

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 RUFIOUS-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-

rojo del Valle, and Corral Hollow regions in Southern Alameda County, where the bird was fairly common. Favored localities are extremely hot, dry, unsheltered hillsides with southern and western exposures, which harbor a growth of black and gray sage, and a scattering of white oaks. Vegetable matter being from 88 to 97 percent of their food, it is necessary that there be an undergrowth of grasses.

Colonies are the rule, and the writer found usually a dozen pairs in the confines of a two or three acre hillside. The birds seldom leave the bushes for the oaks, their favorite perches being the tops of the sage. During the ante-nuptial season, the birds may be seen on their favorite perch, giving their peculiar cicada-like song, which has a wonderfully ventriloquistic power, and is very confusing when one is trying to locate the bird.

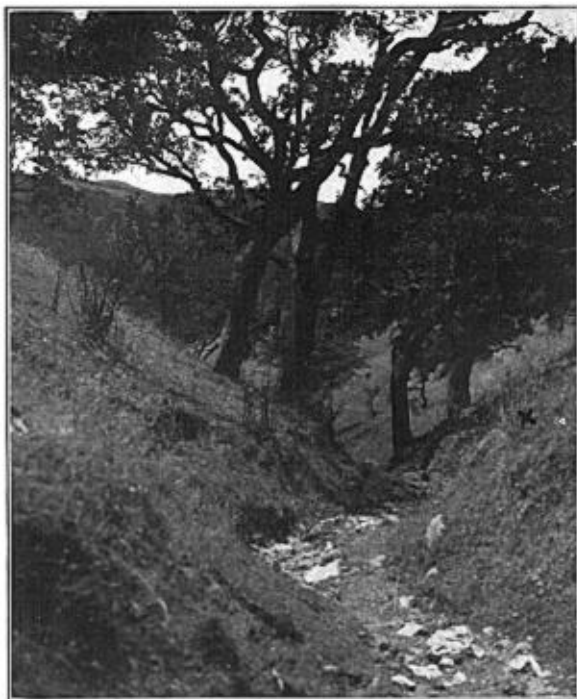


Fig. 40. NESTING SITE (AT CROSS) OF RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW,
NEAR ARROYO DEL VALLE, ALAMEDA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,
JULY 8, 1908

It is impossible to locate a nest by the usual method of watching the female bird. The bird is a past-master of the sleuth stunt, and cannot be followed when going to or from its nest. Just as in poker a greenhorn cannot be beaten by a veteran, so in egg-collecting a novice will find the best nests.

Overhearing a conversation between Mr. W. Otto Emerson and the writer, upon eggs, Mr. A. F. Taggart, a member of our party casually asked, "What kind of a bird lays three little white eggs in a nest in a hole in the ground under a sage bush?"

Emerson and I needed no more information. There was no other bird in that Arroyo del Valle that could do that but the Rufous-crowned Sparrow. Soon we had the assurance that Taggart had not smasht any of the eggs or stept on the nest

or done any other foolish stunts. Dreams of skunks and other "varmints" following Taggart's tracks and eating the eggs filled my head that night; but all eventually turned out well, and to make a long story short, I got the female bird, nest and eggs, and Emerson took photographs of the whole outfit. The bird was seen leaving the nest, and was collected right then.

The nest was a poor affair—simply a few dry grasses were arranged on one side and part of the bottom of an irregular hole on the edge of a bank along the side of a small gully. The eggs rested upon the earth with a few grasses crost between, and a small sage sheltered the nest from the sun.

The lateness of the date, July 8, 1908, augered well for incubated eggs, but we were glád to find these perfectly fresh. They were three in number, glossy white with no trace of the bluish color spoken of by some writers, tho slightly pink before blowing. The eggs are now in the writer's collection, and are prized the most of all the shells to be found there.

THE ANNA HUMMINGBIRD

By J. H. BOWLES

NUMBER one on my list of "birds seen at Santa Barbara" is the Anna Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), a splendid male noted on November 17, 1909.

Accustomed as I was to the much smaller hummers of the north, and to the Ruby-throated Hummingbird of the New England states, this large and handsome species became at once of the greatest interest to me and I determined to make an especial study of it.

Altho most numerous during the winter months, the Anna Hummers are very plentiful at all seasons, being the commonest member of their family in this portion of southern California. A friend who has a large flowering shrub on his estate assured me that he had seen more than forty of these hummers feeding at one time among its blossoms, and indeed in many such localities one might shut his eyes and believe himself to be surrounded by a swarm of giant bees.

All hummingbirds seem possess with the most irascible dispositions, and Anna is very far from being an exception to the rule. The females are, if possible, more pugnacious than the males, and nothing seems to give them greater pleasure than to pick a quarrel with some other bird, preferably of their own kind, altho anything with two wings is acceptable. It is a most amusing experience to sit near the nest of some such bird as the Parkman Wren, whose loud complaints at your intrusion have attracted numerous of her sympathetic avian neighbors. Presently an Anna will whiz upon the scene and at once start in on a systematic campaign against every bird in the immediate vicinity.

On one occasion I notist a female making repeated dives into the center of a large wild rose bush, and an examination showed a four-foot corral snake to be the cause. Upon killing the snake I found him to have been guilty of nothing more reprehensible than eating a lizard, so throwing him on the ground I moved a short distance away to see what the hummer would do. She had been watching from the top of a neighboring live oak, and almost immediately darted down and hovered over her enemy, gradually dropping closer until she was within a foot of him. Her head was bent far down and here extreme caution, in markt contrast to the rough and tumble tactics usually employed, showed how fully she appreciated her