

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

The Texas Kingfisher at New Braunfels, Texas.—While spending a Sunday at Landa's Park, New Braunfels last June I observed a pair of these rare kingfishers (*Ceryle americana septentrionalis*) flying about in search of food. While enjoying a boat ride on the lake, I had a good opportunity to observe them. They were always in sight and were constantly uttering their curious call-note, which somewhat resembles the notes of the common kingfisher. Presently one alighted on a dead pecan tree on the margin of the lake and I cautiously approached so as to get a better view, but before I had gotten within viewing distance it was off, and soon again was seen flying down the lake with its mate. This species is considerably smaller than the common kingfisher and is very rare in this locality except at New Braunfels near the springs in Landa's Park. I have never found this species breeding but I am inclined to believe that it still breeds in Comal county, Texas.—A. E. SCHUTZE, *Austin, Texas.*

The Inca Dove in Central Texas.—On account of the long droughts that have occurred throughout southwest Texas for the past few years, many birds have suffered considerably from scarcity of food and water. For long years the Inca dove (*Scardafella inca*) or Mexican dove, as it is often called, was confined to a region between San Antonio and the Rio Grande and south ward into Mexico. Bexar county was perhaps the northern limit in Texas.

On account of the continued droughts, this dove, as well as many other species of birds moved north and eastward to a country where they found food and water in abundance. In Comal county, especially at New Braunfels, they are now plentiful, where but a few years ago they had never been seen. They are also quite common in Travis county. The first birds that I observed near Austin, were seen in the fall of 1902 when I unexpectedly came upon a flock of five. They were feeding together on the side of a hill and showed no fear at my presence. Only one nest has so far been found north of Comal county. This was found in a small bush in Caldwell county and contained two fresh eggs. Last summer I made several trips to New Braunfels, Comal county where I found this diminutive dove in abundance. They were confined to the city and not a single individual was seen in the immediate vicinity. No nests were discovered, but I was told by a resident that they had nested abundantly the previous spring.

Like the common dove, they are residents. After the breeding season they form small flocks and can usually be found feeding together in a shady ravine or grove. They are rapidly increasing in numbers and probably in a few years they will be as abundant as the common dove. They are slowly moving northward and have also been observed as far east as College Station.—A. E. SCHUTZE, *Austin, Texas.*

Northern Flicker at Auburn, California.—Dr. R. F. Rooney has sent the writer a wing of *Colaptes auratus luteus*. The bird was taken by his son on the outskirts of Auburn, California, October 3, 1904. Dr. Rooney says it is the first specimen he has seen on the Pacific coast during a residence of twenty-seven years. Auburn is a rather southern station although, as stated in Grinnell's check-list, "*auratus*" has been recorded as far south as Warm Springs, San Diego county.—WALTER K. FISHER.

The Destruction of Bird Life by Light Towers.—Hundreds if not thousands of birds lose their lives yearly, by coming in contact with the light towers of the city of Austin. There are thirty-four of these towers, 150 feet in height, built entirely of steel, and held in place by stout wires or iron ropes. At the top of each are suspended six large globes or arc lamps which make a very brilliant light. During the fall and spring migrations the birds encounter a great difficulty when passing over this city at night. They are attracted by the lights from the towers and begin to fly about in great confusion. The light is so strong that when they come within a certain distance they are temporarily blinded at which time so many lose their lives. They begin to fly about in all directions and not being able to see they strike the steel tower with such great force that they fall to the ground, with perhaps a broken wing, crushed body or shattered head. Warblers, sparrows, thrushes and other small birds that fly at night are the principal victims. Ducks, geese, plover and other water fowl suffer considerably. I have often been awakened at night by the screaming geese that had been betrayed by the light. In some instances the birds were so stupefied that they flew around the light for hours in great confusion. During storms the birds are more easily attracted. Martins have also suffered since the towers were erected. When they arrive from the south their first stopping place is invariably the light tower, where after a few days of noisy courtship they begin to build their homes in the suspended globes. The towers are cleaned daily and consequently the nests are destroyed. After the great dam and power house was destroyed at Austin, in April 1900, the towers were neglected for several months. The martins became aware of this fact and many built their nests in the globes. The

birds entered from the top as this was the only opening large enough to admit them. All went well until the young were able to leave the nest. But now how to get out? They had never gone through the upper passage and therefore did not know the route to the outer world. The old birds diligently fed and cared for their broods that were rapidly growing in size, when finally they became aware of their folly and gave up in despair. The young were left to their own fate. The globes in which the nests were situated are transparent and are 150 feet above the ground. The young could see the green world below, hear the twitter of other birds that were flying about and yet they were unable to leave their confinement. The old birds could be seen flying about, in distress throughout the day and unable to give any relief. Now imagine the miserable deaths these poor little creatures met.

After a new power plant had been erected men were ordered to clean the towers and make all necessary repairs. On one occasion I saw an electrician take six full grown young from a single globe, besides many individuals out of the others. This is probably one instance out of a hundred that shows how bird life is affected as civilization advances. The scissor-tailed flycatcher often builds its nest on the cross bars of the towers.—A. E. SCHUTZE, *Austin, Texas*.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

JULY.—The July meeting was held July 9, at the residence of H. R. Taylor, Alameda. Eleven members and ten visitors were present, and President Taylor occupied the chair. Three new active members were elected, viz., Messrs. Walter Dean, L. Stejneger, and S. F. Rathbun. Communications from Mr. William Brewster and Dr. Jonathan Dwight, Jr. were read, and five persons were proposed for membership, viz., Miss E. F. Kuhls, and Messrs. A. H. Snow, H. C. Oberholser, R. H. Johnson, and C. H. Rose. Mr. W. K. Fisher was appointed chairman of the Information Committee. Mr. Emerson spoke on "The Identification of Birds in the Field," and two papers were also presented one by Mr. Mailliard, "California Jays and Cats," and one by Mrs. Florence Merriam Bailey, "A Dusky Grouse and her Brood in New Mexico." The authors not being present the papers were read by the Secretary and by Mr. Fisher. Meeting adjourned to meet at San Anselmo, Sept. 10, 1904.

SEPTEMBER.—The September meeting was held at the residence of H. H. Sheldon, San Anselmo, Sept. 10. The small attendance was noticeable, only five members and two visitors being present. Mr. Grinnell occupied the chair in the absence of Mr. Taylor. Five new members were elected, as follows: Miss Elsa F. Kuhls, Messrs. A. H. Snow, H. C. Oberholser, R. H. Johnson, and C. H. Rose. Mr. J. Proctor was proposed for membership. Mr. Grinnell addressed the Club regarding the financial condition of THE CONDOR. He informed the Club that it was in a most satisfactory condition, and that the year would close with a small balance on hand. Mr. Johnson's paper "Notes on Unusual Nesting Sites of the Pacific Yellow-throat," was read by Mr. Grinnell, and Mr. Thompson spoke on "The Anatidae of Morro Bay." The Club then adjourned to meet in Oakland, Nov. 5, 1904.

NOVEMBER.—The Club met Nov. 5 at the home of Miss Helen Swett, Oakland. Nineteen members and seven visitors were present, and President Taylor occupied the chair. The order of business was reversed and the program was immediately proceeded to. Mr. Seale gave a most interesting address on the "Birds of the South Seas," and Mr. Taylor read Mr. Silloway's paper "Notes from Flathead 1904." Business was then taken up, and Mr. J. W. Procter, Stanford University, was elected to active membership. The following were proposed for membership: Messrs. H. H. Elbert, Stanford University; P. J. Fair, Palo Alto; W. A. Bryan, Honolulu; E. S. Currier, Tacoma, Washington; C. P. Smith, Palo Alto; and Dr. E. A. Mearns, Washington, D. C.

The following were nominated as officers for 1905: president, Joseph Mailliard; senior vice-president, Miss Helen Swett; junior vice-pres., J. O. Snyder; secretary, Charles S. Thompson; treasurer, Joseph Grinnell.

Mr. Fisher proposed that the January meeting should be held at some restaurant in San Francisco, and the members present voted unanimously that the annual meeting should be held at such restaurant as should be decided upon by the committee appointed for that purpose by Pres. Taylor. The Club approved Mr. Fisher's action in placing the magazines and books of the Club in the Barbara Jordan Ornithological Library at Stanford University.

Adjourned to meet in San Francisco, January 14, 1905.

CHARLES S. THOMPSON, Secretary.