

GENERAL NOTES

Conducted by M. H. Swenk

Another Early Hour's Bird List.—The following was suggested by Mr. Eifrig's list in the WILSON BULLETIN for March, 1931, p. 58. I was still in bed, the hour was 6:00 to 6:30 o'clock on the morning of March 21, 1931. The temperature was about 60°. The birds heard were the Red-bellied Woodpecker, Flicker, Blue Jay, Crow, Meadowlark, Grackle, White-throated Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Cardinal, Loggerhead Shrike, Mockingbird, and Bluebird.—HELEN M. EDWARDS, *Fairhope, Ala.*

Migration Notes from Sioux City, Iowa.—The migrating shore birds have been quite plentiful this spring. Some of the less common species listed were the Hudsonian Godwit, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Stilt Sandpiper. Brewer's Blackbird and the Arctic Towhee were found both in Woodbury County, Iowa, and in Union County, South Dakota. A specimen of the latter bird was taken for verification. The Turkey Vulture and the Yellow-breasted Chat were found in the adjacent Dakota County, Nebraska. The Yellow-throated Vireo was seen in Union County, South Dakota, and has apparently been overlooked, as it does not appear in the Birds of South Dakota, by Over and Thoms. The Black-throated Green Warbler, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Osprey were also seen in Union County.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, *Sioux City, Iowa.*

Pectoral Sandpiper at Winslow, Arkansas.—On May 12, 1931, it was my good fortune to receive a specimen of the Pectoral Sandpiper (*Pisobia melanotos*) that had been shot near a small pond here, where it was feeding in company with five other birds of the same species. The bird was a female and the skin is now in my collection.

This is the first record for the Pectoral Sandpiper from this section of the state. Pindar found the bird in Poinsett County in 1888-89, and reported it as rare, while Howell, while making his study of the birds of Arkansas for the Biological Survey, recorded it on May 15, 1910, at Arkansas City, Arkansas County. These are the only two locations from which the bird has been reported. Both of these records are from the lowlands portion of the state, on the east side near the Mississippi River. Winslow is in the extreme northwestern part of the state, in the Ozark Mountains. The pond where the Winslow specimen was secured is in all probability the highest natural pond in the Mississippi Valley, being 2250 feet above sea level, and far away from the regular migration route of this species.—J. D. BLACK, *Winslow, Ark.*

The Mating of the Western Mockingbird.—On June 21, 1929, at San Diego, California, I witnessed a pair of Western Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*) in copulation. I had several times noticed a female carrying nesting material into a certain clump of shrubbery, and on the morning of the day stated above she flew from her nesting site and alighted on the ground among the shrubbery under the window from which I watched. She appeared to be feeding on something which she was finding on the ground. The male was singing from the top of a tall flagpole nearby. Suddenly he dropped from his perch. In full song, he shot down into the shrubbery about fifteen feet beyond the female. As he sped past her, the female crouched a little and began to quiver her wings. She continued in this as the male, singing excitedly and with tail and wings half

spread, advanced toward her with dancing steps. As he neared her his excitement grew but his approach was stately and unhurried. As he came near he seemed to be floating along just over the ground and he rose gradually and settled upon her back. All this time he had been pouring forth impassioned melody. The act lasted several seconds and was accompanied by much fluttering of wings.

This mating was surprisingly different from what I have witnessed in other *Passeriformes*. With House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*), Western Lark Sparrows (*Chondestes grammacus strigatus*) and English Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*), observed on numerous occasions at San Diego, California, copulation occurred at intervals of a very few seconds for many successive times.—FRANK F. GANDER, *Natural History Museum, San Diego, Cal.*

Skunks as Prey for Owls.—As long ago as 1892, when Dr. A. K. Fisher wrote his classic "Hawks and Owls of the United States in Their Relation to Agriculture", it was recognized that in regions where the skunk is common it forms a not uncommon article of the Great Horned Owl's food. However, skunks are not listed in that work as among the stomach contents of any other kind of owl. It was therefore of interest to the writer to find that an American Barn Owl (*Tyto alba pratincola*), which had been killed on the highway by a motorist and was brought to the San Diego Natural History Museum on April 29, 1931, was strongly pervaded with the odor of skunk. Furthermore, the scent could be positively identified as that of the genus *Spilogale* (Spotted Skunk), which, in the writer's experience, can be distinguished without difficulty from that of other genera of skunks when it is fresh.

When the wings of the dead Barn Owl were spread, a round yellow spot about five inches in diameter was found on the secondary feathers of the left wing, and it was from this spot that the strongest skunk odor emanated. Two similar incidents were recalled to the mind of the writer, both involving Western Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus pallescens*) which had been in close contact with skunks. One of these birds was collected in December, 1915, at Fort Lowell, near Tucson, Arizona, and had a discolored area on its plumage where the scent had struck, which was, however, of a light pinkish color, not yellow. As there are three genera of skunks (*Conepatus*, *Mephitis*, and *Spilogale*) to be found in or near the locality where this owl was secured, we may perhaps assume that one of the two larger forms, not *Spilogale*, had been the victim of the owl. Further experience may determine which of the two had been attacked.

The other Horned Owl was taken in January, 1917, at Potholes, Imperial County, California, and was marked with a yellow stain like that upon the recent Barn Owl. We may now assume that this Horned Owl had been preying upon a *Spilogale*.

Frank F. Gander, a member of the San Diego Natural History Museum staff, informs me that several years ago a dead Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus flammeus*) was brought to him, very odorous with skunk scent. Although the events which led up to this condition are not known, we may perhaps add the Short-eared Owl to the list of owls which have killed, or attempted to kill, skunks.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *San Diego, Cal.*

Incompatibility of House and California Wrens.—I have been wondering if any other lover of birds has noticed anything odd in the attitudes of House