

curred in 1907, as no wind could have reached so deep in the woods, and was lying almost horizontally with the butt end in the bottom of a little stream and the tip lying against the bank. Mr. Sheldon and his companion left for home the next day, but bequeathed the nest to me. As my time was limited to the 18th it was necessary to visit the nest on the 17th, even tho the complement of eggs might not have been laid. The bird was setting and in full view when the spot was reached, and creeping along the bank, trying to hypnotize the bird with the eye while feeling the way with my feet I set up the camera at a guess of ten feet with the idea in view of a possible enlargement should a good negative result, focussed and took a time exposure. Cautiously moving along with my heart in my throat I tried again at eight feet, timing the light with an actinometer. And yet again at six feet, and the bird never moved! The smallest stop was used and the exposure was *six minutes* in these somber woods, during which I do not believe the bird took her frightened eyes off the camera for an instant. The accompanying photo is an enlargement of this six foot exposure. Gradually creeping along inch by inch, keeping my head covered, and looking under the camera and focussing cloth, I was setting up and focussing at *four* feet when my heel dislodged a stone which fell with a slight crash down the bank and the bird flew. Too bad! I would have liked to hide and wait for her return to the nest, but time pressed and we were far from home, so I took a couple of plates of the nest and eggs in situ before adding them to our collection. It was a great disappointment to me not to have had a telephoto lens along, as here was a fine chance to use one, but an error of a friend at the last moment left me without such an aid.



NEST AND EGGS OF MONTEREY HERMIT THRUSH

*San Geronimo, California.*

### A BIT OF EARLY CALIFORNIA NATURAL HISTORY

By FRANK S. DAGGETT

RECENTLY came across a set of twenty volumes, published by the author, Dr. John Trusler, entitled "The Habitable World Described". Volume I was published in 1788 and the last one in 1795. They contain many plates and a great amount of information from countries then but little known. Volume VII

contains a description of California "from the Spanish of Michael Venegas, a Mexican Jesuit, published at Madrid in 1758, and others". Of course we are most interested in what he says about animals and birds:

"In California are now found all kinds of domestic animals, commonly used in Spain and Mexico; horses, mules, asses, oxen, sheep, hogs, goats, dogs, and cats. They have been imported from New Spain, and thrive here very well; but here are two species of wild animals, not known in Old or New Spain. The first is that which Californians call *Taye*; it is about the size of a calf, a year and a half old, and greatly resembles it in figure, except in its head, which is like that of a deer, with very thick horns like a ram; its hoof is large, round, and cloven like that of an ox; its skin is spotted like a deer, but the hair thinner, and it has a short tail like a deer; the flesh is very palatable, and, to some, tastes delicious.

"The other animal peculiar to this country is the *Coyote*, or wild dog, very much resembling a fox. Here are also leopards, such as they call lions in Mexico; goats, cats, and wild hogs, are frequently found in the mountains, and (Father) *Torquemada* observes, that, about Monte-Rey are very large bears, tigers, an animal something like a buffalo, and a creature which he thus describes: it is about the size of a steer, but shaped like a stag; its hair resembles that of a pelican, and is a quarter of a yard in length; its neck long; and on its head are horns, like those of a stag; the tail is a yard long, and half a yard broad; and its feet cloven, like the feet of an ox."

"Of birds there are an infinite variety. Among these, for the table, are turtle-doves, herons, quails, pheasants, geese, ducks, and pigeons. The birds of prey are vultures, hawks, falcons, ospreys, horn-owls, ravens, and crows. Of night-birds, there are owls, and many others of a smaller kind, not seen in other parts, nor mentioned by any naturalists; nor have the narratives of the Jesuits supplied us with a description, or even with the names of them.

"California has a great variety of singing-birds, as larks, nightingales, and the like, adorned with beautiful plumages. *Torquemada* says, that about the harbour of Monte-Rey are buffards, peacocks, geese, thrushes, swallows, sparrows, gold-finches, linnets, quails, partridges, blackbirds, water-wagtails, cranes, and other birds resembling turkey-cocks, so large as to be 17 palms from the extremity of one wing to that of the other; and also a particular species of gulls, that live on pilchards and other filth, equal in size to a very large goose, their bill a foot long, with long legs resembling a stork, their beak and feet like those of a goose. They have a vast crew, which in some hangs down like the leather bottles used in Peru for carrying water, in which crews they carry what they catch to their young ones. The friendly disposition of these birds is something surprising, for they assist one another when sick or wounded, and bring that bird provision that is unable to search for it. The Indians profit by this; for, when they want a dish of fish, they will wound and tie a gull to a particular spot, conceal themselves, and, when they think all the provision is brought them which other gulls designed, they advance and seize the contribution: such are the mysterious ways of Providence for the support of his creatures!"

"Father *Torquemada* speaking of the island of St. Catherine, in the neighbourhood of California, says, 'In this island are rancherias, or communities, and in them a temple, with a large, level court, where they perform their sacrifices; and in one, was a large circular space, the place of the altar, with an enclosure of feathers of several birds of different colours; which I understood,' says he, 'were those of the birds they sacrificed in great numbers: and within the circle, was an image, strangely bedaubed with a variety of colours, representing some devil, ac-

According to the manner of the Indians of New Spain, holding in its hand, a figure of the sun and moon. It happened, that when the soldiers came to see this temple, they found within the said circle, two crows, considerably larger than ordinary; which at the approach of the Spaniards flew away, but alighted among the rocks in the neighbourhood. The soldiers seeing them of such uncommon size, fired their guns and killed them. At this, an Indian, who had attended the Spaniards as a guide, fell into an agony. I was informed that they believed the devil spoke to them in these crows, and thence held them in great veneration. Sometime after, one of the soldiers going that way, saw some Indian women washing fish on the shore, but some crows came up to them, and with their beaks, took the fish from their hands, whilst they observed a profound silence, not daring so much as to look at them, much less frighten them away. Nothing therefore could seem more horrible to the Californians, than that the Spaniards should shoot at these respectable birds.'"

*Chicago, Illinois.*

## SUMMER BIRDS OF THE UPPER SALINAS VALLEY AND ADJACENT FOOTHILLS

By G. WILLETT

THE following notes were taken from May 23 to June 3 of this year in the Upper Salinas Valley and surrounding hills along the Monterey and San Luis Obispo county line.

Owing to the short time given me for observation the appended list is undoubtedly very incomplete. Also owing to the semi-arid nature of this particular section many birds that are common a few miles away are found here rarely or not at all. For instance I did not note a single species of warbler altho I know that several species breed within a few miles. I visited this locality about fourteen years ago and I find the distribution of several species of birds considerably changed during that time.

In the Salinas river bottom, which at San Miguel has an elevation of about 800 feet, are extensive groves of cottonwoods and willows; and the surrounding hills, which run up to an elevation of over 2500 feet, are covered with large oaks and scattering groves of pines.

*Ardea herodias*. Great Blue Heron. Common in river bottom.

*Ardea virescens anthonyi*. Anthony Green Heron. Green Herons probably of this species were common in river bottom but no specimens were taken.

*Ægialitis vocifera*. Killdeer. Common along streams.

*Lophortyx californicus vallicola*? Valley Partridge. Abundant, with half-grown young. Owing to close season I took no specimens and am in doubt as to subspecies as this must be about the dividing line between *L. californicus* and *L. c. vallicola*.

*Columba fasciata*. Band-tailed Pigeon. A small flock seen in the hills on Monterey side at about 2500 feet.

*Zenaidura macroura*. Mourning Dove. Abundant.

*Gymnogyphus californianus*. California Condor. I saw this species in this vicinity fourteen years ago but saw none at this time altho I kept a careful lookout for them.