

THE WILSON BULLETIN

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ORNITHOLOGY

VOL. XXXIV

SEPTEMBER, 1922

NO. 3

OLD SERIES VOL. XXXIV. NEW SERIES VOL. XXIX

NESTING BIRDS OF LAKE COUNTY, OREGON

(With Special Reference to Warner Valley)

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Lake County, Oregon, as its name implies, is a county of lakes, but this article has special reference to that portion of the county known as Warner Valley.

Warner Valley lies in the southeastern portion of Lake county and contains a series of lakes known as Warner Lakes.

The territory covered in my investigations of the bird life of this section comprises the valley from a few miles north of Plush to the lower or south end, a distance of some 36 miles.

The valley proper is from five to eight miles wide and covering about 180 square miles.

In this valley, beginning at the north, are found the following lakes: Hart, Crump, Pelican, Dodson, Greeser, and Alkali Lakes.

All are freshwater lakes, except Alkali, and are fed by Honey Creek at Plush, Deep Creek at Adel, and Twenty Mile Creek in the southwest corner.

The major portion of the entire valley is flooded in the early season by irrigation ditches, to mature the crop of wild hay.

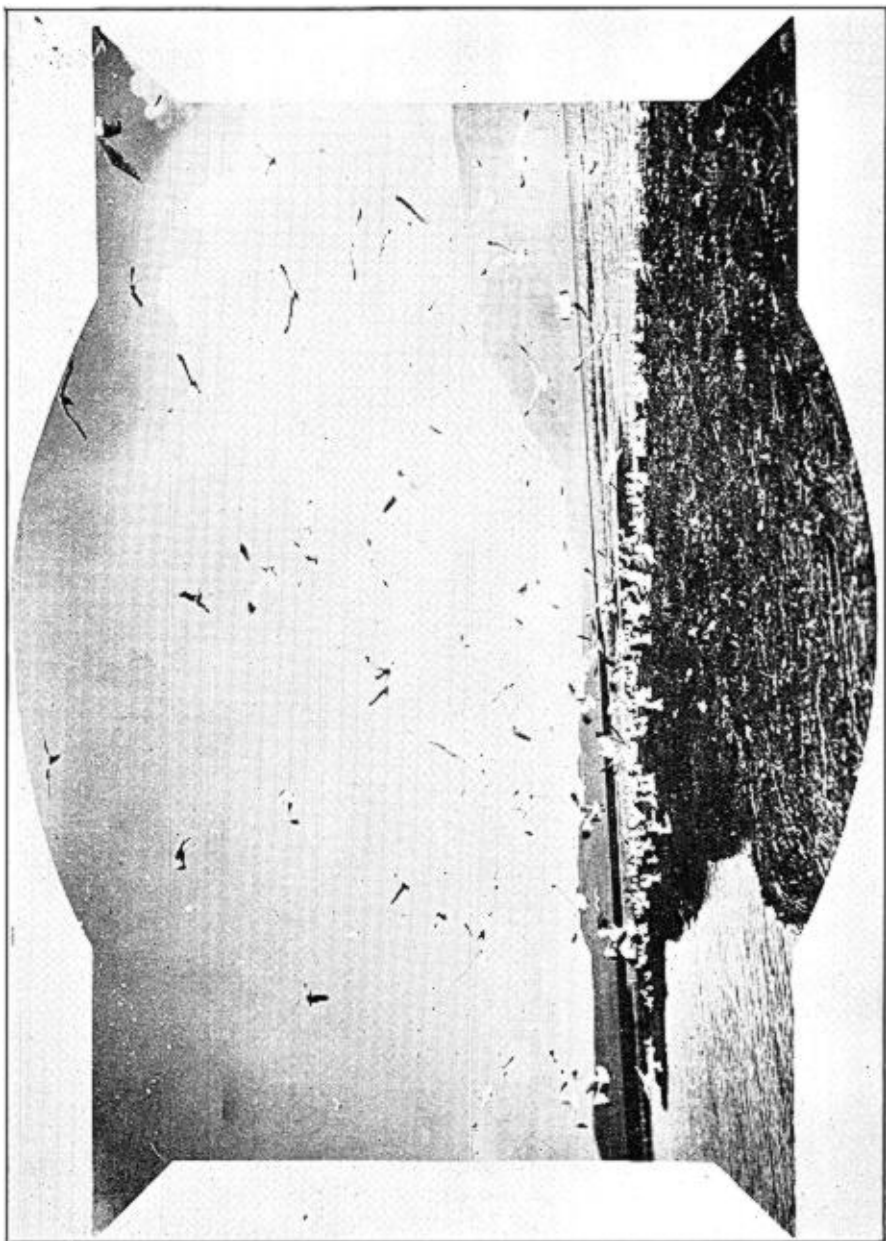
Scattered over this tract are many portions of land above high water mark. Several of the lakes contain islands. Surrounding these lakes are large patches of tules and flags and outside of such areas are found the wild grass meadows.

The general elevation of the valley is 4500 feet.

On the west side of the valley are high mountain ranges, known as the Warner Rim, and on the south and east, equally as high ranges, elevations up to 6500 feet, and on top of these ranges are found the table lands.

The mountains and table lands are covered with sage brush and greasewood, with scattering trees of Juniper.

The low lands along the streams have dense growths of Cottonwood, Willows, Junipers, Choke Cherry, Wild Plum trees and some Wild Rose bushes.



Ring-billed Gulls and Caspian Terns
500 Nests on the Island, June 22, 1922

The farming lands, which are all irrigated, have large groves of Poplar trees, fruit orchards, alfalfa fields and gardens.

Along all the irrigation ditches are found dense growths of willow trees and bushes.

The various descriptions heretofore given will be referred to under separate headings of the many birds found breeding in this valley.

My observations covered a period from May 20 to June 20, 1922, being the height of the breeding season during this year.

While nests of all the species listed were not located there is no doubt of their nesting, as the birds were mated, and were observed during my stay.

Nearly all the lakes contain fish and vegetation, suitable for food for the many wading and water fowl which annually come here to nest.

It was observed that the various species selected breeding grounds quite separate and apart. For example, the Greebes were found on the west side of the lake, the Gulls, Terns and Pelicans on the east side.

The Redhead Ducks were found only in one portion of the valley.

Reference to the map which accompanies this article will further make clear this point.

1. WESTERN GREBE—*Echmophorus occidentalis*.

Not common. Four pair on Crump Lake and three pair on Hart Lake. Not seen in other parts of the valley.

4. AMERICAN EARED GREBE—*Colymbus nigricollis californicus*.

Very common on Hart and Crump Lakes. Nesting in the tules bordering on the lakes. Nests of tules floating on water, four to six eggs.

6. PIED-BILLED GREBE—*Podilymbus podiceps*.

One pair found on Pelican Lake. Would appear to be a rare nesting bird here.

54. RING-BILLED GULL—*Larus delawarensis*.

Very common. Nesting on island in the east part of Crump Lake; 500 nests on one island and 85 nests on another island. Ninety per cent of nests contained young June 11. Two and three eggs in sets.

64. CASPIAN TERN—*Sterna caspia*.

Not common. Twenty-five pair nesting in colony on island in Crump Lake. Complete sets by June 11. Nesting with the Ring-billed Gulls. One, two, three eggs in set.

69. FORSTER'S TERN—*Sterna forsteri*.

Nesting on island in Crump Lake; separate and apart from other birds. Nest very compact, made of flags and grass, raised four or five inches from ground. Three eggs in set June 11.

77. BLACK TERN—*Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis*.

Not common. Some 25 pair nesting near the eastern border of Crump Lake. Eggs two and three in sets June 11.

120c. FARALLONE CORMORANT—*Phalacrocorax dilophus albociliatus*.

Not common. A dozen pair nesting on Bird island, Hart Lake. Three and four eggs June 5. Nest on the ground made of tule and flags.

125. AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN—*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*.

Not abundant. Twenty-five pair seen in the valley. Nesting on Bird island, Hart Lake, and Gull island, Crump Lake. One and two eggs June 11.



Typical Nest and Eggs of Forster's Tern

129. A129. AMERICAN MERGANSER—*Mergus americanus*.

One pair seen on Crump Lake June 5.

131. HOODED MERGANSER—*Lophodytes cucullatus*.

One pair seen on Crump Lake and one pair on Dodson Lake June 1.

132. MALLARD—*Anas boschas*.

One of the most abundant ducks nesting in the valley. Nesting in the marshes, also on Deep Creek, Honey Creek, Twenty Mile Creek and on the rocky side of Warner Rim, under sage brush. Eggs 7 to 15, May 25 to June 10.

135. GADWALL—*Chauliastmus streperus*.

Very common. Found nesting in the tule marshes around the lakes.

Sets May 23 to June 15, six to eleven eggs. Nests made of tules, sometimes floating on the water.

156. BALDPATE—*Marca americana*.

Only three pair seen in the valley. These birds were mated and without doubt getting ready to nest.

140. BLUE-WINGED TEAL—*Querquedula discors*.

One pair seen and one nest found with eggs May 25. Not common.

141. CINNAMON TEAL—*Querquedula cyanoptera*.

Common, and found nesting throughout the valley on small grass islands above high water mark. Nesting June 10. Sets seven to ten.

142. SHOVELLER—*Spatula clypeata*.

Not common, but at least a dozen pair seen in the valley. Mated and nesting June 1.

143. PINTAIL—*Dafila acuta*.

Not over six pair seen in the valley. One nest on Deep Creek. Eleven eggs, June 15.

146. REDHEAD—*Marila americana*.

Quite a common duck. Found nesting on islands near Pelican Lake. June 10. Sets eight to 10 eggs.

147. CANVAS-BACK—*Marila valisineria*.

One of the rarer specie found in the valley, and only three pair seen mated June 5.

167. RUDDY DUCK—*Erismatura jamaicensis*.

Several mated pairs seen in Pelican and Crump Lakes June 5.

172. CANADA GOOSE—*Branta canadensis canadensis*.

At least 25 pair nesting in valley. Canada Geese with young seen June 1. Set two eggs on Bird island. Incubation half on June 5.

187. WHITE-FACED GLOSSY IBIS—*Plegadis guarauna*.

Three pair seen June 1 on the eastern border of Crump Lake.

190. AMERICAN BITTERN—*Botaurus lentiginosus*.

Very common, and could be heard in all parts of the marshes in the valley. Would estimate at least 100 pair nesting. Sets May 25 to June 10, three to four eggs. Nest built in the tules some eight or ten inches above water.

194. GREAT BLUE HERON—*Ardea herodias herodias*.

Very common, probably 25 pair nesting. Colony near Dodson Lake of eight nests built in the top of willow bushes fifteen feet high. Nest on Bird island were on the ground and made of tules. Sets two to six, May 24.

202. BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON—*Nycticorax nycticorax naevius*.

Not common. But twelve pair observed in the valley.

206. SANDHILL CRANE—*Grus canadensis mexicana*.

Seen in all portions of the valley. Ten pair nesting, about one pair to every eighteen square miles of marsh land. Nest with eggs, May 20 to 30. Nest with young birds, June 6. Nesting far out in the marshes.

214. SORA—*Porzana carolina*.

Several pair seen near Dodson Lake, and were no doubt getting ready to nest.

221. AMERICAN COOT—*Fulica americana*.

Very common in all the tule marshes and flags. Sets 7 to 10. Dates, May 28 to June 30. Many not complete sets on later dates.

223. NORTHERN PHALAROPE—*Phalaropus lobatus*.

Three pair mated seen near marshes of Dodson Lake and their actions would indicate nesting June 1.

224. WILSON'S PHALAROPE—*Steganopus tricolor*.

Quite a number of pairs seen near Dodson Lake, all being mated, and without doubt getting ready to nest June 1.

225. AMERICAN AVOCET—*Recurvirostra americana*.

A common nesting bird of the valley. Preferring small alkali island in the marshes. Nests of tules, flags and grass raised some three inches from ground. Eggs 4. Sets May 30 to June 10.

230. WILSON'S SNIBE—*Gallinago delicata*.

Several birds in pairs seen in the south end of valley in the meadow lands.

263. SPOTTED SANDPIPER—*Actitis macularia*.

Several pairs nesting on Deep Creek, Honey and Twenty Mile Creeks. Nest near streams, made of dried grass. Eggs four, June 4.

264. LONG-BILLED CURLEW—*Numenius americanus*.

Two pairs of birds seen in the valley. Nest of four eggs found June 6. Built on dry knoll covered with wild grass made of dry grass. Returning next day to lake. Photo of nest and eggs. Found the birds in much excitement, with two crows near. On reaching nest found eggs had been carried off by the crows.

273. KILLDEER—*Oxyechus vociferus*.

Very common along the streams and borders of the lakes where open dry ground could be found.

294. CALIFORNIA PARTRIDGE—*Lophortyx californica*.

Very common. Many pairs seen along Deep, Honey and Twenty Mile Creeks. Just beginning to nest June 10.

309. SAGE GROUSE—*Centrocercus urophasianus*.

Very abundant on the table lands of Warner Rim and on the Sage Brush Mountain, east of the valley. Nearly all had young birds by June 1.

316. WESTERN MOURNING DOVE—*Zenaidura macroura marginella*.

One of the most common and numerous birds of the valley. From six to fifteen pair found near each ranch house. Over fifty pair nesting along Deep Creek for a distance of one mile. Nests low down in willow and cottonwood trees. Eggs two, May 20 to June 10.

325. TURKEY VULTURE—*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*.

Very common bird in the valley nesting on the rocky cliffs of Warner Rim.

331. MARSH HAWK—*Circus hudsonius*.

Several pair seen in the valley nesting in the tules. All had young May 25.

322. SHARP-SHINNED HAWK—*Accipiter velox*.

One pair seen on Deep Creek near marshes.

327b. WESTERN RED-TAIL—*Buteo borealis calurus*.

Two pair seen in the valley. One nest on rocky cliff up Deep Creek with young June 1.

342. SWAINSON'S HAWK—*Buteo swainsonii*.
Several pair seen in different parts of the valley.
349. GOLDEN EAGLE—*Aquila chrysaetos*.
One pair near Crump Lake in rocky cliff, 1500 feet high.
352. BALD EAGLE—*Haliaetus leucocephalus leucocephalus*.
One pair near Greaser Lake, nesting in Greaser Canyon, found by sheep herders, with young in nest.
355. PRAIRIE FALCON—*Falco mexicanus*.
Very common. Several pairs seen in various sections of the valley.
- 360a. DESERT SPARROW HAWK—*Falco sparverius phalena*.
Six pair observed along the roads leading around the valley.
367. SHORT-EARED OWL—*Asio flammeus*.
One pair seen near Greaser Lake.
- 375a. WESTERN HORNED OWL—*Bubo virginianus pallescens*.
Very common. Generally seen near some ranch buildings resting during the day in large cottonwood trees.
378. BURROWING OWL—*Scototyto cunicularia hypogaea*.
One pair seen near Dodson Lake with nest June 11.
380. BELTED KINGFISHER—*Ceryle alcyon*.
Found along Deep, Honey and Twenty Mile Creeks. Nesting in the sand banks June 1.
- 394a. GAIRDNER'S WOODPECKER—*Dryobates pubescens gairdneri*.
Several pairs seen and nests located well up in cottonwood trees June 1.
408. LEWIS'S WOODPECKER—*Asyndesmus lewisi*.
At least six pairs seen, and one nest in cottonwood tree on Deep Creek, June 6.
413. RED-SHAFTED FLICKER—*Colaptes cafer collaris*.
Quite common, and nesting in willow or cottonwood trees. Eggs five to eight, June 1 to 10.
- 420a. WESTERN NIGHTHAWK—*Chordeiles minor henryi*.
Observed in large numbers on Deep Creek. Arriving June 1. Not nesting by June 15.
435. MORCOM'S HUMMINGBIRD—*Atthis morcomi*.
Two pairs seen on Deep Creek. Identification, from one female specimen.
444. KINGBIRD—*Tyrannus tyrannus*.
Quite common in all sections nesting in juniper bushes June 1.
447. ARKANSAS KINGBIRD—*Tyrannus verticalis*.
A very common bird and found around all the farm ranches. Nest-
448. CASSIN'S KINGBIRD—*Tyrannus vociferans*.
One pair on Twenty Mile Creek.
ing in barns, telephone poles and high fences, June 10.
457. SAY'S PHOEBE—*Sayornis sayus*.
Several pairs seen on Deep Creek.
462. WESTERN WOOD PEWEE—*Myiochanes richardsoni richardsoni*.
Several pair on Deep and Twenty Mile Creek in the willows along the streams. No nests June 15.
469. WRIGHT'S FLYCATCHER—*Empidonax wrightii*.

Several pairs seen in the poplar trees near the ranches, nesting high up in the trees, June 10.

474c. DESERT HORNED LARK—*Otocoris alpestris leucolæma*.

Only a few pair seen in the entire valley, June 1.

475. AMERICAN MAGPIE—*Pica pica hudsonia*.

Very common on Twenty Mile and Honey Creek, but none seen on Deep Creek. Nesting in willows May 25. Birds very destructive to eggs of other birds.

481. CALIFORNIA JAY—*Aphelocoma californica*.

A very common bird, found along the streams and irrigation ditches.

486. AMERICAN RAVEN—*Corvus corax sinuatus*.

Two pair seen in the entire valley.

489. NORTHWEST CROW—*Corvus caurinus*.

Very common. Nesting but in the marshes in willow trees. All nests found had young by May 25. A bird destroying many eggs, especially of the Duck family.

494. BOBOLINK—*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*.

A pair or two found in every alfalfa field.

495. COWBIRD—*Molothrus ater*.

A number were seen at Adel and Warner.

497. YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD—*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*.

Very common, and nesting in the many tulie and flag swamps. Eggs three to four, June 10 to 15.

498F. NORTHWESTERN RED-WING—*Agelaius phœniceus caurinus*.

Very common and found nesting in the wild grass meadows near the marshes. Eggs three to five. Full sets by May 27.

499. BICOLORED BLACKBIRD—*Agelaius gubernator californicus*.

Three pair nesting near Pelican Lake. Eggs 3. Nest in a clump of wild grass.

501b. WESTERN MEADOWLARK—*Sturnella neglecta*.

Quite common in the meadow lands around the entire border of the valley.

508. BULLOCK'S ORIOLE—*Icterus bullocki*.

Very common. Found near all the ranch houses in poplar trees and nesting along the stream. Nests very often high up and some as low as ten feet from ground. Eggs 5. Full sets June 15.

510. BREWER'S BLACKBIRD—*Euphagus cyanocephalus*.

Very common. Probably 100 pair nesting within a mile of Adel on Deep Creek. Nest built in cottonwood, willow, juniper trees and sage brush. One pair of birds had stolen the new nest of Bullocks. Eggs 4 to 7, May 20 to June 15. Oriole had a set of six eggs.

514a. WESTERN EVENING GROSBEAK—*Hesperiphona vespertina montana*.

Nesting in the pine forests at an elevation of 6500, and high up in the trees.

517a. CALIFORNIA PURPLE FINCH—*Carpodacus purpureus californicus*.

Several pairs along Deep Creek, but no nests located.

519. HOUSE FINCH—*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*.

Common near all the ranch houses, which had trees or orchards. Nest June 10.

- 529a. PALE GOLDFINCH—*Astragalinus tristis pallidus*.
A band of about twenty birds seen June 1.
- 552a. WESTERN LARK SPARROW—*Chondestes grammacus strigatus*.
The most common sparrow found in the valley. Nesting on the ground in pastures and meadows.
- 581B. MOUNTAIN SONG SPARROW—*Melospiza cinerea montana*.
Several pair seen near Adel and Warner.
586. BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK—*Zamelodia melanocephala*.
A common bird along the water courses in the deep willow thickets.
599. LAZULI BUNTING—*Cyanospiza amæna*.
Two pair seen on Deep Creek nearly every day June 1 to 10.
607. WESTERN Tanager—*Piranga ludoviciana*.
A very common bird along the mountain streams, but not as numerous as Bullock's Oriole.
612. CLIFF SWALLOW—*Petrochelidon lunifrons*.
Nesting by the thousands on the high cliffs of Warner Valley. Eggs four to five, June 15.
613. BARN SWALLOW—*Hirundo erythrogastra*.
Quite common, nesting under bridges and under barns, June 10.
614. TREE SWALLOW—*Iridoprocne bicolor*.
Very common out in the marshes where willows or cottonwood trees with holes were found June 10.
615. VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW—*Tachycineta thalassina lepida*.
Two pair nesting near Adel in dead willow stubs June 10.
616. BANK SWALLOW—*Riparia riparia*.
Numerous pairs nesting in a bank on Deep Creek, half mile east of Adel. June 1, four to five eggs.
619. CEDAR WAXWING—*Bombycilla cedrorum*.
Seen quite frequently in all parts of the valley on the west side.
- 627a. WESTERN WARBLING VIREO—*Vireosylva gilva swainsoni*.
One pair seen at Adel, nesting in poplar grove, June 10.
652. CALIFORNIA YELLOW WARBLER—*Dendroica aestiva brewsteri*.
This warbler was found in large numbers on Deep Creek and Twenty Mile Creek. It seemed that nearly every clump of willow bushes had a pair of warblers. Eggs four to five, June 10 to 20.
- 681a. WESTERN YELLOW-THROAT—*Geothlypis trichas occidentalis*.
Very common along all the water courses, arriving about June 1.
- 683a. LONGTAILED CHAT—*Icteria virens longicauda*.
Common in and along the water courses. Nesting in willow bushes June 15.
701. AMERICAN DIPPER—*Cinclus mexicana unicolor*.
One pair nesting at falls on Deep Creek June 1.
715. ROCK WREN—*Salpinctes obsoletus obsoletus*.
Two pair seen up Deep Creek canyon.
- 721b. WESTERN HOUSE WREN—*Troglodytes aedon parkmani*.
A pair generally nesting at each farm house. Eggs May 20, young June 15.
- 725a. TULE WREN—*Telmatodytes palustris paludicola*.

Found in large numbers in the tulie swamps near the lakes. Eggs four to six, June 1.

758. RUSSET-BACKED THRUSH—*Hylocichla ustulata ustulata*.

One pair on Deep Creek, in the dense willow, but hear many singing along the streams.

761a. WESTERN ROBIN—*Planesticus migratorius propinquus*.

Very common nesting bird of the valley. Eggs four to five and found May 20 to June 10.

768. MONTANA BLUEBIRD—*Sialia currucoides*.

Several pair observed in the valley and on the tablelands up to 6500 elevation.

The diversified fauna of Warner Valley makes it the ideal nesting home of many birds, the list observed by me containing 102 specie, and no doubt some of the rare species were not found.

The greatest enemy to bird life in the valley, especially to eggs, are the crows and magpies, as in the vicinity where these birds were nesting hundreds of egg shells, especially duck's, were found.

Coyotes and skunks also destroy nests and kill hundreds of the young birds.

The ducks, nesting in their order of numbers are: Mallard, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, Redhead, Shoveller, Pintail, Ruddy and Canvasbacks.

Other water fowl in order of abundance: Ring B. Gulls, Forster's Tern, Avocets, Am. Eared Greebes, Am. Bittern, Caspean Tern, Great Blue Herons, Black Tern, Pelicans and Sand Hill Cranes.

These birds cover the main bird life of the great marshes and lakes of Warner Valley.