

Bird Notes from Eastern California and Western Arizona.

BY FRANK STEPHENS.

IN the summer of 1902 I made a collecting trip through portions of eastern California and western Arizona in the interests of the U. S. Biological Survey. By the kind permission of Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the Biological Survey, I am enabled to publish the bird notes in THE CONDOR.

A description of the route followed will be necessary for a clear understanding of the region worked over and the relationships of the bird life therein.

Leaving the eastern end of the San Gorgonio Pass the middle of May we crossed a small corner of the Colorado Desert; thence we traveled northward through the Morongo Pass at the eastern end of the San Bernardino Mountains, coming out on the Mohave Desert. Another day's drive eastward took us to Twenty-nine Palms, a small oasis of rather alkaline soil surrounded by barren desert. There was little bird life here and a sand storm which continued through our short stay kept the few birds there were about from showing themselves. A drive of forty miles northward over very sandy desert took us to the next water at Bagdad on the Santa Fe R. R. We then followed the route of the railroad northeast fifty miles to the little station of Fenner, where we made a side trip twenty-five miles northward to the Providence Mountains. Soon after leaving Fenner we began to see a little vegetation and as we neared the mountains it became more common and signs of animal life were seen. A fortnight's stay at the Providence Mountains proved very interesting. This range is extremely rugged, and is composed of limestone and porphyry. It is well timbered with pinyon and juniper. Although the higher peaks exceed 7,000 feet in altitude they carry no yellow pine. On the plain at the base of the mountains is a fair growth of larrea and several species of cactuses. Among the pinyons was a good growth of a species of bunch grass, the only good pasturage we found for our horses on the whole trip. Water was very scarce, three springs and two wells comprising all the known waters of this high, well timbered range.

Returning to Fenner we travelled near the railroad to the Colorado River at Needles. We stopped a week in the river bottoms some twenty miles below Fort Mohave, where Dr. Cooper spent several months forty years ago. On leaving the Colorado we turned northeast, crossing a barren range of mountains by a very steep and rough road, and finding the next spring at Little Meadows on the eastern slope, altitude 2700. Thence we went to Kingman and Beale Spring in a basaltic mesa region. From there we made another side trip southeast into the Hualapai Mountains. All this region was suffering from a four years' drouth and the springs in the Hualapais were mostly dried up. We staid a fortnight at a spring where a sawmill had once been located, at about 6000 feet altitude. The highest peaks reach 8000 feet altitude or more. This granite range much resembles the south Californian mountains, as it is covered with thick low brush on the southern slopes and carries some pinyon at the base, and on the northern slopes above 5500 altitude a fair growth of yellow pine.

Returning to Kingman we struck eastward around the northern end of the Hualapai Mountains and down into the narrow valley of Big Sandy Creek, a tributary of Bill Williams River. The Big Sandy proved an interesting bird region, as a narrow tongue of the Lower Austral life zone reaches up it to about latitude 35°. Along the creek were groves of willow, cottonwood and mesquite, and

giant cactuses and other species of cactuses were scattered over the mesas.

To avoid the canyons on the lower part of the Bill Williams River the little-travelled road swings out on the desert southward and westward and comes to the Colorado River below the mouth of the former stream. From here we drove down the Colorado Valley about eighty miles, crossing the Colorado River at Ehrenberg. We spent the first eighteen days of August in the river bottoms, which carry a scattering growth of mesquite away from the river, and thickets of willow mixed with a smaller quantity of cottonwoods near the river banks. On the mesa east of the river were more or less giant cactuses, but we did not see a single plant of this species on the Californian side of the river. Birds were less plentiful in the Colorado Valley than I had expected and at this late date were mostly moulting. The heat was great, reaching 119° in the shade of August first, and collecting was not a comfortable task.

From the Colorado River we followed the old, long-abandoned stage route westward across the Chuckawalla Desert, a disagreeable sandy drive of eighty miles to the next house, and with but one water, at Chuckawalla Spring, midway. Then we crossed the Colorado Desert via Salton, and were well pleased to get into the coast mountains after spending nearly four months in the hot deserts with but two breathing spells in the mountains.

As collecting mammals was the principal object of the trip I made few bird skins, and omitted taking several species that since have proved desirable, hence in a few cases there is a little doubt as to the particular subspecies seen.

The migration being practically over when I entered the region the following list contains few species not resident therein and most of these are noted as migrants in the text.

Podilymbus podiceps. Pied-billed Grebe. Saw one in a lagoon below Ehrenberg.

Larus sp. At Ehrenberg I saw a small flock of medium-sized gulls passing down river near the opposite bank.

Phalacrocorax sp. Below Ehrenberg I saw several cormorants standing on a snag in a lagoon. Later others flew past at a distance.

Mareca americana. Baldpate. One shot from a small flock near Ehrenberg.

Querquedula discors. Blue-winged Teal. Shot two and saw others on a lagoon near Ehrenberg.

Querquedula cyanoptera. Cinnamon Teal. Saw a pair near Needles in June.

Plegadis guarauna. White-faced Glossy Ibis. Saw a small flock of migrants at Whitewater Ranch, San Gorgonio Pass, May 15.

Tantalus loculator. Wood Ibis. Saw two near Needles in June; an immature bird at Bill Williams River the last of July; and large flocks in the lagoons below Ehrenberg in August. They were not shy and were feeding in the shallower parts of the lagoons, wading about where the water was but a few inches deep.

Ardea herodias. Great Blue Heron. Seen several times along the shores of the Colorado River. Not common.

Ardea virescens anthonyi. Anthony Green Heron. I saw quite a number along the Colorado River and Big Sandy Creek, mostly young of the year.

Nycticorax nycticorax nævius. Black-crowned Night Heron. Seen and heard along the Colorado River in June and August.

Fulica americana. American Coot. Saw but few and only on lagoons near the Colorado River.

Himantopus mexicanus. Black-necked Stilt. One flock and some single birds seen at the lagoons near Ehrenberg.

Tringa minutilla? Saw a small flock of birds that appeared to be of this species flying over Big Sandy Creek in July.

Ereunetes occidentalis? Saw a big flock at a lagoon near Ehrenberg in August.

Heleodromas solitarius (cinnamomeus?) Saw several solitary sandpipers along the lagoons of the Colorado, but neglected to shoot any.

Numenius longirostris. Long-billed Curlew. Saw a small flock below Ehrenberg flying southward over the Colorado River.

Ægialitis vocifera. Killdeer. More or less common at all the streams passed.

Lophortyx gambeli. Gambel Partridge. First seen in the Morongo Pass. Found thereafter at all places where water and food were obtainable by them. These partridges seem to find it difficult to live where water is not accessible to them. They were rather common in the Hualapai Mountains up to 6500 feet altitude. Two broods of young were seen at the foot of the Providence Mountains the latter part of May and many more along the Colorado River near Needles on our arrival there early in June. No other species of partridge was seen on the trip east of the range of *L. californicus*.

Zenaidura macroura. Mourning Dove. Seen practically along the whole route traveled, though of course not plentiful in the deserts.

Melopelia leucoptera. White-winged Dove. The characteristic hoarse cooing of this dove was first heard at The Needles on the Californian side of the Colorado, but none were actually seen there. Seen at Little Meadows (alt. 2750). They were common on Big Sandy Creek, where they were feeding partly on the fruits of the giant cactus, and were known locally as the Sonora dove. Around Ehrenberg they were less common but I killed two at one shot there on the river bank. I did not happen to see any on the California side of the Colorado, though they of course occur on both sides of the river. I do not think this dove is found regularly west of the Colorado River bottom lands, though they probably straggle a short distance into the deserts.

Columbigallina passerina pallescens. Mexican Ground Dove. Shot one and saw others on Big Sandy Creek, also saw them on Bill Williams River and I shot another on the Californian side of the Colorado below Ehrenberg.

Cathartes aura. Turkey Vulture. Seen in many places, even over the deserts.

Accipiter cooperi. Cooper Hawk. Seen only in the timber about the lagoons below Ehrenberg.

Parabuteo unicinctus harrisi. Harris Hawk. Shot two near Ehrenberg, one in Arizona and the other in California and saw two others in California. They frequented large isolated cottonwoods standing near lagoons. They were not very shy.

Buteo borealis calurus. Western Red-tailed Hawk. Seen sparingly in most of the region traversed.

Buteo abbreviatus. Zone-tailed Hawk. The only one seen I shot on Big Sandy Creek. It was not wild, but perhaps this was accounted for by the fact that it was totally blind in one eye. This is the most northern record for this species known to me.

Buteo swainsoni. Swainson Hawk. Saw the dried remains of one at Beale Spring. No other recognized.

Falco mexicanus. Prairie Falcon. Saw one at Twenty-nine Palms and another on Providence Mountains.

Falco sparverius deserticolus. Desert Sparrow Hawk. Unexpectedly rare. Saw a few on the Mohave Desert and one on Providence Mountains. The only one noted in Arizona was in the Colorado River bottoms above Ehrenberg.

Pandion haliaetus carolinensis. American Osprey. Saw the remains of one near Ehrenberg.

Bubo virginianus pacificus. Pacific Horned Owl. Mr. Brandegee saw two in the Providence Mountains. I heard them in the Hualapai Mountains and near Ehrenberg.

(To be concluded.)

A Strange Nesting Site of *Calypte anna*.



MR. W. Lee Chambers of Santa Monica has sent us photographs showing a very strange nesting site of the Anna hummingbird. Mr. Chambers writes:

"I am enclosing a couple of photographs of an Anna hummingbird's nest built on a telegraph pole in the busiest street of Santa Monica. It is built over a nest of last year, and the illustrations show its situation. The

construction is as usual: i. e., spider-web chiefly, covered on the outside with bits of moss, and lined with an unusual amount of white feathers. In fact the nest was so filled with feathers that I could hardly take the eggs out for fear of crushing them. The incubation was well advanced; date March 31, 1903."

