

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**A Protracted Incubation Period in the Mourning Dove.**—During the summer of 1942 the writer studied caged White-winged Doves (*Melopelia asiatica*) with the cooperation of Carlos Stannard, of Phoenix, Arizona. A large three-compartment outdoor cage was constructed. In addition to the White-wings under observation we also obtained two pairs of aviary doves to serve as incubators and foster parents for wild White-wing eggs and young. One pair was Ring-necked Doves (*Streptopelia risoria*).

The pair of Ring-necks obtained from a Phoenix aviary immediately set to work and constructed an excellent nest in the space provided; they spent much of each day brooding on the empty nest, and it was soon apparent that both were males.

On June 4 Stannard flushed a female Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*) from a nest in an orange tree containing one egg. Passing to and fro at work he noted that the Mourning Doves did not return to the nest, and on June 7, motivated by idle curiosity, he took the single egg from the nest of the Mourning Dove and placed it in the nest of the male Ring-necks. Both males immediately started to brood the egg, sitting side by side upon the nest all day but deserting the nest at night to roost upon an open perch in the cage.

This procedure continued day after day to our great amusement; we had little thought that anything would result. The egg had not been incubated before its removal to the Ring-neck nest, and night temperatures dropped to as low as 65° and were seldom over 70°.

It was therefore with great surprise that on the evening of June 29 Stannard noticed one of the Ring-necks on the nest at 7:30 p.m., Standard Time. He went out to the cage at 9:00 p.m. to investigate and found the egg hatched, the tiny squab in the nest, but both male doves perched upon the roost. One of the males was placed upon the nest by hand and remained there the rest of the night. Next morning, after feeding, both males clambered onto the nest and in their efforts to brood the tiny youngster they succeeded only in smothering it and killing it.

The normal hatching period for the Mourning Dove in Arizona seems to be 14 or 15 days. Here, however, an egg was unattended in the nest for four days, then for 21 days was incubated under the adverse conditions of brooding by day and exposure by night to temperatures ranging from 65° to 70°; yet from it hatched an apparently normal squab. During field studies on the White-winged Dove in the Phoenix district, the writer had frequently been puzzled by nests in which incubation appeared to be erratic, uncertain, or intermittent, and in which healthy young White-winged Doves were finally found; in other instances incubation continued for several days more than the normal White-wing hatching period. It would seem that plausible explanation may be suggested by the incident herein described.—JOHNSON A. NEFF, *United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Denver, Colorado, May 4, 1944.*

**Black and White Warbler at Berkeley, California.**—On June 5, 1944, I heard a bird singing outside the Life Sciences Building on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley that sounded like the eastern Black and White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) with which I am familiar. Upon investigation it turned out to be this species without any doubt. Dr. A. H. Miller and others from the the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology watched the bird that morning. It remained in the oaks and laurels about the southwest corner of the Life Sciences Building until at least two o'clock in the afternoon.

Only a few records of this species have been reported from California. These have been chiefly in March and April, and September and October. The latest spring record known is May 28, 1887, from the Farallon Islands (W. E. Bryant, Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., ser. 2, 1, 1888:48). From Berkeley there are records for March 18, 1915, March, 1919, and October 3 to 20, 1924 (Storer, Condor, 17, 1915:131; Grinnell and Wythe, Pac. Coast Avif. No. 18, 1927:132).—WADE FOX, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, June 12, 1944.*

**Semipalmated Plover Wintering on San Francisco Bay.**—This is the first winter that I have observed Semipalmated Plovers (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) in Alameda, on the east shore of San Francisco Bay. On January 16, 1944, Mr. Angelo Hewetson of Alameda telephoned me that he had seen 26 Semipalmated Plovers along the shore at Otis Drive and Mound Street. On January 23 he saw 11. On January 30 the two of us counted 17. Mr. Hewetson's other dates are February 5, 19, 24 and March 4 and 5. The greatest number observed at one time was 30 on March 4. On March 1 I saw 24. My next visit to this particular spot was on March 21 when no Semipalmated Plovers were seen. Evidently the wintering birds had left.

The mud flats along Otis drive are not frequented by these birds during the regular spring and fall migration. During the months of January, February, and March they were never seen on local beaches or flats where migrants of this species usually feed. The southern birds began arriving April 1 when I saw one individual; on April 5 there were four birds. Thereafter the birds became more numerous, thirty being seen on April 21.—JUNEA W. KELLY, *Alameda, California, June 21, 1944.*

**A Great Gray Owl Observed in Yosemite National Park.**—On the bright sunny morning of June 23, 1944, at 7400 feet altitude on the west branch of Bridalveil Creek in Yosemite National Park, a large gray owl was seen perched in the top of a small fir tree, less than six feet high, that grew near the center of a very wet meadow. I stopped the car to investigate and the binoculars showed that at a distance of 60 yards in good light this owl had no ear tufts or "horns." The tail of this owl was much longer and more curved than that of a horned owl. When the bird flew the rounded wings and the relatively long tail were conspicuous. The owl alighted in a dead red fir tree where it remained motionless, its streaked grayish brown feathers blending with the dead bark of the tree. Yet it did not escape detection and was soon "mobbed" by several chickadees, kinglets and warblers. The owl made no attempt to fight back but closed its large yellow eyes, pulled in its feathers, and appeared as inoffensive and inconspicuous as possible. This was within less than two miles of the locality where Dr. Joseph Grinnell on June 18, 1915, collected a pair of adult Great Gray Owls (*Scotiaptex nebulosa nebulosa*) which are now nos. 25534 and 25535 in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.—JOSEPH S. DIXON, *United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Berkeley, California, June 29, 1944.*

**The Gray Vireo as a Victim of the Cowbird.**—A nest of the Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*) was located on May 28, 1944, in the Cajon Pass area northwest of San Bernardino, California. The nest was six feet up from the ground near the end of a limb of a piñon tree and was suspended from two twigs on separate branches of the limb. This is only the second record that I have for nests in piñons, although I have observed these birds building nests in several different kinds of shrubs in San Bernardino County. A visit was again made to the site on June 4, in company with Fred Frazer, for the purpose of taking some photographs and I then found that the nest contained two eggs of the vireo and one of the Dwarf Cowbird (*Molothrus ater obscurus*). I remained at the site for some time after taking the photographs and making other observations, but the vireos did not come to the nest. Since the nest was somewhat disturbed and the eggs cold, I concluded that the owners had deserted it.

It is believed that this is the first record of the Gray Vireo as a victim of the Cowbird (see Friedmann, *Auk*, 60, 1943:350-356 and cited references).

During the past fifteen years it has seemed to me that most of the nests started by this vireo come to some unhappy end, often before the eggs are placed in them; at other times the eggs are destroyed, and in at least one case one egg was removed from a nest. This damage has been blamed on rats, chipmunks, California Jays, or reptiles, but it now seems probable that the Cowbird should receive at least a part of the blame. Since the Gray Vireo often perches on the top of brush or yuccas it is conspicuous, except for its somber color. With loud, repeated calls it flies to its nesting site. We may thus expect that Cowbirds would have no trouble in finding nests of this species.

The eggs from the nest reported above weighed 1.99 and 1.73 grams, respectively, and were more heavily marked than usual. I have found the average weight of thirty-six eggs of the Gray Vireo to be 1.94 grams, with a range from 1.57 to 2.32 grams. The number of eggs in clutches that I feel certain were not disturbed has ranged from three to four, with an average of 3.55.

The weight of the egg of the Cowbird in this nest was 2.42 grams, a little larger than the average of 2.26 grams which I have determined by weighing 112 eggs, but it is well within the range of 1.65 to 3.03 grams.—WILSON C. HANNA, *Colton, California, June 4, 1944.*

**Records of the Paroquet Auklet and the Pacific Fulmar for Marin County, California.**—Although the Paroquet Auklet (*Cyclorhynchus psittacula*) is probably a regular winter visitant off the California coast, published data are sufficiently scarce to warrant recording a specimen from Marin County, California. On April 9, 1944, I found a bird of this species on the ocean beach near the high-tide mark at the town of Stinson Beach. Although the flesh was practically gone, the skeleton and most of the plumage, including the postocular plumes, were intact. A small patch of oil on one side of the breast was the only clue as to the cause of death. As far as I have been able to determine this is the first time the Paroquet Auklet has been recorded in Marin County.

On the same day along the sand spit between Stinson Beach and the inlet to Bolinas Lagoon, remains of three Pacific Fulmars (*Fulmarus glacialis rodgersii*) were found. The auklet and one of the fulmars have been preserved as skeletons in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.—ROBERT W. STORER, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, July 18, 1944.*