

species until July 10 of the present year, when I took a fine set of four eggs, the nest being placed in a pine sapling and saddled on to a large limb about six feet out from the trunk of the tree and thirty feet from the ground. Elevation, 9,000 feet. This nest and eggs do not differ from those I found in 1896 excepting that the nesting material is a little different, owing to the

difference in altitude. Mr. F. C. Willard found a nest of this species in 1897 saddled on a large limb in a pine tree thirty feet from the ground. This nest rested against the trunk of the tree and in climbing, Mr. Willard put his hand over the nest,—not knowing it was there—and unfortunately crushed the eggs.



### A Northern Record for the Black-chinned Sparrow.

(*Spizella atrigularis*.)

BY D. A. COHEN, ALAMEDA, CAL.

[Read before the Northern Division of the Cooper Orn. Club, Sept. 2, 1899.]

ON May 27, 1899 while working my way through the low, rather sparse, black sage covering a knoll in the Coast Range Mountains in Alameda county, near the line of Contra Costa county, I observed a small bird alight in one of the bushes, but before I could raise the gun it had hidden itself amongst the cover. During that brief space I caught a glimpse of the black chin and wondering what the strange bird could be, decided it was possibly Bell's Sparrow (*Amphispiza belli*). Efforts to flush it or catch sight of it again were unavailing. About two miles farther along the rocky hills, descending from a rocky ledge and barren soil with a sparse growth of sage and scrub oak to where the more fertile soil supported a healthier and more abundant growth of vegetation, I had just shot a Lazuli Bunting on a gentle incline down to the canon. Here and there was a small rock and on one of them I sat for a brief rest when a bird song, very much like that of the Lazuli Bunting in tone and duration, met my ear.

The singer had no time to repeat as he hopped about the top of a tall shrub, because a charge of dust shot ended the life of the individual which I could not clearly recognize in the strong light. Upon picking up a cleanly-killed specimen I knew it to be akin to the bird I had just previously seen, and judging it to be a male because of its song, I searched for the female or for the nest. Here was an ideal place for the nest, both sun and shade in varied quanti-

ties,—a miniature ravine, shaded by a few willow, small bay trees and burr oaks, that had been a rill in the rainy season, losing its way a hundred yards farther down the slope to a grassy hillside above the thick brush along the creek, while on each side of the ravine was mixed vegetation characteristic of the richer soils, also an occasional sage bush and rock straggling from the rugged territory higher up. One or two patches of wild blackberry vines, beds of bracken, clumps of lupine and thistles and mixed brush where a tall, coarse perennial grass flourished, were diligently searched without sign or note of a bird of any sort.

Mr. W. Otto Emerson identified the specimen as the Black-chinned Sparrow (*Spizella atrigularis*). It measured in inches 5.90; 7.88; 2.60; 2.80. Bill, pinkish-brown; irides, brown. It was a male in rather worn plumage and possibly breeding close to the spot where it was taken as this was the best site as to varied topography for its size of any for miles. The bird's song and bold actions indicated its mate was nesting in the vicinity if similar actions of other small birds are taken into account.

Mr. Belding's "Land Birds of the Pacific District" quotes on this sparrow as follows, in part:—"Santa Ana Plains, Los Angeles Co., Dec. 10-14, 1884, rather common—F. E. Blaisdell. San Bernardino, F. Stephens, tolerably common; breeds in the foothills. Colton, April 28, 1884, a fine male shot by R. B. Heron. April 29, male shot by Chas. W.

Gunn. [Mr. Stephens was the first to find it in the coast region of California, in 1883 or earlier]."

I sent the specimen to Mr. Stephens at Witch Creek, San Diego Co., for further reference and he generously contributed the following notes, and remarks that the specimen appears to be in the normal male plumage. Mr. Stephens says: "All my notes and references are at San Diego so I cannot give you as definite information as I would like to. In a general way this species is more or less distributed over the brush-covered hillsides (chemisal) of Southern California, between 1,000 and 3,000 feet altitude. They appear in the latter part of March. By the end of June the song ceases, or nearly so. As they are retiring in habit, the song is the principal clue to their presence. I cannot say just how late the species remains but I doubt many birds being here after the first of August, perhaps none.

"The farthest north I have seen this species is near Independence, Inyo Co. (see Fisher's Report on the Ornithology of the Death Valley Expedition). The nest and eggs are of the usual *Spizella* character; the nest is placed in low bushes in the thick chemisal and May is the principal nesting month. I have seen small companies of fewer than a dozen birds in the migration, but usually not more than one or two pairs inhabit any one hillside. I do not consider the species common anywhere and there are large areas in southern California where it does not occur."



### Echoes From An Outing.

A MEMORY OF THE SIERRAS.\*

ON a bright morning in early June a trio of the Cooper Club consisting of Mr. Barlow, Mr. Carriger and the deponent set out from Placerville, the old "Hangtown" of blessed memory, and took our way up over the old stage road toward the divide. A pair of handsome "bays" relieved us of physical exertion and the blistering heat of the lower valleys was tempered by the mountain altitudes. Every breeze was redolent with the o-

dors of conifers, while the broad sweeps of the mountain suburbs were a continual revelation of fresh and inspiring scenery.

Our attention is early and often called to the substantial pavement with which Nature has invested the highway and hills, and to the superfluous materials left scattered about. But even these ungentle reminders are not devoid of sentiment, for was it not over these rocks that Horace Greeley made his flying record behind the relentless whip of Hank Monk? The incident is dim in the shadow of more important events connected with the old highway, but in the light of experience the solemn conviction remains that here the seeds of lingering dissolution were planted in the tangled viscera of the great journalist.

Tradition tells us that over this trail came many of the Argonauts of '49 and bands of gold-hunters who followed in succeeding years. When the hidden treasures of the old Comstock were unfolded to the world, the old trail was converted into a chartered thoroughfare and carried the products and supplies of that historic mining camp. No suburban avenue on the continent could then rival it in value and magnitude of its traffic and old residents, with watery eyes and far-away look, still delight to tell of those halcyon years when the road was crowded with a moving procession of dusty mules and ponderous trains, of flying stages and hurrying equipages and all the turmoil of congested business to be found where gold is prevalent. But the sentiment is all of the past! When the heart of the great industry ceased to beat, associated enterprises died for want of nourishment. A few lumber-laden teams from an adjacent mill plod up and down in monotonous routine.

The wandering camper urges his weary mules toward the clear waters

\* [It is proper to here mention that the locality whence Mr. Welch gleaned the observations that have entered into his delightful "reverie," is Fyffe, El Dorado Co., Cal., a point on the Lake Tahoe Road, which has of late years become a favorite sojourning point for numerous members of the Cooper Club. It is most interesting to note the impressions which are inspired in one who does not give his time wholly to the fascinations of ornithology while in the field, as do most of the workers who have visited Fyffe in the summer. Mr. Welch's keen and ready wit and generous good nature were pleasing features of the outing, as one may judge who follows through the sketch. ED.]