

to settle this point. At each dive, the suggestion of a violent tornado in miniature, as shown by the dust of the ashes, was very striking.—CHARLES W. BOWLES.

**Egrets in California.**—As the total extinction of the Egret (*Herodias egretta*) and the Snowy Egret (*Egretta candidissima candidissima*) has been prophesied, the following records should be of interest. A trip into the marsh lands southeast of Los Banos, Merced County, California, on July 11, 1912, revealed the fact that these two birds still exist in small numbers in this state.

A flock of seventeen egrets was first noted. The birds were first seen quietly standing about in an open marshy field. On nearer approach they took flight and were seen to settle down in a field some distance away. Later, a lone Snowy Egret was seen wading about in water about a foot deep. Still later in the day, three Egrets and two Snowy Egrets were seen feeding together. The aigrettes, the valuable feathers which caused the near extinction of these birds, could be seen. In no case would the large egrets permit one to approach nearer than a quarter of a mile. The lone Snowy Egret was approached within a distance of a hundred and fifty yards.

The Fulvous Tree-duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) was the bird most abundant in the locality. Other water and shore birds noted were: Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), Forster Tern (*Sterna forsteri*), Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis*), Ruddy Duck (*Erismatura jamaicensis*), Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias herodias*), Anthony Green Heron (*Butorides virescens anthonyi*), Florida Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*), Coot (*Fulica americana*), Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*), Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*), and Killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus*).

A Great Blue Heron picked up beneath the wires of an electric power line, where it had evidently accidentally killed itself, furnished abundant evidence as to the economic value of this bird. The stomach of this particular individual contained two large gophers (*Thomomys angularis*), still undigested. Considering the time of digestion one would naturally infer from this, that these birds must need a minimum daily food supply of an equivalent of two gophers. A complete knowledge as to the average number of gophers taken by one of these birds in a day would furnish interesting evidence as to their money value to the rancher. The patience displayed by one of these birds as it watches a gopher hole in an alfalfa field, and the cleverness shown in catching the rodent when it puts in an appearance, have become topics of conversation by many observing ranchers of the state.—H. C. BRYANT.

**Blue Jay Imitating Song of Brown Thrasher.**—On July 4, a hot, sultry day, while seated near an open window, a Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) was seen to alight on a bush within twenty feet, and was observed to sing softly a song distinctly resembling that of the Brown Thrasher. Dr. Craig Thoms and I both saw its throat moving as it sang and have not the slightest doubt as to the source of the notes. It was softer and lacked the "ring" but was almost as pretty a song as the Brown Thrasher's own.

Dr. Thoms relates that some ten years ago on a similar hot afternoon in Des Moines, Iowa, he saw and heard a Blue Jay sing just outside of an open window. That time, though, the song was brief and didn't distinctly suggest that of any other common species.—S. S. FISHER.

**The Northern Brown Towhee.**—In 1899, Richard C. McGregor (Bull. Cooper Orn. Club 1, page 11) gave the name *Pipilo fuscus carolae* to what he at the time regarded as a separable form of the brown towhee from northern California (type from Battle Creek, Shasta County); and the name was adopted by the A. O. U. Committee. Subsequently several writers, including McGregor himself, expressed doubt as to the reality of the assigned characters, and the name was dropped from the A. O. U. List.

Some material has lately come into the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, which seems to me to establish adequate grounds for reinstating *carolae* as a valid subspecies. The material representing *carolae* is as follows: Kerby, Josephine County, Oregon, two (nos. 17201, 17202); California: Helena, Trinity County, one (no. 17359); Tower House, Shasta County, two (nos. 17360-17361); Tehama, Tehama County, ten (nos. 22856, 22871-22879); Winslow, Glenn County, five (nos. 22880-22884); Chico, Butte County, two (nos. 22869, 22870); Oroville, Butte County, one (no. 22868); Marysville Buttes, Sutter County, two (nos. 22866, 22867); Carbondale, Amador County, five (nos. 22860-22864); Galt, Sacramento County, one (no. 22865).

Specimens from the latter two localities approach *Pipilo crissalis senicula*, and others, from the rim of the southern San Joaquin Valley, are best referred to that form, the known range of which is hereby extended accordingly. *Pipilo crissalis crissalis* is thus to be considered as restricted to the coast region of west-central California.

The characters separating *carolae* from *crissalis*, are slightly larger size, and paler, more slaty and less brownish, coloration. From *senicula*, *carolae* differs in decidedly larger size and deeper, slaty-brown, tones of coloration. The two skins of *carolae* from Kerby, Oregon, (presented to the Museum by Mr. Charles W. Bowles), show the extreme of large size.—J. GRINNELL.