

British Columbian population of the Clay-colored Sparrow may be derived from around the northern end of the Rocky Mountain mass and thence east from the Canadian parklands and plains, the metropolis of this species. It is noteworthy that in the Peace River district, through which the Clay-colored Sparrow would probably have entered British Columbia if this hypothesis is correct, this species is "the most abundant sparrow" (Cowan, Occ. Papers Brit. Col. Prov. Mus., No. 1, 1939:15). Elsewhere, however, the records suggest sparse and local distribution; in a report on the Cariboo district, for example, Munro (Can. Jour. Res., ser. D, 23, 1945:91) could only cite Brooks' earlier records. Observations on date of spring arrival at the several localities mentioned here can throw light on the question of source and spread of the species.

Thus, according to present information, *Spizella pallida* occurs commonly in the Peace River district of east-central British Columbia and locally, perhaps only sporadically, west to Bulkley Lake and south to the Okanagan region. Some British Columbian records of *Spizella pallida* may have been overlooked in the preparation of this note, but I have attempted only to report unpublished records and to point out that these, together with other recent records, are adequate basis for the inclusion of interior British Columbia in the normal range of the species.

Mrs. Marjorie Brooks and Allan Cecil Brooks generously permitted me to extract notes from Major Brooks' personally annotated copy of the British Columbian list. Mr. Kenneth E. Racey of Vancouver, British Columbia, kindly showed me three specimens of *Spizella pallida* which he obtained at Dawson Creek. Through discussion with Dr. I. McT. Cowan of the University of British Columbia, the possible northern derivation of the Okanagan population was suggested.—FRANK A. PITELKA, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, March 10, 1947.*

Offshore Records of Mourning Dove and Hermit Warbler from Baja California.—

While I was in the Navy, our ship operated frequently out of San Diego, California, usually southward along the Lower Californian coast. On May 8, 1946, three Mourning Doves (*Zenaidura macroura*) came aboard. Our position at that time was roughly 60 miles due west of Ensenada, Baja California. The nearest land was probably the Coronados Islands, at least 50 miles northeast of us. One dove disappeared, but the remaining two stayed with us until our return to San Diego at the end of the week. They finally left the ship when we were about two miles from Point Loma, flying low over the water straight toward it.

On May 9 a Hermit Warbler (*Dendroica occidentalis*) was found dead on deck in the morning, when we were still in the same area, 60 miles west of Ensenada.—ARYAN I. ROEST, *Corvallis, Oregon, February 13, 1947.*

Starling in British Columbia.—On January 15, 1947, Mr. A. J. Braun collected four Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) from a flock of eight which appeared in the vicinity of Oliver, a village in the Okanagan Valley 15 miles north of the international boundary. The four specimens were mounted, and I recently have examined one of them, an adult sexed as a male. There are earlier but unconfirmed reports of Starlings seen in the Cariboo Parklands, at Williams Lake and at Alkali Lake; but so far as I am aware, the Oliver specimens are the first taken in British Columbia.—J. A. MUNRO, *Okanagan Landing, B.C., February 4, 1947.*

Frigate Birds and the Laysan Rail.—Baldwin's (Condor, 49, 1947:14-21) account of the Laysan Rail (*Porzana palmeri*) is interesting to me as I had the pleasure of participating in the Bishop Museum "Tanager" Expedition to Midway and Laysan islands in 1923. It is my impression that a Frigate Bird (*op. cit.*:16) cannot catch any animal that would try to escape by dodging. I believe that the rails could have escaped an attack by dodging. As for Dill's statement that a Frigate Bird picked up full grown rabbits, I would like to hear that this observation has been repeated. Mr. Lewis W. Walker of the San Diego Society of Natural History has experimented with the weight-lifting ability of the large birds of prey and found that their lifting power is very small. The Frigate Bird, according to my memory, does not weigh more than a full grown rabbit—of the size that I saw and killed on Laysan—and I doubt very much that a Frigate Bird could lift a half grown individual or that a rabbit in good health could be caught by a Frigate Bird. One tale, that a Frigate Bird cannot rise from the water, I disproved by taking a Frigate Bird into the water where I held it submerged all but the head. Upon releasing the bird, it rose clear with one down stroke of the wings.

We did not find any fresh water on Wake Island where rails were numerous, which would make it appear that the Wake Island rail can subsist without water (*op. cit.*:19). On the other hand there was permanent water on Laysan and Midway, where some faucets were always left dripping for the canaries, finches and rails. We brought a few rails back to Laysan and liberated them, but they apparently did not find the fresh-water "spring," as we found them all dead along the shore of the lagoon. I believe the Laysan Rail needed fresh water and that its introduction to a waterless island was a foredoomed failure.—CHAPMAN GRANT, *San Diego, California, February 10, 1947.*