

**A Curious Set of Gambel Quail Eggs.**—During the season of 1913 I collected several interesting sets of common birds, among them one of fifteen eggs of the Gambel Quail, taken May 24, in the mesquite forest near Tucson. The photograph (fig. 38) shows this set, which was unusual in the great variation in the sizes of the eggs; for it contains not only the smallest, but also the largest egg of *Lophortyx gambeli* that I have ever taken.

The largest and smallest are shown side by side in the center of the photograph, and the others are arranged in the order in which I give the sizes (in inches), as follows: .94x.74; 1.06x.84; 1.04x.85; 1.10x.89; 1.07x.88; 1.17x.91; 1.18x.90; 1.22x.93; 1.19x.95; 1.27x.96; 1.31x.95; 1.30x.98; 1.31x1.03; 1.36x1.00; 1.45x1.03. The average of forty normal specimens is 1.23x.93.—F. C. WILLARD, *Tombstone, Arizona.*

**The Breeding of the Snowy Egret in California.**—It is well-nigh incredible that the early "fathers", Gambel, Heermann, Cooper, and the rest, who regarded the Snowy Herons (*Egretta candidissima*) as "abundant" in California should have recorded no specific instance of their nesting within our borders. Cooper's naive remark that "In summer it migrates to the summit of the Sierra Nevada" shows, perhaps, how wide of the mark they were in their search. Without a shadow of doubt this species, save for a thirty-year period of persecution by plume hunters, has nested in certain flooded low-lands of

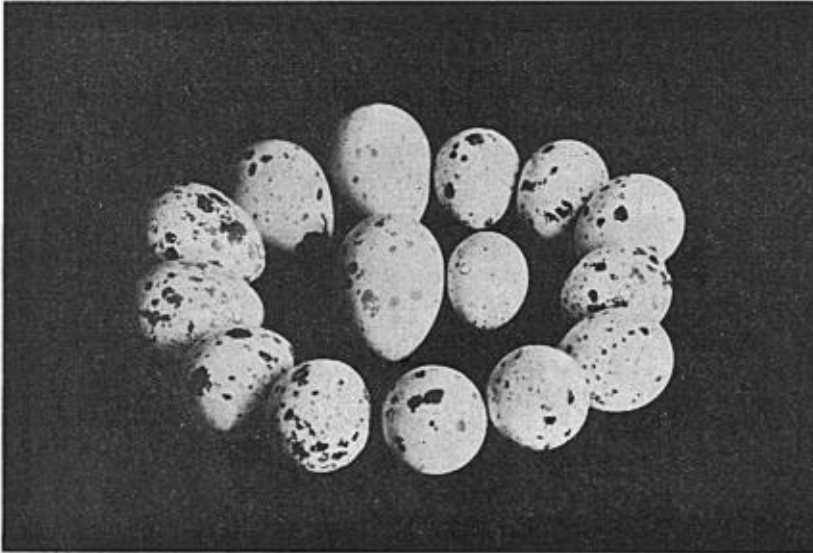


Fig. 38. A CURIOUS SET OF EGGS OF THE GAMBEL QUAIL

Photo by F. C. Willard.

our interior valleys from time immemorial; yet it remained, apparently, for a lucky accident of the past season to establish the first authentic breeding record for the State.

At a point in Merced County some miles from Dos Palos, my son and I, on the 26th of May, 1914, came upon five pairs of these birds nesting in close association with a colony of Black-crowned Night Herons, on a cat-tail island in the middle of a large overflow pond. The Squawks outnumbered the Snowies fifty to one, and it was impossible in the confusion attendant upon approach to tell just where the wary Herons got up. A thorough canvass of the reedy city, however, discovered five nests which contained a uniformly smaller type of eggs, four of five and one of four. One of these began to hatch on the day following, and the eggs yielded in turn chicks covered with a sparse long white down. The operation established also the fact that the Snowy Heron deposits its eggs every other day, and the complementary fact that incubation begins with the deposition of the first egg. Indeed it could not well be otherwise, for a single day's exposure to that blazing interior sun would addle an egg, however hardy.

The youngsters showed, as the days passed, an exaggerated disparity in size and strength, yet even when a week old appeared amazingly small and helpless. Neither did