

## Nesting of *Hylocichla aonalaschkæ auduboni* in the Sierra Nevadas.

BY LYMAN BELDING, STOCKTON, CAL.

[Read before the Northern Division of the Cooper Orn. Club, Mar. 4, 1899.]

THIS is the bird I named *Turdus sequoiensis* a few years ago, but as I neglected to send enough specimens to the Committee of the A. O. U. to convince them it was worthy of a new name, they finally "considered it to be identical with the Audubon's Hermit Thrush of the Rocky Mountains," and I suppose it so stands at present. By any other name it would sing just as sweetly.

It is the finest song bird of the Pacific Coast, breeding in many localities in the Sierras, on both slopes, usually choosing damp, densely-wooded localities for a summer home. It begins to sing about the middle of May at 5,000 feet altitude, below which it is seldom found in summer, and sings until about the first of September, when it leaves for warmer regions.

Altogether I have found seven nests of this bird; all of them were within a few feet of paths. They were mostly well-concealed, but one was the reverse, having been saddled on a fallen, dead, barkless fir sapling, with nothing to

hide it except a few dead and leafless twigs. This nest contained four young which were quite fit to leave the nest about the middle of June. The eggs appear to be four or less. Three of the nests were in yew trees (*Taxus*), one was in a hazel bush (*Corylus*) and two were in deer brush (*Ceanothus*). The highest was about ten feet from the ground and the lowest about three feet. There was more or less moss (*Hypnum*) in all of the nests though the materials used in them varied considerably.

I hope this information will help ornithologists to find a few eggs of this very interesting bird and that they will forever afterward refrain from molesting this charming songster, to which I am indebted for many, many happy hours. Two photographs of one nest were kindly taken at my request, in 1898, but Mr. L. E. Hunt of Berkeley, Cal. The nest represented was built on a fallen cone of a sugar pine (*P. lambertiana*) which had lodged in a deer brush.

## A Day With the Raptors.

BY ERNEST ADAMS, SAN JOSE, CAL.

[Read before the Northern Division of the Cooper Orn. Club, Mar. 4, 1899.]

JUST as the messengers of Old Sol were speeding away toward the beautiful Santa Clara Valley, on the morning of April 12, 1898, I was urging my pony up the gentle grade toward Mt. Hamilton. Why I had decided to go in that direction I could not tell; I could not boast of *Buteos* I had taken in that vicinity, nor of *Bubos*, and when the thought of seeing eggs of the Golden Eagle *in situ* entered my head I cast it out, declaring that it belonged to only such fellows as Barlow and Taylor. I had grown careless of late; my Kites had failed me, my favorite grove for collecting eggs of the smaller birds had been cut down, and now my destination was perhaps as good as any I had in mind, though it was quite probable that Beck had been over the same ground

only a short time before. And right here let me say if there is anyone who hopes to find his first egg of *Aquila chrysaetos*, he must beware of this collector whose climbers mark many a tree east of here! I had to learn the lesson once though it cost me a fine set. I will not say how long I continued my delightful ride before hitching my horse and starting over the hills on foot, for that is one of those secrets that only oologists have.

April 18, 1896 I had removed from a newly constructed nest only ten feet in a small oak, one egg of a Western Red-tail, advanced in incubation. On April 13, 1897 a friend found two young Horned Owls in this same nest and I was hoping to find the old bird there this year, but you can imagine my sur-

prise when I beheld a hawk leave the nest and sail off in the air. The nest had been greatly enlarged and contained two fresh eggs. They resembled the one taken in 1896 but there are no distinguishing marks of identity, and I am yet undecided whether this old nest was occupied by the original pair of birds or a new pair. It seems altogether probable that they were the same ones which nested in 1896, though I am sure they were not there the following year. Passing on, I visited the hollow under a large rock and tree from which I took a beautiful set of two Turkey Vulture's eggs two years before, but there were no signs of its having been inhabited since. From an old nest situated in the hollow of an oak seventeen feet from the ground, I took a nice set of two Horned Owls measuring 2.13x1.81 and 2.13x1.85. Two nests of the Desert Sparrow Hawk were found, each about twenty feet from the ground in oak trees, one cavity containing four eggs, the other an incomplete set of two.

Then came one of those long tramps which you are led to take by seeing a mirage of most beautiful eggs, and though as you come to the top of each hill you swear you will go no farther than the next, you are led on and on until the sun, after repeated warnings, slowly sinks behind the distant mountains and night claims her own.

Woe to the person who meets the collector at this time if it has been an "off day" with him. But it was not quite as late as this when I seated myself on a rock at the top of my last hill and looked with longing eyes toward the next, beyond which I knew must be the best canyon in the country. I could not resist and hastened over. A Redtail catching sight of me left her nest with loud discordant screams, and well she might scream for never again was she to see those three beautiful eggs, except perchance some day, mounted and holding an edified position over my cabinet, she may look down upon them through her glassy eyes as I show them to an interested friend. On and on I went until, coming out of a little ravine, I saw another hawk resting on her nest. She too,

soon joined her mate on a leafless tree fifty yards away. Eagerly I ran to the tree but alas, it was a sycamore, its main trunk as devoid of limbs as a newly formed flag-pole. I looked down the canon perhaps in the hope of seeing Beck coming along with his climbers but I was alone. Setting my teeth in determination, I conquered the seeming impossibility, and there soon lay before me not two nor three, but four eggs of the Redtail, who was now dashing furiously at me. The eggs which are rather large and evenly washed with a yellowish brown color, are quite unlike any I had ever seen before.

Far up the canon was another nest and I was still some distance from it when the bird flew away. It was not a Redtail but a Golden Eagle. I had thought there was excitement in collecting eggs of the White-tailed Kite but they are not "in it" at all with the Eagles. I felt myself rising far above the amateurs and being set down with the Upper Ten! There was no more hesitation at climbing a sycamore, and I had soon traversed the intervening twenty-eight feet and was intently gazing upon three eggs of this far-famed raptore. The eggs are quite large, measuring 3.08x2.44; 3.08x2.44; 3.08x2.40. One is heavily marked with reddish brown and the other two are nearly covered with lavender intermixed with dark brown. Incubation, one week.

Although it has been proven that Eagles of this species sometimes lay a second time after being robbed, (*Osprey* II, 6-7, p. 84) notwithstanding the lateness of the deposition of these, (April 12), I am inclined to believe that it was their only set. The birds appeared to be an old pair and had lost a number of wing feathers. The nest was an immense affair and had probably been added to for a number of years. This ended my day's collecting, with which I was quite satisfied and as I hastened along over the hills, each star appearing in the darkened gloom above me seemed to whisper, "To be successful let not a hill remain between you and the next canyon, for it is the *next* in which the eagles lay and happiness reigns."