

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