

Bobwhites (*Colinus virginianus*), introduced by man, were not infrequent at Medicine Root and Grass Creek, while at Lake Creek there was one small bevy, which, when alarmed, took refuge under a ranchman's dwelling house! In that region, too, if the statements of the settlers are correct, the Pinnated Grouse (*Tympanuchus americanus*) is increasing in numbers and forcing the Sharp-tailed Grouse (*Pedioecetes phasianellus*) out of the valley. In the highland country, however, where I dwelt also, only the latter species is to be found.

Downy (*Dryobates pubescens medianus*) and Hairy (*Dryobates villosus*) Woodpeckers were resident where trees abounded, but did not come to the buildings. Blue jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) now becoming more numerous with each returning year, often stopped at the door. The Orchard (*Icterus spurius*) and the Bullock Orioles (*Icterus bullocki*) hung their pendent nests in the great cottonwoods that stand isolated on the meadows of Grass Creek; and at the house on the hill there and at Medicine Root the charming lay of the Black-headed Grosbeak (*Zamelodia melanocephala*) was wafted to the ear from the groves below.

Then, too, the notes of migrating Arctic Bluebirds (*Sialia currucoides*) greeted us from overhead, and numberless warblers and greenlets enlivened the thickets as, in their pilgrimages, they followed the north and south streams. But to enumerate all my bird acquaintances in that pleasant land, would, in itself, prove a task; therefore I will not prolong the list. Perhaps they came flying to the grounds—perhaps their notes were zephyr-borne from the trees below; in what way soever they made themselves known, these feathered companions were an un-failing source of pleasure and instruction.

A NESTING COLONY OF HEERMANN GULLS AND BREWSTER BOOBIES

By JOHN E. THAYER

WITH THREE PHOTOS

IN the spring of 1909 I sent my collector, Mr. Wilmot W. Brown, Jr., to the islands off the coast of southern Lower California in the hopes that he would find the nesting place of the Heermann Gull (*Larus heermanni*). After a long and weary search on the different islands, he found a large breeding colony on the southeastern end of the Island of Idelfonso. This was March 28. After waiting a few days, so that the birds would have full sets, he collected a very large series. With a few exceptions most of the nests contained two eggs; some twenty or thirty had three.

Mr. Brown says: "The nest in all cases was simply a well formed depression in the ground with no lining whatsoever. There must have been over fifteen thousand Heermann Gulls nesting on this island.

"On the southeastern end of the island, facing the sea, there is a large semi-circular shaped depression, which covers about five acres. It is quite level on the bottom and covered with gravel, with here and there blocks of lava scattered about. (See fig. 35.) It is well protected from the northwest wind, which prevails here in March and April. At the time I arrived on the island immense numbers of these gulls had congregated. They literally covered the ground. They were so

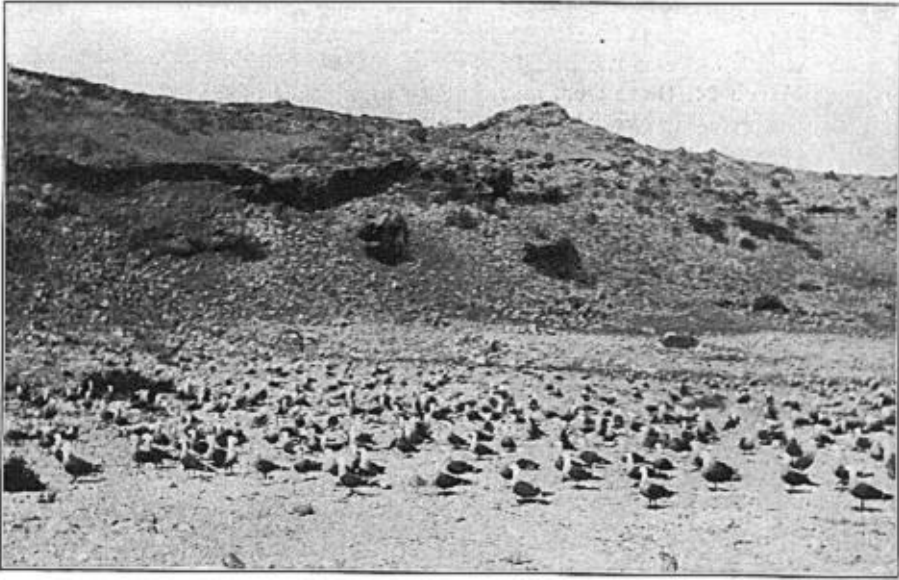


Fig. 34. NESTING COLONY OF HEERMANN GULLS, IDLEFONSO ISLAND, LOWER CALIFORNIA; MARCH 23, 1909

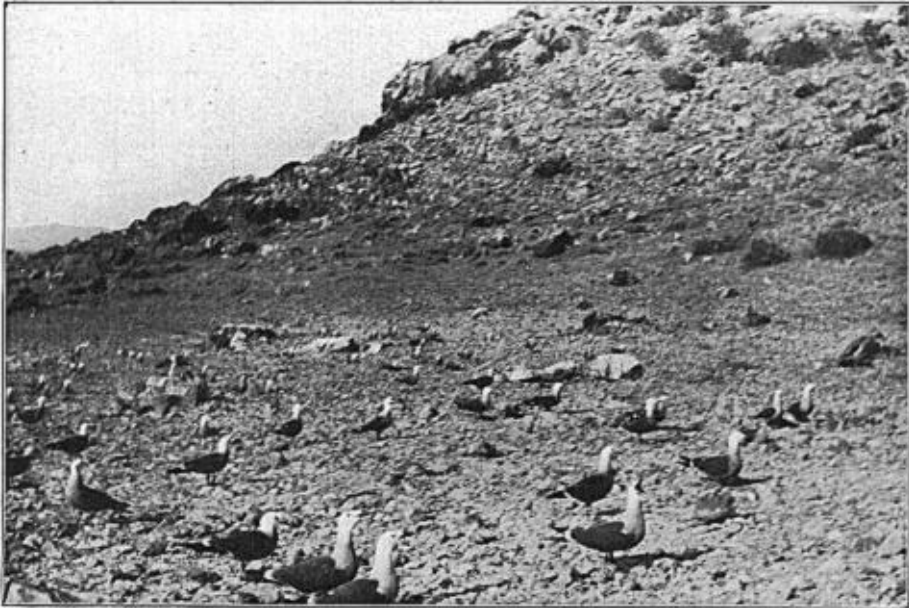


Fig. 35. PORTION OF COLONY OF HEERMANN GULLS; APRIL 8, 1909. AT THIS TIME THERE WERE ABOUT 2500 NESTS IN THE COLONY

occupied in their love-making that they paid very little attention to us. Their cries deadened the cries of all the other birds and they kept it up all through the night.

"In the waters close to the breeding ground large flocks were seen. When I first arrived, March 24, there were an immense number of birds. The males were constantly seen fluttering over the females on the ground, near their nests; but no eggs were laid until April 2. It seems they spend some time in courtship before settling down to their matrimonial duties. The female when in passion emits a peculiar squeaky sound as she coaxes the male by squatting down and going through the most ludicrous motions. I have also seen a pair holding on to each other's bills, a kind of tug-of-war affair; then they would back away and go through a suggestion of a dance, but all the time talking to each other in low love tones.



Fig. 36. A FAMILY OF BREWSTER BOOBIES, BOTH PARENT BIRDS, AND ONE YOUNG ONE IN THE NATAL DOWN. THE NEST IS IN A CREVICE NEAR THE TOP OF A CLIFF

The appearance of a Duck Hawk would send them all flying to sea. They would return however very quickly.

"On the southern end of the island there was a colony of Brewster Boobies (*Sula brewsteri*). They were nesting in the cliffs and caves and in the openings among the rocks (see fig. 36). The nest was composed of a few sticks, in most instances whitened with guano, and on this one egg was laid. I never found a nest with two eggs. I found many nest with one young. I also saw full grown young on the wing, which would indicate that they must begin to nest in January."

Mr. Brown also found breeding on this island the Blue-footed Booby (*Sula nebouxi*), the Craveri Murrelet (*Brachyramphus craverii*) and the Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus obsoletus*).