

had the form of a nest although I had to put it in a box to prevent it from falling to pieces. It is composed mostly of feathers and hair with a little gray moss and I also noticed a number of Steller's Jay's feathers in it. It measures four and a half inches across and about one inch deep and resembles nothing so much as a handful of floor-sweepings, especially the kind we sweep from the floors of our skinning rooms. Besides this nest I found two others. In one case I broke into the hollow but no eggs were to be seen, so the parents deserted on account of the exposure of their home. This hollow was about 20 feet from the ground. The third nest contained young and was 40 feet up.



Black Oystercatcher on Anacapa Islands.

ON June 4, 1899, we dropped anchor near the southern end of Anacapa Island and prepared to go ashore and collect, although it was already late in the day. While we were getting ready, a shrill whistle was heard, followed by a loud clattering noise, and as we looked up, two large, dark-colored birds flew past and lit on a rock near by, still keeping up their noisy clamor. Their bright red bills and shrill notes easily established their identity as Black Oystercatchers, though we had hardly expected to see any on the islands. We got into the skiff and started to row around the island in search of a landing place, from which we could reach the top of the island, no easy job anywhere, and appearing from the boat almost impossible. We had not gone very far when two Oystercatchers were seen on some rocks. They allowed us to come within shooting range and I dropped one with each barrel, one falling dead on the rocks, while the other, only wounded, fluttered into the water.

Although there was a strong current and a heavy swell running, the wounded bird swam easily and swiftly to another clump of rocks fifty or sixty feet away, upon which it clambered and then fell exhausted. It was a matter of no little difficulty to retrieve either of the birds, and without a strong, exper-

enced boatman it would have been impossible to have brought the boat close enough to the rocks for a person to jump out and in, without having the boat dashed to pieces. Both birds were retrieved without accident, however, and we went on in our search for a landing. Before long we saw another Oystercatcher in a similar place to the others, which was also secured. This bird was so unsuspecting that we were within thirty feet of it before we saw it, and were obliged to row further away before it could be shot.

These were all that we saw for the day, but on June 6, when we rowed along the other two islands of the group, six or eight of the birds were seen; all, however, in places where it would have been unsafe to have taken the skiff. All the birds were in pairs, except one that I shot, but on dissecting the three that I secured (a male and two females) it was evident that they were not breeding. All the birds that were seen were very tame and unsuspecting and paid very little attention to us. The crops of the three birds secured were filled with small mussels and they were all extremely fat.

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Additional Notes on the Birds of Santa Cruz Island, Cal.

WITH much interest I read Mr. Jos. Mailliard's article on the birds of Santa Cruz Island in the May-June number of the BULLETIN, and finding his experience differed from mine in some particulars, I submit a few notes taken principally on the west end of the island in May, 1897. On June 5, 1895, I visited Scorpion Harbor for a few hours and landed on the square-looking rock mentioned by Mr. Mailliard. In addition to the breeding gulls and cormorants (Farallone and Baird's), there were many burrows of Cassin's Auklet which contained heavily incubated eggs or young birds. On the west end of the island there is an open, rolling stretch of land running back from the cliffs along shore. On this mesa the Horned Larks were abundant. While they were all in pairs and nesting, the nests were found

only by accident. Two nests were collected on Santa Cruz and one on San Miguel Islands. They were located by flushing the bird from the nest. In every case the nest was nearly stepped on before the bird flew and in each case it was placed in a small bunch of grass in a slight hollow and was right on the feeding ground. I found the towhee (*Pipilo maculatus oregonus*) not very wild and secured without much trouble a dozen or so. Among those taken was a partial albino having many white feathers scattered among the black on the head and neck.

In a deep, rugged canon some distance inland I found an ideal nesting place for the Dusky Warblers,—a cool stream of water with thickets of green bushes and tangled vines on both sides. Warblers were seen here but no nests were found. A Flicker's nest was seen in a tall dead tree in the bottom of the canon and farther down this canon I found the Santa Cruz Jays nesting. I saw and collected in two or three different canons near the ocean specimens of the song sparrow (*M. f. graminea*). Four or five raven's nests were found, one containing four eggs. The others had young in various stages of growth. The nests were in holes among the rocks and cliffs in steep gulches, with but one exception. This was placed in an overhanging cliff, twenty feet from the top and high above the ocean, and contained four young on the 8th of May.

R. H. BECK.

Berryessa, Cal., June 15, 1899.



Breeding of the Dusky Horned Lark in Eastern Washington.

OF the birds I met on a trip through the state of Washington, none were more common than the Dusky Horned Lark (*Otocoris alpestris merrilli*). About 25 miles west of Walla Walla one reaches what is known as "Eureka Flats," a large space of territory which a few years since was covered with sage brush and bunch grass, but now all that is tillable is in grain and the steep hillsides are pastured. It is the custom among the farmers of this district to summer-fallow one half the land each year and it was in one of

these fields that I found this lark nesting.

I spent some time in a field of 160 acres, and in this field and along a road near by, I saw hundreds of the birds daily. There is no water in the district and the farmers haul it from a river and place it in cisterns. From the cisterns water is drawn for the horses, and this is the only place where the birds can obtain a drink, and it is a common sight to see numbers of them about the cistern on a hot day. The birds often remained for hours about the house or barn, for these furnished about all the shade there was on some of the farms.

I had been on the farm a few days when one bright morning at sunrise I heard birds singing which I thought were goldfinches, but on going outside no birds but the larks were about and I soon discovered that they were the songsters. I heard them often after that and would imagine that I was in California listening to the goldfinch, for it seemed strange to find a song bird in such a desolate, sandy country. Out in the summer-fallowed fields hundreds of Horned Larks were to be found, and it was a curious habit of the male to fly up into the air and by a series of circles mount higher and higher 'till it was lost to sight, although one could hear its note which was uttered every few seconds.

Scattered through the fields are numerous plants called "Chinese lettuce" and a species of lupine and under these the birds find a nesting place. A small hollow is scraped out and filled with pieces of wheat straw and dry lupine, with fine pieces of the latter for a lining. The eggs are three or four in number and vary considerably. When the set is incomplete or contains fresh eggs the bird often leaves the nest before you are near, but when the eggs are highly incubated the female sets close and remains near when disturbed. As the farmers have the weeds cut each year in the months of June or July, many nests are annually destroyed. Two or more sets are probably laid in a season as I saw large young in June and fresh eggs late in July.

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