

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**California Condors in San Luis Obispo County, California.**—On June 14, 1944, in the course of road-improvement operations on the Cholame Ranch about eight miles west of the north-east corner of San Luis Obispo County, the writer had the good fortune to see a flock of twenty California Condors (*Gymnogyps californianus*). I had pointed out a condor with its white wing patches to one of a road crew two or three years ago. When I arrived this morning, he said, "There are three of your condors." As we worked farther up the road, more and more condors appeared until there were twenty in the air circling above us.

They had been feeding on a carcass about two hundred feet west of the road, and the noise of road-grader engines frightened them away. After the graders had passed, the birds returned and I counted them again as they came in to the field. I was close enough to see the feathers at the tips of their wings bend up three or four inches from the air pressure just before they landed.

A few Turkey Vultures had also been attracted to the food, but these appeared small by comparison, and kept well out of the way of the condors. While tearing at the dead animal, the condors kept their balance by raising and partly extending their wings.—HALBERT T. JOHNSON, *Paso Robles, California, October 3, 1944.*

**Notes on Raptors of the Boulder Area, Colorado.**—The following observations were made in the period from September, 1941, to September, 1943.

*Haliaeetus leucocephalus* ssp.? Bald Eagle. The occurrence of the Bald Eagle along the Front Range in Colorado and its possible nesting there is of great interest to observers in that state. Several recent authors agree that it is a rare transient and winter resident in Colorado, although the following records would tend to indicate that it is much more frequent than was formerly thought.

On January 10, 1942, a single adult soared over the hills just south of the mouth of Lefthand Canyon, seven miles north of Boulder. On January 25, 1942, a single adult male (no. 4124, Univ. of Colo. Mus.) was shot four miles east of Boulder. On March 8, 1942, a large adult flew north by north-west along the palisades of Lefthand Canyon. On December 16, 1942, an immature bird was seen soaring south over South St. Vrain Canyon about three miles southwest of Lyons. On February 14, 1943, in Spruce Canyon, just below Fairview Peak, three miles west of Altoona, an adult was watched as it soared north at about 3 p.m., and at 3:20 p.m. a second bird, which was thought to be an immature Bald Eagle, was seen flying north at the same place as the first. On February 21, 1943, an adult Bald Eagle was attacked as it soared northward by the male of a pair of Golden Eagles nesting in Twomile Canyon. On March 10, 1943, an adult passed along the east face of the Dakota hogback at Twomile Canyon just north of Boulder. On March 21, 1943, two adults were observed as they left a patch of cottonwoods on the shore of Welch Reservoir, about four miles northwest of Berthoud. No nest was found but circumstantial evidence would indicate the nesting of this species in the Buckhorn Creek drainage. Unfortunately, it was not possible to investigate the various rumors of nesting.

*Tyto alba pratincola*. Barn Owl. In his recent list of additions to the birds of Boulder County, Alexander (Condor, 46, 1944:36) states that "the status of the Barn Owl in this region is somewhat uncertain. Although there is little evidence for nesting, the bird has been considered a possible resident." On November 27, 1941, a young Barn Owl was found dead at the foot of the cliff making up "White Rocks" about seven miles east of Boulder. This owl was about six weeks old and could not have flown any great distance. Pellets and excrement indicated the long residence of this species. Shortly after the finding of this first specimen, an adult male was found dead at the same location. The following year, 1942, fresh pellets of this species were observed. The discovery of this young owl establishes the breeding of this species at "White Rocks," and provides another record of very late nesting in this species (see Walker, Migrant, 4, 1943:80).

The Barn Owl is of regular occurrence in the Pawnee Buttes and Chalk Bluffs area of north-eastern Colorado, and the finding of a molted feather in the hogback area north of Boulder would indicate its occurrence there. This owl should be considered as a scarce resident on the plains up to the foothills, with centers of abundance in the dry bluff areas of eastern Colorado.

*Asio flammeus flammeus*. Short-eared Owl. The following observations provide some evidence of the sporadic occurrence of this species. Niedrach and Rockwell (Birds of Denver and Mountain Parks, Denver, 1939:96) speak of the Short-eared Owl as a winter visitor in the Denver area, and Alexander (Univ. Colo. Studies, 24, 1937:94) writes as follows: "infrequent; plains and foothills; considered a winter visitant by Betts [Univ. Colo. Studies, 10, 1913:196, two fall and three spring

records], but probably is a resident." According to Bergtold (A Guide to the Birds of Colorado, 1928:109), upon whose account Alexander bases his statement, the Short-eared Owl is a "frequent resident; mostly on plains but also up to 8000 feet; . . . most common in northern Colorado in summer." The basis for this statement is open to question; in any event field observations would indicate that the Short-eared Owl is at best a rare or only sporadic resident in northeastern Colorado. On June 10, 1942, Short-eared Owls were seen in three separate localities in the area north and northeast of Fort Collins, Colorado. The first group, an adult with several nearly grown young, was flushed from a roadside ditch near the main highway between Fort Collins and Cheyenne about 15 miles north of Fort Collins. As we proceeded toward Fort Collins, going first some distance to the east, other adults were seen perched on fence posts. The last bird was observed about five miles northeast of Fort Collins. It appeared that in this area, at least, the owls were fairly abundant. In 1943 this general area was visited on three occasions, but no owls were noted.

It is possible that during certain periods the Short-eared Owl may nest as far south as Boulder County, but until breeding birds are actually observed it should be listed from there only as an infrequent winter resident.—MALCOLM T. JOLLIE, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, December 20, 1944.*

**Diving Habits of the Shoveller Duck.**—Shoal-water or river ducks of the subfamily Anatinae normally obtain their food on land, on the surface of the water, or by tipping. Rarely are surface feeders found diving for food, although they experience no difficulty in diving to evade enemies during the period of molt and when crippled.

On September 21 and 22, 1942, at a small pond on the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, some 10 miles south of San Antonio, New Mexico, the writer observed three to five male Shovellers (*Spatula clypeata*) repeatedly diving for food. The pool was 2 to 3 feet deep and had been formed by a washout during a serious flood down the Rio Grande River. The dives were clean-cut actions; the birds disappeared completely under the water and submerged for several seconds at each dive. Furthermore, the diving seemed to be a concerted action, that is, if one Shoveller dived, the others did so immediately. This abnormal feeding habit was probably the result of insufficient surface food in the particular section of the country where the birds were accustomed to feed; consequently, they had learned to dive for their food.

On a number of occasions the writer has seen Black Ducks and Mallards dive—in a protected area that had been baited—for wheat or corn placed 2 to 4 feet in the water.—CLARENCE COTTAM, *United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago, Illinois, November 13, 1944.*

**Foster Parentage of a Mourning Dove in the Wild.**—Adoption or foster parentage among birds in the wild apparently is not a common occurrence. There are relatively few instances recorded in the literature, and most of these appear to concern adoption of a juvenile after it has left the nest in which it was hatched; in one such case reported by the writer (Bird-Lore, 28, 1926:334), a towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) cared for a juvenal cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) which had been hatched in the nest of an Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*).

An interesting case of adoption was observed in 1941 by Lee W. Arnold of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Arnold and the writer were studying the life history of the White-winged Dove (*Melopelia asiatica*) in the big mesquite thicket on the Gila River Indian Reservation south of Komatke, Arizona. A blind had been set up near a nest containing two squabs about three days old, and at 5:14 a.m., sun-time, on August 12, 1941, Arnold entered the blind for the purpose of obtaining a full day's record of the care of the young doves. The adult female flushed from the nest at his approach and another adult flushed from the same tree; the female returned to the tree at 5:22 and to the nest at 5:35. At 5:52 another adult perched briefly in the tree, but after that hour no other White-wing entered the tree during the day.

At 7:34 a.m., about the normal hour for the adults to make their regular exchange in parental duties, the brooding female became restless and suddenly left the nest and flew from sight. From that hour until 4:36 p.m., sun-time, no adult White-wing appeared near the nest, though at intervals it was in full sunlight. Several species of birds inspected the nest and young doves during the day, but none attempted to harm them.

At 3:11 p.m., a Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*), apparently attracted by the peeping of the hungry youngsters, alighted near the nest and inspected the young White-wings, then walked to the nest and immediately began to brood them. From 3:13 to 3:50, the Mourning Dove fed the young White-wings several times and continued to brood them.