

bridge, Massachusetts, JOHN SEDDON WESKE, *Department of Conservation, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York*, and ROGER B. CLAPP, *Newton, Connecticut*, June 7, 1963.

Bird Notes from Southeastern Alaska.—During the period February 24 to June 30, 1962, I was assigned to work at the Petersburg Experimental Fur Station, Petersburg, Alaska, on a study of effects of DDT on the Bald Eagle. I spent much time at or near this station and spent some time daily making general bird observations. Some observations supplement information given in Gabrielson and Lincoln's (1959) "Birds of Alaska" and appear to be worthy of record.

Petersburg is located on the northern end of Mitkof Island in southeastern Alaska. The island is bordered on its western side by Wrangell Narrows and is roughly bisected by Blind Slough and Blind River. A public road extends about 30 miles along the edge of the island beside Wrangell Narrows and Blind Slough, the water being within good view of the road in many places. Most field work was done near this road.

Specimens needed to support identifications were collected whenever feasible, but it was not possible to collect some that were desired. Those collected were deposited in the collection of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife at the United States National Museum. Subspecies identifications were made by Roxie C. Laybourne.

Falco sparverius. Sparrow Hawk. A Sparrow Hawk was observed on a sparsely tree-covered muskeg area near Blind Slough on March 27 and again at the same place on April 10. The bird remained perched on top of a dead tree about 20 feet from the ground until I walked directly beneath it, close enough to see its rufous tail. The observation on March 27 was a month earlier than the earliest previous record for Alaska, and it seems probable that this bird wintered in the area.

Lanius excubitor. Northern Shrike. On April 6, a shrike was seen flying across Wrangell Narrows from Kupreanof Island. It lit on a telephone wire in Petersburg, and I was able to drive to within about 30 feet of it and to observe it for several minutes before it returned to Kupreanof Island. The latest spring record for southeastern Alaska reported by Gabrielson and Lincoln was March 5.

Dendroica coronata. Myrtle Warbler. The Myrtle Warbler was first observed on April 18, 11 days earlier than the previous earliest date for Alaska. On June 22, five birds were seen at three sites on sparsely tree-covered muskeg areas; the birds were gathering and carrying food at two sites and so presumably were breeding birds. Gabrielson and Lincoln reported three possible breeding records of Myrtle Warblers in southeastern Alaska.

Dendroica townsendi. Townsend Warbler. The Townsend Warbler was first observed on April 18, nine days earlier than the previous earliest date for Alaska. On June 30, a female was observed gathering food at the Petersburg Experimental Fur Station. This was presumably a breeding bird. The Townsend Warbler has previously been observed in southeastern Alaska during the breeding season.

Molothrus ater. Brown-headed Cowbird. On May 18, a female Brown-headed Cowbird was collected at the Petersburg Experimental Fur Station, and another female was seen at the same site on the following day. A male Brown-headed Cowbird was observed on June 16 in Petersburg as it followed a Starling to its nest. The Starling was carrying food to young in the nest and soon left the nest, closely followed by the cowbird. The specimen taken is the first record of the Brown-headed Cowbird in Alaska, and it was identified as *M. a. ater*. This bird was far beyond the limits of its usual range, for, according to the 5th edition of the A.O.U. Check-list, the northwestern limit of the range of *M. a. ater* is eastern Minnesota. The race *M. a. artemisiae* is more to be expected than *M. a. ater* since it ranges north and west to northeastern British Columbia.

Piranga ludoviciana. Western Tanager. On June 13, a male was observed at the Petersburg Experimental Fur Station. This is the third record for Alaska and the second record for southeastern Alaska. The presence of the Western Tanager in southeastern Alaska was to be expected, however, as the bird regularly occurs in northwestern British Columbia.

Sturnus vulgaris. Starling. A maximum of 53 Starlings was observed in and near Petersburg during March; the birds apparently fed chiefly at or near the town dump. Nine nests were located before my departure from Petersburg. Five of the nine were beneath the eaves of a large building occupied by the Petersburg Cold Storage Company; four were in cavities of trees. On June 6, a male was collected when it was feeding young in a nest near the town dump. The Starling was first observed in Alaska on April 18, 1952 (Kessel, Condor, 55, 1953:65). There appears to be no earlier published breeding record of the Starling for Alaska.

Passerculus sandwichensis. Savannah Sparrow. On June 15, a male was collected on a muskeg area near Petersburg. A Savannah Sparrow had been observed singing at the same site on the two days before collecting, and a second bird, presumably a female, was also observed several times. The date of observation and the fact that two birds were present suggests that nesting was in progress. This bird was identified as *P. s. nevadensis*, a race not previously recorded in Alaska. According to the 5th edition of the A.O.U. Check-list, its range extends northward and westward to northeastern British Columbia.

Another Savannah Sparrow was taken on May 14 at the Petersburg dump. This bird was identified as *P. s. crassus*, which, according to Gabrielson and Lincoln, is the common breeding Savannah Sparrow on the islands and mainland in the area southward from Juneau and Chichagof Island to the Queen Charlotte Islands.

I am indebted to I. N. Gabrielson, Brina Kessel and Tarleton Smith for critical readings of the manuscript and for helpful suggestions. I am indebted to Harry Merriam for aid in the field work and to James R. Leekley for courtesies extended in connection with my observations at the Petersburg Fur Farm.—PAUL A. STEWART, *Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland, May 6, 1963.*

An Experiment on a Flammulated Owl.—A Flammulated Owl (*Otus flammeolus*), currently in residence at the San Diego Zoo, was subjected to an experiment to determine whether it would undergo torpidity.

This owl was donated to the San Diego Zoo on October 10, 1962, by members of the crew of the U.S.S. "Tulare" (AKA-112). Through the courtesy of Capt. D. B. Ramage, commanding officer, and Lt. (JG) D. R. Timm, who secured the bird, I am able to report the following details. The ship had been in port in San Diego, San Diego County, California, for at least a week prior to the morning of October 9. After a day's voyage extending to about 30 miles due west of San Diego, the ship berthed at about 4:00 p.m. at the United States Naval Repair Facility in San Diego. The owl was first noticed at about 8:30 a.m. on October 10. It was easily captured by Lt. Timm, who noted that it made almost no effort to escape from his hands. The bird's relative inactivity led Lt. Timm to believe that it was "sick, old or exhausted." This quietness on the part of a small owl in broad daylight, however, is probably normal behavior.

The circumstances related above suggest that the owl probably found its way to the ship during the night of October 9-10. It is unlikely that it would have been present but unnoticed for the preceding week, or that it would have reached the ship at sea. At any rate, the Flammulated Owl has never before been recorded along the coast line of California. The localities nearest to San Diego from which records of the species are available are the San Bernardino Mountains, San Bernardino County, approximately 100 miles to the northeast, and Mount Pinos, Ventura County, some 200 miles to the northwest (Grinnell and Miller, *Pac. Coast Avif.* No. 27, 1944:189-190).

In a discussion of the supposed migratory status of the Flammulated Owl, Johnson (Wilson Bull., 75, 1963:174-178) suggested that this species might undergo periods of torpidity in the winter. To test this possibility, Mr. K. C. Lint, Curator of Birds at the San Diego Zoo, made available to me the bird that had been captured on the "Tulare." The bird was borrowed on the morning of March 5, 1963, 48 hours after its last feeding. It was placed in a refrigerator which maintained a fairly constant temperature of 40° F. (plus or minus one degree). On the morning of March 7 it was removed from the refrigerator, still awake and alert. The bird had been checked several times during the 48-hour period of refrigeration, but nothing was observed that would suggest torpidity.

The negative results of this single experiment should not be interpreted as entirely disproving Johnson's suggestion. This experiment was done on a bird which was obviously a migrant; if there is a polymorphism in either a tendency to migrate or a tendency to become torpid, a migrant bird would be the least suitable subject for an experiment of the nature of this one. Also, it may be that a longer period of starvation, a longer period of refrigeration, or a lower temperature would be necessary to induce torpidity in this species, if it occurs.

In addition to the persons mentioned above, I wish to express my appreciation to Drs. Thomas R. Howell and George A. Bartholomew for their comments on the experimental procedure.—RICHARD C. BANKS, *Natural History Museum, San Diego, California, June 1, 1963.*