

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**The Wilson Phalarope at Santa Barbara.**—On the morning of the 30th of April, 1909, while scanning a flock of small sandpipers in the muddy flats near the railway track at Santa Barbara, my glass fell upon a bird which at the second or third glance I saw to be a Wilson Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*), a female in handsome plumage; and presently I discovered nearby her plainly drest small mate. In the afternoon I found the pair in the same place, and watcht them at short range as long as I pleased. Both birds were still present May 2d, 4th, and 6th. On each of the next three days I saw the male only, and on the 10th I left home for two months. It amused me to notice how to the very last I involuntarily thought of the bright large female as the male, and *vice versa*.—BRADFORD TORREY, *Santa Barbara, California*.

**Limonites ruficollis in Alaska.**—I have bought from time to time a good many bird-skins of Mr. A. H. Dunham, of Nome, Alaska. He usually spends his winters in his old home at New Haven, Conn., leaving Alaska early in the autumn. He has on several occasions brought back with him a number of rather rare birds, such as the Kittlitz Murrelet, Emperor Goose, Spectacled Eider, etc.

On his last trip he had a large number of skins, some rare ones and some of little interest. Among the lot were a pair of Sandpipers and two of their young, which he had shot at Nome, July 10, 1908. He "threw these in" with the other birds I bought, saying, that he "remembered my telling him to collect a few nestlings." The skin of the female was such a miserable, greasy thing and so wretchedly made (most of Dunham's skins are very poor) that I threw it away without examining it. On looking over these Alaskan skins one day, I found that I couldn't make out what this Sandpiper was. I sent the remaining adult skin to Mr. Outram Bangs, who sent it to Professor Ridgway, who identified it as *Limonites ruficollis*.

This is, I think, the first record of this bird being taken in Alaska, and that it bred there is also interesting.—JOHN E. THAYER, *Lancaster, Mass.*

**The Allen Hummingbird at San Diego in Winter.**—On January 26, 1908, I found an adult male Allen hummer (*Selasphorus alleni*) in a small hollow in the city park at San Diego, feeding upon the blossoms of the tree tobacco. The place was close upon the Fifth Street sidewalk, within a five minutes walk of my hotel, and for three weeks I saw the bird almost daily. To be precise, I listed it fifteen days between the date of its discovery and the 16th of February, the day on which I left the city. On one occasion Mr. Frank Stephens was with me. I am told that there is no previous record of the wintering of this hummingbird on the mainland of California.—BRADFORD TORREY, *Santa Barbara, California*.

**Red-eyed Cowbird at Sacaton, Arizona.**—May 28, 1909, I noticed one morning a new-looking bird strutting about the barnyard; and a near approach showing his flaming eyes, I decided he was a Red-eyed Cowbird. Later in the day I saw him again, this time accompanied by a mate to whom he was very attentive. I collected him, the female escaping, and found he was the Red-eyed Cowbird (*Tangavius aeneus involucratus*). I saw the female several times the next two or three days, and June 1, a pair of the birds were in evidence. Later, by several days, I noticed a male making violent love to some lady Dwarf Cowbirds, but they were not responsive to his courtship. I have seen the pair nearly every day since, and they are here yet, July 16. I am certain of having seen at least two pairs and believe there were six pairs of them.

This locality is rather far from their reputed range, and I have been carefully examining all the nests of the Sonoran Redwings here to see if the cowbirds are breeding. As before stated they showed indications of mating, and it would be very interesting to determine if they ever do breed in this territory.

Since recording these notes I have received the July *Auk*, and notice Mr. S. S. Visher, Carnegie Laboratory, Tucson, Arizona, reports capturing a male, and seeing several others of the birds.—M. FRENCH GILMAN, *Sacaton, Arizona*.

**The Blue-winged Teal at Santa Barbara.**—Between January 21 and May 1, 1908, I saw drakes of this species (*Querquedula discors*) on fourteen days and in two places, an artificial lake at Hope Ranch and the ditches and pools near the freight station of the Southern Pacific Railroad at Santa Barbara. The two places are perhaps four miles apart. I cannot assert that I ever saw more than one bird in either place, tho on several occasions the drake was accompanied by a female which it seemed fairly certain was of the same species. The following winter the birds were again in both places, and were listed seven times between December 6, 1908, and March 16, 1909. I had no doubt that at least one male spent both winters at Hope Ranch, where

beds of tules and cat-tails furnish it abundant cover, so that its being seen on any given visit was largely a matter of accident.—BRADFORD TORREY, *Santa Barbara, California.*

**Notes from Placer County.**—I note a query you make in the last CONDOR regarding the nesting of the Western Martin (*Progne subis hesperia*). The only places I have met them in this county—nesting—were at the pottery in Lincoln and at the Court House at Auburn. There appear to be but a few pairs at each place. I was told that from three to eight pairs nested at Lincoln for about twenty years, but succeeding years do not see them increasing in numbers, altho the nests were not disturbed.

Mr. Ray's "correspondence" (CONDOR XI, page 141) is all right, but does not affect us here; *but we have the dove.* Hunters have been slaughtering the doves for two weeks and still I know of several nests today (August 1) on my place which contain young birds. A large number of doves here lay their first set of eggs on the ground in grain fields, and many are destroyed by cats and more by the mowing machine. Frequently the dove will remain on the nest until the knives kill her. The dove seems to hold its own in numbers, but it seems a pity to begin killing so *early*—at least. Each year the various gun clubs make a bigger spread over their *first* dove shoot.—ERNEST ADAMS, *Clipper Gap, California.*

**The Ruddy Turnstone at Santa Barbara.**—On the 26th of July, 1909, while watching the motions of a Black Turnstone on the beach at Santa Barbara, I suddenly found my glass resting on two Ruddy Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres morinella*) the first that I had ever seen on the Pacific Coast. They were turning over pieces of seaweed, in company with their black relative, —seeming to have no color prejudice,—and allowed me every opportunity to admire their patchwork costume and the bright deep orange-red color of their legs. And by the bye, I could wish that there were a law requiring all makers of ornithological manuals and hand-books to include this point—the color of legs and feet in live specimens—in their technical description of at least all water birds. It is too often omitted—for lack of knowledge presumably. But it should be the duty of such authorities to *have* knowledge.—BRADFORD TORREY, *Santa Barbara, California.*

**Notes on the Nesting of the Bank Swallow.**—In answer to the query of our Editor in the last issue of the CONDOR as to nesting data on the Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*), I submit the following notes from personal observation.

A small colony was nesting in the bluffs near the long wharf, Port Los Angeles, during May and June, 1907. Three pairs were nesting in a bank near a drain ditch about one-fourth mile from Hansen's old slaughter house, Los Angeles, in May, 1907. A large colony was nesting on Dead Man's Island, and in the banks near the lumber yards at San Pedro in April, May, and June, 1908 and 1909. A colony was nesting along the coast near Huntington Beach; observed June 13, 1908, and May 28, 1909.—D. I. SHEPARDSON, *Los Angeles, California.*

**The Sage Thrasher at San Diego.**—On the 3d of February, 1908, I was surprised to find a Sage Thrasher (*Oroscoptes montanus*) in the most frequented corner of the large city park at San Diego. It remained there till February 16, and I know not how much longer, as that was my last day in the city. I lookt for it daily, and only five times failed to find it,—and then only for lack of patience, I have no doubt. My only previous acquaintance with the species was on the desert at Tucson, Arizona, where it was wintering in good numbers.—BRADFORD TORREY, *Santa Barbara, California.*

**Sparrow Hawk Nesting in a Bird Box.**—It is a common experience of the western ornithologist to find birds of desert or otherwise treeless regions, resorting to all sorts of expediences for nesting sites.

The resourceful Flicker is responsible for some unusual records and we expect something of him in this line. I was, however, surprised this summer by a Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*) who occupied, with his family, a pigeon box on the west end of a cow barn in a very populous barn yard in Modesto, California. Another box, but a few feet away, housed a family of pigeons at the same time.

Hudson, in his "Naturalist in La Plata," discusses the ability that non-predatory birds display in discriminating between Falconidae dangerous to themselves and those that are either unable or indisposed to do them harm. We have here, possibly, a case of discrimination on the part of the pigeon and of resourcefulness on the part of the Sparrow Hawk.—LOVE HOLMES MILLER, *Los Angeles, California.*