

There have been three specimens of the Laysan Albatross collected within 100 miles of the California coast. These are cited by Stager (Condor, 60, 1958:404) and were taken on April 5, 1909, December 6, 1949, and February 6, 1958. In addition, McHugh (Condor, 52, 1950:154) reported the observation of two birds on March 15, 1949, several miles west of San Miguel Island; he also cites other records from spring at greater distances from shore and mentions, without documentation, the presence of this species off northern Baja California, and off southern and northern California and Oregon.

These occurrences of Laysan Albatrosses are difficult to relate to changes in ocean currents, food supply or other environmental factors. However, with respect to the new observations reported here, it is worth noting that in 1957-58 there was a warming of the ocean waters along the California coast which resulted in the northward movement of certain fish species (Radovich, Calif. Dept. Fish and Game, Fish Bull. No. 112, 1961). This may have influenced the distribution of the albatross in 1958. However, no suggestive correlation of this kind is possible for 1949, a year in which several records of this species were obtained.

Despite the possible change in environmental conditions and the fact that the absence of reports from other months may be a result of inadequate observations, it seems significant that all existing records of the Laysan Albatross close to the California shore have been obtained between December and April. Therefore, from the data available at this time, it is suggested that the Laysan Albatross may be a regular visitor in pelagic waters near the California coast in late winter and early spring.

TABLE 1
OBSERVATIONS OF LAYSAN ALBATROSS OFF CALIFORNIA COAST

Date	Position of ship		Date	Position of ship	
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
Feb. 8	37° 47' N,	123° 18' W	Mar. 3	37° 02' N,	122° 36' W
13	36° 24' N,	122° 18' W	24	36° 42' N,	122° 50' W
15	37° 44' N,	123° 12' W	25	36° 39' N,	122° 30' W
16	37° 53' N,	123° 49' W	29	36° 48' N,	123° 07' W
27	35° 55' N,	122° 09' W	29	39° 03' N,	123° 09' W
27	36° 11' N,	122° 16' W			

Acknowledgments are made to C. Fiscus and F. Wilke of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, whose help and encouragement in making the field observations is greatly appreciated.—RICHARD T. HOLMES, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, September 30, 1963.*

Chestnut-sided Warbler in Southern California.—In the early evening of October 2, 1962, I observed and collected an unusual warbler at Old Mission San Luis Rey, located four miles east of Oceanside, California. I prepared the specimen and tentatively labeled it a Chestnut-sided Warbler, *Dendroica pensylvanica*. The specimen was a female, the ovary measuring 2.0×4.2 mm. Incomplete skull ossification indicated it was a bird of the year. The warbler weighed 10.2 gm., having a very heavy deposit of subcutaneous fat. It had been feeding on leafhoppers of the family Jassidae. The skin was sent to Alden H. Miller, who confirmed my initial identification. It is now deposited in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology (specimen no. 150003).

An examination of published material (Bowman, Condor, 63, 1961:410) indicates this is the fifth record for California and the second for the southern part of the state. Another female, of unknown age, was taken in Imperial County (Cardiff and Cardiff, Condor, 55, 1953:217).—FR. AMADEO MICHAEL REA, *San Luis Rey College, San Luis Rey, California, October 8, 1963.*

Nesting of the Crane Hawk in Surinam.—The Crane Hawk (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) inhabits the mangrove forests along the coast of Surinam. It is found near water in light forests and in cultivated areas about the coffee plantations. Very little is known of its breeding habits and the only description of its nest and eggs has been that of Hewitt (Oologists' Record, 17, 1937:12), who reported a nest found on March 13, 1936, in the Río Orinoco district of Venezuela, which contained a single, white, unmarked egg measuring 47.5×38.5 mm. Sutton (Wilson Bull., 66, 1954:241) has described four nests of the Black Crane Hawk (*Geranospiza nigra*) which were found in Sonora,

México. This hawk is considered by Hellmayr and Conover (Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Zool. Ser., 13, pt. 1, no. 4, 1949:228) to be conspecific with *caerulescens*, but Peters (Birds of the World, vol. I, 1931), Friedmann (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 50, pt. XI, 1950), and Friedmann, Griscom, and Moore in Part I of the Mexican Check-list (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 29, 1950) treat it as a separate species.

Five nests of the Crane Hawk were located in shade trees (*Erythrina* sp.) on the coffee plantation of Mr. T. Renssen. The plantation is on the right bank of the Surinam River, a few miles upstream from Paramaribo. The first nest was found on May 31, 1963. When the climber reached the nest, the parent birds dived at him, uttering a call resembling that of the Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*). The nest, a cup of sticks lined with smaller sticks, was about 12 meters above the ground and was placed on an orchid plant. This nest contained one nestling and one addled egg. The nestling was covered with white down and was sprouting dark gray feathers. The iris of the young hawk was orange (red in adults), its bill and cere were black, and its legs and feet were pale orange (orange-red to pale red in adults) with black nails. The nestling called constantly; its note was somewhat weaker than that of its parents. This nestling is now specimen no. 6053 in the Leiden Museum at Leiden, The Netherlands. The addled egg, which measured 45.8 x 35.9, was white and unmarked. It resembled that of the harriers (*Circus*).

The second nest, found on July 30, 1963, was on a side branch of a shade tree at a height of about 12 meters. It contained two fresh eggs, white and unmarked, which measured 46 x 39.5 mm. and 47.5 x 39.4 mm. The eggs each weighed 38 gm. The person who climbed up to the nest was harassed by the parent birds.

The third nest was found amidst creepers in a shade tree on July 31, 1963. It was at a height of about 20 meters. Mr. Renssen observed one bird arriving at the nest with a lizard. The sitting bird rose, grasped the lizard from its mate and flew off. Then the bird that had brought the lizard settled down on the nest. Thus it appears that both sexes take part in incubation. I first saw this nest on August 17. It was extremely well hidden in the creepers and was almost invisible from the ground. I was present on September 4 when its contents were examined. When the climber reached the nest, one of the parent birds circled low above him, calling constantly, and at last it alighted on the top of a nearby shade tree. The nest contained a single nestling that was covered with white down sprouting dark gray feathers. As in the nestling found on May 31, the iris of this young



Fig. 1. Nestling of the Crane Hawk (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) photographed near Paramaribo, Surinam, September 4, 1963. Note the extremely long legs.

hawk was orange and its legs and feet were orange with black nails. Its bill and cere were black. The extremely long legs, which are characteristic of *Geranospiza*, are shown in figure 1. This nestling is now specimen no. 6234 in the Leiden Museum.

The fourth nest was found on September 3, 1963, and was on an orchid in a shade tree at a height of about 20 meters from the ground. This nest contained two incubated eggs which were white and unmarked. They measured 47.9 x 38.8 mm. and 48 x 39.6 mm.

The fifth nest, found on September 21, 1963, was in a fork of a shade tree. This nest was at a considerable height from the ground and was well hidden. Like the other nests it was discovered because the parent birds flew around calling constantly. The nest contained one fresh egg, white and unmarked, which measured 50 x 39.9 mm. and weighed 44 gm.

My six eggs average smaller in size than the six eggs of *G. nigra* mentioned by Sutton (*op. cit.*).

The nesting season of the Crane Hawk in Surinam seems to be rather extended for nests have been found from May until the end of September.—F. HAVERSCHMIDT, *Paramaribo, Surinam, October 1, 1963.*

Light Sensitivity and the Function of the Nictitating Membrane in a Nocturnal Owl.—

The vast literature treating the strigiform eye falls well short of providing a clear explanation of the use of the nictitating membrane. In an abortive attempt to explain what is now accepted as parallax localization in birds, Dunlap and Mowrer (*Jour. Comp. Psychol.*, 11, 1930:99–113) seem to be the first to have suggested the use of the nictitans in protection against intense light. Friedmann (*Jour. Comp. Psychol.*, 14, 1932:55–61) cites this reference and goes on to suggest that the habit of nocturnally oriented species of owls of sitting with their nictitans closed when exposed to bright sunlight would support this theory. He does not, however, provide any experimental evidence, and he bases his conclusions on field observations which he admits are "rather crude." Austin (*Birds of the World*, 1961:155) accepts this theory, but the scope of his book would give me reason to believe that he is following the literature in which, however, I am nowhere able to find conclusive evidence for this function.

Observations which I have made on a hand-reared Barn Owl (*Tyto alba glaucops*) from Hispaniola suggest that the nictitating membrane in this species plays no significant role in light shielding. Taken from its nest when just a few days old (estimated 5–6), this bird of unknown sex has been kept in a normally lighted house subject to the normal photoperiod for Cambridge, Massachusetts. When 9 to 10 weeks old, the bird was taken outdoors on bright sunny days at which time no noticeable effort was made on the owl's part to protect its eyes from the intense rays of the sun. It is true that the bird did not look directly at the sun, never coming closer than an estimated 30 degrees to either side, but this behavior would be expected of most vertebrates exhibiting a wide range in retinal components. All subsequent ventures outdoors with this owl gave similar results.

Even more indicative are observations made indoors on various occasions when this bird was seen perched on top of household lampshades peering directly into lighted electric bulbs. This behavior was observed several times between the time when the owl was 22 weeks of age and the present time (now 46 weeks old), and never was he seen to close his nictitating membranes under these circumstances, except in normal blinking. Such instances involved his staring directly into 100- and 150-watt, frosted light bulbs at a focal distance of less than one foot for a period of not less than 5 seconds.

In order clearly to substantiate these observations a test was made in which an unshaded 100-watt, 120-volt, frosted Westinghouse light bulb was waved directly in front of the owl's face at a distance of less than 12 inches for a period of 15 seconds. This test could have been run for a longer time duration, but there seemed little point to it. Immediately following the test the bird was encouraged to leave its perch. It flew unhesitatingly to another perch across the room and landed without difficulty. During the actual test itself, the owl stared inquisitively at the light without pause and neither blinked nor used his nictitans in any other fashion during the 15-second period. The subsequent flight and landing were made in what appeared to be a perfectly normal manner indicating not even a temporary loss of sight from the light.

Friedmann's observations on owls resting while exposed to sunlight are no doubt valid but are of no intrinsic value here. This same Barn Owl, which was exposed to natural and artificial light