

do here; the trees were almost the same,—the sacred laurel being no other than our familiar bay tree; the plane-tree our sycamore and the arbutus our madrone. Even the odor and feeling of the air was like home. Why then should not the nightingale find himself at home and prosper in California?—ANNA HEAD, *Berkeley, Cal.*

Stragglers in Los Angeles County.—While Mr. G. F. Morcom and myself were combining the pleasures of quail shooting with the collecting of ornithological specimens in the San Fernando Valley, on Dec. 13, 1901, we had the good fortune to secure a lark bunting. (*Calamospiza melanocorys*.) The bird was flushed out of a thick clump of cactus and shot by Mr. Morcom. It was a young female in the streaked plumage, without a trace of black, and at first we hardly knew what we had secured. On Jan. 16, 1902, I secured another not two hundred yards from where the first one was shot, and a minute or two later flushed at least three more which scattered in the thick brush and were lost sight of. This second specimen was a male, and probably an adult bird, as there were many black feathers in the wings and tail and about the head.—H. S. SWARTH, *Los Angeles, Cal.*

Wren-Tit Building in a Tree.—It has always been one of my traditions, strongly corroborated by experience, that the family of wren-tits invariably build nests in low bushes, near the ground, the highest observed not having been over three and one-half feet. On the morning of the 18th of April, 1902, however, I observed a wren-tit (*Chamaea f. henshawii*) carrying materials for a nest. Half an hour's watch failed to locate any particular bush that seemed to be the building site, but I noticed that the birds always flew into a live oak tree before diving into the surrounding bushes. Close approach, and several changes of position without giving offense to the busy pair, finally developed the fact that they had chosen the thick outer part of a large overhanging branch of this tree for the site of their nursery, and the height above ground of the nest was estimated at twelve feet. This morning they appeared to be nearly through with the labor of lining, and I presume the fairer partner will assume her maternal duties in a day or two. Unfortunately it will be impossible, from its situation, to watch this nest for further details. If any of the readers of THE CONDOR have discovered similar sites for nest-building appropriated by these birds it would be of general interest to know of such.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *Santa Barbara, Cal.*, April 20, 1902.

An Unusual Sight.—What seemed to me a sight worthy of note was observed a few mornings ago on the outskirts of this town. A man was endeavoring to burn the rather green grass on the golf links near the mission during the prevalence of a very strong north wind. While walking along the road, some half mile from the spot, I first observed the smoke rising, and soon noticed that, on the lee side of the fire, the air was dark with what appeared to be swallows, but did not at the moment connect the two incidents in my mind. Approaching from the windward side I ran into a small flight of white-throated swifts (*Aeronautes melanoleucus*) accompanied by a few Vaux swifts (*Chetura vauxi*) and a few swallows, and being too near houses to use a large charge, managed to drop a couple of the *Aeronautes* with my 32-cal. auxiliary as they were bucking against the wind. The field was burning just opposite my quarters, and on close approach the air appeared to be actually full of swallows, cliff swallows far outnumbering the other varieties, darting about in the lee of the fire and following the thin smoke for at least a quarter of a mile. All the swallows of the neighborhood seemed to have congregated on the spot. Many were actually flitting through the smoke within three feet of the smouldering blaze where the grass was too green to burn freely, though the heat must have been considerable within such a short distance of the fire.

The burning was not continued for any great length of time on this day, but was resumed on the next when the same occurrence was repeated, the only difference being that the wind being less strong and somewhat shifting the area of the smoke was greater and the birds consequently more scattered. Also on this morning a good many swifts were among the swallows, while on the previous day these had mostly kept to windward of the smoke. On the third day I was busy putting up specimens and did not notice whether there was any fire or not, but in the afternoon Mr. A. P. Redington came to call on me and was much interested at having seen a repetition of this occurrence on the way over, it being something new in his experience.

Neither of us was able to solve the phenomena. We could not ascertain whether the birds were after insects stirred up from the grass, whether they were attracted by the smoke itself, or whether they mistook fine cinders for insects. The first hypothesis seemed untenable from the fact that there could not have been enough insects from such a small area of grass as was burning to amount to much in the way of food for such an assemblage of birds, while the third seems an insult to the birds' intelligence on account of their persistency in following the smoke for several days. It really appeared as if the smoke itself or the odor therefrom was the great attraction.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *Santa Barbara, Cal.*, May 25, 1902.