

## NESTING OF THE SPOTTED OWL IN NORTHEASTERN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

By LAWRENCE PEYTON

It was in the month of May, 1908, that the Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentale*) was first observed nesting in the same hole from which the eggs were subsequently taken, in 1909 and 1910. At that time my father and my brother Sidney were looking for some cattle and noticed the female in the hole with the heads of the young birds sticking out from under her. The hole was in the face of a granite cliff about 15 feet up and extending back about two feet. The men did not look into the nest when they went up, but on the way back my brother cut a long pole and carried it quite a ways, intending to shin up to the nest with it; but in some way he past the hole and had to throw the pole away as it was getting too dark to go back.

In 1909 my father, my brother and I started for Castaic on March 30, arriving at our bee camp in the Castaic Canyon about 5 o'clock in the evening, having driven about 40 miles. The next morning we worked around the bees; but in the afternoon my brother and I went over to some cliffs not far away and succeeded in finding a set of six eggs of the Rock Wren. The next morning at seven o'clock we started to walk to the owl's nest, carrying an ax, a shot gun, and a can of beans for dinner. It is about seven miles from camp to the nest site which is in a tributary of the Castaic called Fish Canyon, and most of it over rough trail; so we knew that we would have to walk pretty lively in order to get back for supper. It had rained about four days before and the creek was still high, so we were in water up to our knees about half the time.

We got to the nest about ten o'clock and found the female on the nest and the male sitting on a small bush about ten feet away. We went back down the creek a little ways and cut down a small alder tree, trimmed it up and carried it back to the nest. We then leaned it up against the cliff so that it would reach the nest and then I shinned up. I grabbed the female by the wing; jerked her off, and saw something that would gladden the heart of any collector. "Two eggs," I shouted. I put the eggs in my hat, took the hat in my teeth and slid down.

When I pulled the bird off the nest she flew into a small tree near by, but while we were blowing the eggs she flew over to where the male was sitting and lit beside him. Then they stuck their bills into the feathers of each other's necks and talked in soft cooing tones. While we were there the male called several times. It sounded like the distant baying of a hound. One of the eggs was about half incubated and the other just medium. They measured 1.93 x 1.63, 1.88 x 1.62 inches. When we had finished blowing the eggs we ate dinner and then started back to camp where we arrived about half past two, tired, but well satisfied with the result of the trip.

This year my brother and I started for the bee ranch on March 28, arriving there the same evening. The next morning we worked with the bees and in the afternoon collected a set of California Bush-tit. The next morning, good and early, we started to walk to the owl's nest. We carried a shot gun this time, too, and intended to collect the birds also, if they had nested there again. We also carried a couple of gunny sacks to put the birds in, if we got them. We arrived at the nest about ten o'clock and sure enough, there was the old female on the nest, and the male sitting in the same bush. I pulled off my shoes and socks, and using the pole which we had cut last year, shinned up to the nest. Then I lifted the female up

and peekt under. "Gee Whiz!"—I nearly fell off the pole. There were three eggs. Then I put the female in one of the sacks, handed her down to my brother, and slid down with the eggs.

We next turned our attention to the male, who was still sitting where we first saw him. I went down the creek a little ways and got a long dry alder pole to which we tied a piece of fish line. We tried to snare him with this, but the line was too small; so I pulled one of the leather shoe laces out of my shoes and tied it onto the end of the pole. This was all right, but the owl got scared and flew about twenty feet, lighting on a small limb overhanging the creek. I crawled up a ledge in front of him and kept his attention while my brother went around behind and tried to drop the noose over his head. He got it over all right and caught him by one leg, but in some way the string came off the pole and the owl flew up the creek with my shoe string still dangling from his feet.

We followed the owl up the creek and threw rocks at him when he lit, until he lit on a point of rock on the canyon wall where my brother shot him. He flew quite a ways before falling and when we caught him we found that only one bone of his wing was broken. We put him in the other sack and carried both birds to camp. Here we bilt cages for them out of some dry-goods boxes and carried them to Fillmore in our buggy. Here we left them with Mr. Phillips, the taxidermist, who mounted them for us. The measurements of the birds were as follows: Male, wings, tip to tip, 34 inches, length 18 inches; female, wings, tip to tip, 37 inches, length 19 inches. The three eggs measured 1.88 x 1.56, 1.82 x 1.57, 1.88 x 1.62.

## NOTES ON THE RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW

By J. R. PEMBERTON

WITH ONE PHOTO BY W. OTTO EMERSON

TO write an article for THE CONDOR which will pass unscathed our worthy Editor's blue-pencil requires some labor and a deal of incentive. An incentive, I presume, is either a sincere desire to impart new knowledge to our CONDOR readers, or one sprung from our vanity in the desire to proudly tell of our takes of rare specimens, and gain the envy of our less fortunate friends. To write under the latter is easier, and under cover of scientific modesty is the method adopted by the casual field worker. It is thus fair enough for me to add a little to our knowledge of the Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and tell, entirely "on the side," of a set of eggs I had the fortune to take.

I have met the Rufous-crowned Sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps ruficeps*) in many places from Ventura County to Marin County in the Coast Ranges; and the distribution of this distinctively Californian bird is given in our literature as extending along the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada from San Diego County to Colfax in Placer County, and not north of Marin County in the Coast Range.

In the region about San Francisco Bay, conditions seem ideal for the home of this bird, for practically few localities are without it. Southern Alameda County, from Haywards thru the Livermore Valley country, down into the Mount Hamilton region and back up the western slopes of the Bay is especially favored by colonies of these birds.

The writer had the fortune to be for several weeks in the Arroyo Mocho, Ar-