

Malay Banded Crane off the island of Mindanao in the Philippines.—At 4 o'clock on the afternoon of October 3, 1945, while the U. S. S. *Jamestown* was steaming through the Sulu Sea seven miles due west of Dohinoc, Mindanao, a rail—subsequently identified as a Malay Banded Crane, *Rallina fasciata*—collided with the ship's superstructure, stunned itself, and fell to the deck. A crew member brought the bird to me. Its legs, feet and eyes were red, the latter of a very bright shade. Wondering whence it could have come, I noticed dark storm clouds and heavy lightning over the island in the vicinity of Dohinoc. On skinning it I found it to be a male. Its testes were not enlarged.

The specimen is now No. 113,947 in the collection of the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology. It is one of 46 specimens known to be in museums of the United States at this time. The American Museum of Natural History has 24 specimens, the U. S. National Museum 11, the Chicago Natural History Museum 4, the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard 3, and the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia 3.

Rallina fasciata has not previously been reported from Mindanao, although it has been found on Palawan (Lowe, *Ibis*, 1916, p. 611), Balabac (Everett, *Ibis*, 1895, p. 32), and Mindoro (McGregor, *Philippine Journ. Sci.*, 1906, p. 698) in the Philippines. It is known to inhabit India, Burma (Sharpe, *Cat. Birds Brit. Mus.*, 1894, 23: 75), Siam (Gyldenstolpe, *Ibis*, 1920, p. 763) and "the Malay Peninsula; Sumatra; Java; Borneo; Lesser Sunda Islands; . . . Pelew Islands; Moluccas (Halmahera, Batjan, and Buru)" (Peters, 1934. Check-list of Birds of the World, 2: 171). The Mindanao record does not extend the periphery of range, but it does fill the gap which has existed between Mindoro to the north and the Moluccas to the south and Palawan to the west and the Pelew Islands to the east, strongly suggesting that this little known rail may inhabit the central Philippine Islands.—KENNETH W. PRESCOTT, *University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor*.

Death of a Horned Lark in territorial combat.—On March 4, 1950, my husband and I, in company with Robert A. Whiting and Kenneth Bunting of Jackson and George M. Sutton of Ann Arbor, visited various parts of Jackson County, Michigan, checking early duck arrivals. The morning was bright, the wind brisk and from the northwest, the snow several inches deep, and the temperature about 20° F. In the vicinity of Clark Lake we continued to see pairs or small flocks of Prairie Horned Larks, *Eremophila alpestris praticela*, many of them in snowless places at the very edge of the highway. Near a slough just north of Jefferson Road and west of South Woodlands Road we stopped to look at some Tree Sparrows (*Spizella arborea*) and a Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*).

Having climbed the embankment near the highway and started through a young cherry orchard toward the slough, we happened to see and hear ahead of us two Horned Larks. That these birds were neither a pair nor part of a flock was soon apparent. They were males in bright plumage. As they walked and ran about on the snow they continued to twitter excitedly, occasionally singing a full song. Often they stood high, with 'horns' lifted, or crouched, 12-15 inches apart, facing each other defiantly. Occasionally they sang in duet. We soon realized that we were witnessing a territorial conflict, for the birds, despite the sweetness of their singing, were obviously opposing each other determinedly. They did not run at each other, but flew instead; and when they met, midair, they rose fluttering straight up to a height of 30 or 40 feet, pecking and clawing at each other the whole way. Their twittering never ceased, but they resumed their singing only after descending to the ground and taking positions a few yards apart. Not once, during the 15 minutes or more that we watched them, did one drive the other about. One flew at the other, the other seemed to accept the challenge without giving ground, and up they went, fighting hard. Usually they rose quite rapidly and directly, but the wind carried them away from the area in which they continued to show interest and to which they invariably returned. For a time we thought

one bird was showing signs of weariness, the other of victory, but when they flew at each other and fluttered upward we found it quite impossible to be sure which was which.

Somewhat to our surprise, and almost certainly without our frightening them off, both birds flew upwind and across the highway, still twittering and bickering. We did not keep our eyes on them, but judged from the singing that they were continuing their fighting just across the highway. Turning our attention momentarily to the sparrows we had started after in the first place, we began our return to the car.

As we started to cross the highway Mr. Bunting called to our attention a 'dead bird' in the highway about 25 yards away in exactly the direction of the twittering we had last heard from the fighting Horned Larks. Using our binoculars, we instantly saw that the 'dead' bird was a male Horned Lark, and that a *living* male Horned Lark was beside it apparently pecking at its wings and tail as if trying to rouse it. Approaching, we found that the 'dead' bird was actually still alive, but it was obviously done for. As it struggled feebly, spreading its wings and tail, the other bird twittered, ran at it, gave it a peck or two, and flew off. We were only five or six yards away at that time.

Picking the doomed bird from the ground we watched it expire in our hands while the living bird twittered only a few rods away. We were greatly puzzled as to exactly what had happened. Each of us sensed that this was the very bird we had been watching and we could not help wondering whether it had died from exhaustion or been dealt a lethal blow by the other bird. One thing was certain: the bird could not have been lying there when we had crossed the highway a little more than a quarter of an hour before; it had been mortally injured within the past few minutes.

Some of our questions were answered when we made a skin of the specimen that evening. The bird was in excellent condition. It weighed 34 grams. Though not fat, there was a considerable amount of food in its gizzard. There was no evidence of fractures. The skull, however, showed moderate hematoma along the parieto-occipital suture line, and there was a mild hematoma across the upper back and left shoulder. These wounds (which had not torn the skin) suggested a blow of sufficient force to involve the central nervous system and cause death. Our conclusion was that the bird, its attention focussed primarily upon its opponent and its perceptive powers somewhat dulled by the long and strenuous combat, had struck a telephone wire while fluttering upward and thus met its tragic end. The wind had carried it, still fluttering no doubt, to the highway, where we had found it. Reviewing what we had seen of the two birds—the dying and the 'victorious', we decided that the latter probably had been just as much bewildered and surprised—in its way—as we had by the refusal of the other to continue fighting.

Pickwell (1931. *Trans. Acad. Sci. St. Louis*, 27: 56) states that "all quarrelling" between male Horned Larks defending territories "takes place in the air." He describes the "curious game of tit for tat" which the birds play, "one now chasing, next being chased. . . ." Sutton (1927. *Wilson Bulletin*, 39: 133), however, mentions "tussels on the ground" which may have been in defense of territory.

Mr. Bunting returned the following day to the scene of the above-reported observations, finding a pair of Horned Larks not far from the highway. This pair probably nested somewhere in the vicinity.—BETTY DARLING (MRS. POWELL) COTTRILLE, 6075 Brown's Lake Road, Jackson, Michigan.

White-breasted Nuthatch and Tufted Titmouse hawking for insects.—On the evening of August 13, 1949, I watched a male and female White-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*) hawking for flying insects in and about a white elm (*Ulmus americanus*) at my home. The birds frequently made flights of a few yards, generally with some abrupt turns, just inside or outside the peripheral twigs of the tree, about 30 feet above the ground. Less frequently they flew out from the tree as much as 10 yards. Once, when the male alighted