

slight. In the nest where my birds were taken (on this same date) were one fresh egg, two fresh or addled, two with small embryos, three with very large embryos, one egg pipped, and one owlet; total, ten eggs.

I thought Feb. 12 an extra early date but considered it influenced by dry shelter and plenty of food, but in the case of this large set the first egg must have been laid about March 1. On the same date another nest held four fresh eggs; another held one fresh egg. On March 30 one nest held two eggs and several owlets. Individual birds certainly lay earlier annually than others, as does the parent? bird of these captive owls and the hereditary transmission was perhaps over-transmitted to the offspring.

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### Nesting of *Spatula clypeata*.

WHILE collecting some specimens of the Salt Marsh Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia pusillula*) on the salt marsh April 25, 1901, I noticed on starting out from the edge of the marsh a pair of ducks which were flying toward the waters of the bay.

After working over the marsh for several hours I started back and when half way across I again saw a pair of ducks headed inland, but thought nothing of it until a single duck started up ten feet from me and 300 yards from the mainland.

On going to the spot there lay a nest in open sight on the bare ground among the salt-weed. It was not over four inches off the ground and contained fourteen eggs. The nest was composed of dry stems of the salt-weed, lined with down and a few feathers from the parent bird, and measured fourteen inches across the top with a depth of five inches.

The eggs were of a dull grayish-green or olive color, about two-thirds incubated and lay well embedded in the down of the nest. If the female had not

flushed I should not have found the nest.

On March 28, 1886 I took a set of this same species, placed on the sand under a low bush, 150 yards back from the bay shore. The nest was constructed in a very similar manner to the one above described. In this case I got my head within three feet of the close-setting female before she flew, the male joining her before reaching the bay. The Shoveller is becoming more common on the salt marshes from year-to-year.

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### A Visit to the Herons.

ON THE morning of April 4, 1901 Mr. R. Smith and the writer started on bicycles to visit a heronry about six miles from town. We passed the Napa State Insane Asylum one and one-half miles out at nine o'clock and reached the heronry half an hour later. It was found to be thickly populated with Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*), known to their human neighbors familiarly as cranes.

This heronry is situated on the summit of an eminence known as Greenwood's hill and does not at all resemble the dismal-like heronries I have read of so often. The trees are chiefly live-oaks and contain, in some cases, as many as eleven nests. We carried a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch rope about 80 feet long, a satchel for the eggs and a tape-line for measuring heights. After considerable difficult climbing we secured a number of sets of eggs from the rather bulky nests of sticks.

In the live oaks the nests can be best seen from below, and from a distance a tree containing several nests does not appear to be tenanted. The birds usually perched near the nests and were easily seen. On the trip Barn Owls, Sparrow Hawks, Californian Woodpeckers and Brewer's Blackbirds were especially numerous while many other species were represented.

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