birds of Utah" (Condor, 46, 1944:67-87) has prompted me to place on record a few instances of occurrence of birds within the state of Utah that have come to my attention in the course of field work in recent years. These are offered by way of supplement to the very useful contribution that Dr. Behle has made to Utah ornithology.

Anser albifrons albifrons. White-fronted Goose. A female was taken by the writer at Lehi, Utah County, April 22, 1933. This individual was alone on a shallow pond with several species of ducks.

Geococcyx californianus. Road-runner. One was shot in the foothills of the Wasatch Mountains east of Provo, Utah County, in July, 1932. It was brought to the Brigham Young University in a bad state of decay but the head was saved as an alcoholic specimen. This is undoubtedly an accidental occurrence since it is the only record known to me from this part of the State.

Hylocichla guttata guttata. Alaska Hermit Thrush. A specimen determined by Dr. H. C. Oberholser as this subspecies was taken by D. E. Beck on Pine Valley Mountain, Washington County, October 12, 1935.

Sialia mexicana occidentalis. Western Bluebird. Since records of this species are not too common for Utah, it seems worth while to record a specimen collected by Clarence Cottam at Kigalia Ranger Station, Bear's Ears, Abajo Mountains, San Juan County, June 27, 1927.

Vermivora luciae. Lucy Warbler. A juvenal specimen was taken by J. W. Bee at Calf Creek, Garfield County, July 4, 1938. This appears to extend the known northward distribution of the species.

Guiraca caerulea interfusa. Western Blue Grosbeak. A pair was taken by the writer at Henrieville, Garfield County, September 7, 1937. Local residents state that the species is fairly common in this section in summer.

Poocetes gramineus affinis. Oregon Vesper Sparrow. One specimen taken by F. Atkin at Pan-gitch, Garfield County, August 20, 1934, constitutes the second record for the State.—C. LYNN HAYWARD, *Department of Zoology, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, April 11, 1944.*

Hooded Oriole Nesting in Banana Plant at Beverly Hills, California.—The use as nesting sites of the native California fan palms (*Washingtonia filifera* and *W. robusta*) by the Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*) is well known to bird students. However, the use of the garden-grown non-native banana (*Musa paradisiaca* var. *sapientum*) for that purpose apparently has not been noticed in the literature. The clump of bananas selected for a nest site stood about 15 meters from a house on Canyon Drive in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles County, California, in a protected corner of a backyard garden. Mrs. Verna Mills called attention to a nest between the drooping and sheltering halves of the folded blade of a fully mature leaf of the banana. The nest was constructed entirely of palm fibers brought from veteran washingtonias that form a parkway on Canyon Drive. The palm fibers were sewed into the leaf blade, thereby joining the two halves of the banana leaf together, but the nest was not attached to the sturdy midrib. When in use the nest was entirely concealed within the folds of the untorn leaf. In contrast to the usual choice of a high position in the leaf-crown of fan palms, this nest was but three meters from the ground. It was removed on November 2, 1928, and is now preserved in the nest collection of the University of Colorado Museum. Have other anomalous nesting sites been observed for this oriole? In the light of the fact that abundant sites of much greater comparative safety were so immediately available close by to these orioles, the use of the banana is all the more singular.—J. EWAN, *University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, April 3, 1944.*

Eastern Blue Jay in Idaho.—Because of the lack of published records of the Eastern Blue Jay in Idaho, a positive identification seems worthy of mention. Dr. R. F. Daubenmire of the University of Idaho has allowed me to publish this record. He observed a jay of the species *Cyanocitta cristata* on September 20, 1942, on Moscow Mountain, about seven miles north of Moscow, Latah County, Idaho. "It was alternately picking up something off the ground at the edge of a stubblefield, and flying up in some low ponderosa pine to eat it. We observed the bird closely enough to see the white wing bars, white on tail, and crest on head."—M. DALE ARVEY, *Boise Junior College, Boise, Idaho, April 24, 1944.*

A Flock of Cedar Waxwings Meets Tragedy.—On March 2, 1944, a fine adult male Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) was brought to the zoological laboratory of Fresno State College together with the information that many others of a flock were found dead or dying at the place where it had been obtained in the Holmes City Playgrounds, Fresno, California. Inquiry was promptly made as to the cause of the trouble.

At first thought, death by poisoning was suspected in this multiple destruction. Careful examination and subsequent dissection, however, suggested another cause. It was noted that the mouth of many of the birds held a blood smear while a spot destitute of feathers on the lower throat suggested a possible collision during swift flight. Dissection further strengthened this idea, for the base of the heart was found almost surrounded by heavy blood clot. This condition prevailed to a greater or lesser degree in all the 25 specimens dissected, and it appeared to be due to a rupture of the blood vessels entering or leaving the heart. In many of the more severely injured the clot extended throughout the body cavity.

With these conditions revealed, it seemed more likely that the birds, which often fly swiftly and