

anything of the topography of the country thereabouts asserted that all the valleys were narrow and rocky, with no marshy places nor lagunas of any extent anywhere in those ranges of mountains except just where we were collecting—that is, between Isabella and Onyx, on the South Fork of the Kern.

*San Francisco, August 16, 1915.*

NESTING OF THE WHITE-TAILED KITE AT SESPE,  
VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

By LAWRENCE PEYTON

WITH TWO PHOTOS

IT WAS in the spring of 1913 that a pair of the beautiful but fast vanishing White-tailed Kites (*Elanus leucurus*) was first seen in this vicinity. My brother Sidney saw the birds carrying sticks to a nest in a eucalyptus tree

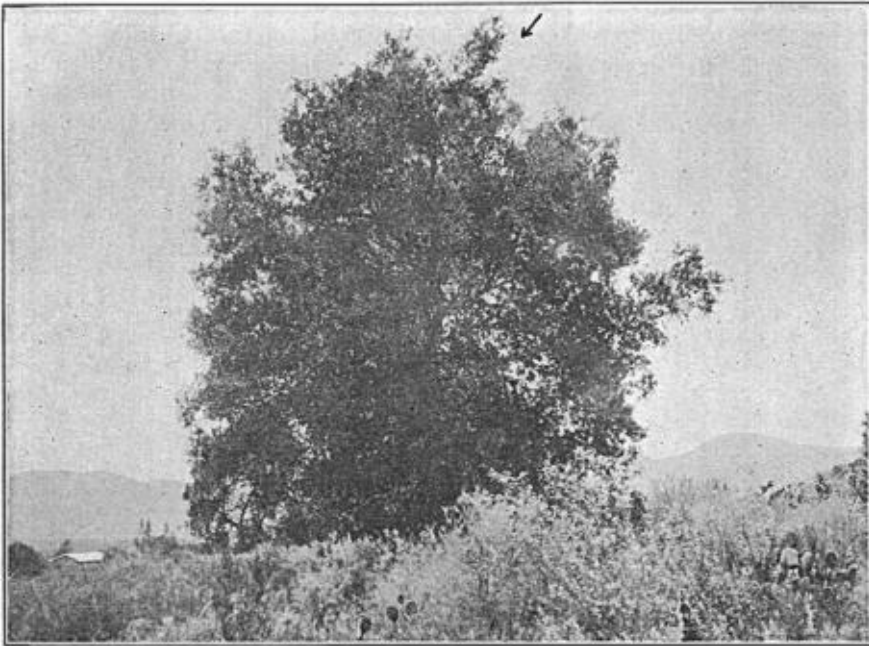


Fig. 77. NESTING SITE OF WHITE-TAILED KITE NEAR SESPE, VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA. ARROW POINTS TOWARDS NEST.

in the willow swamp about three-quarters of a mile east of home. This nest was not completed, however, probably owing to the persecutions of the Crows.

In 1914 a pair of Kites, probably the same ones, were again located in the willow thickets about two miles farther west, but all efforts to find the nest failed, and it was not until this year that our search was rewarded. On April 22, my brother Sidney, while after bluejay's eggs saw a Kite fly from a nest in the top of a small oak tree about one-half mile north of home. On climbing to the nest, which was about 18 feet above the ground, he found it contained three young about a week old and an addled egg, which latter he took.

On April 25, while scouting around in the same neighborhood, he located another nest within two hundred yards of the first and also in an oak tree about twenty feet above the ground. This nest contained three small young and a heavily incubated egg. Both of these nests were within a short distance of the Japanese quarters of the Rancho Sespe.

On April 27 another visit was made to both nests. Nest no. 1 was all right; but on climbing to no. 2, the three young were found to have disappeared, although the egg was left. No trace of the young could be found although the old birds were seen later. On May 7 we both made a visit to nest no. 1 to take some photographs (see figs. 77, 78). The young had grown considerably and manifested some uneasiness if we came very close. The nest



Fig. 78. YOUNG WHITE-TAILED KITES IN THE NEST; PHOTOGRAPHED MAY 7, 1915.

contained a considerable quantity of rabbit fur and the entire body of a field mouse. On the morning of May 16 we paid our last visit to the nest. The young were nearly ready to leave and one adventurous youngster did essay a weak flight into a sumac bush about fifty yards distant, where he was caught by a Japanese laborer. After photographing him at close range he was returned to the nest tree.

In the afternoon of this same day my brother found another Kite's nest, partially completed, in the top of a big sycamore three-quarters of a mile east of home. One week later this nest contained four beautifully marked eggs. This was undoubtedly a second set laid by the birds of nest no. 2. Nests nos.

1 and 2 were both fairly substantial platforms of oak twigs lined with weed stems; but nest no. 3 was very flimsily constructed of willow twigs and lined with rootlets.

At no time were the old birds aggressive. They usually left the vicinity of the nest as soon as we came within fifty or sixty yards. The only note we ever heard them utter was a sort of plaintive whistle. One morning, while working near the nest, my brother saw one of the Kites returning from the direction of the river with something in its claws. While still some distance from the nest it began calling and was quickly joined by the other bird. The first bird remained hovering in the air like a Sparrow Hawk, while the other darted up underneath it, took the food from its claws and returned to the nest while the other sailed away.

*Sespe, California, August 10, 1915.*

## ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE BIRDS OF THE LOWER COLORADO VALLEY IN CALIFORNIA

By A. BRAZIER HOWELL and A. VAN ROSSEM

THE FOLLOWING paper is meant to supplement J. Grinnell's "An Account of the Mammals and Birds of the Lower Colorado Valley" (Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., XII, 1914), and contains only such notes on the birds of the region as would seem to be of especial interest in connection with that publication. The present writers spent from January 13 to 31, 1913, camped on the river bottom of the Colorado, with headquarters some four miles below Potholes, on the California side. It will be recollected that this was immediately after the big freeze of two years ago, and for that reason it is possible that the conditions as we found them did not present altogether a normal aspect. Our work was mostly confined to the arrow-weed association with the intervening patches of cultivated ground, and to the bordering mesquite thickets. Some little collecting, however, was done back in the dry arroyo beds, and in the patches of sahuaros a few miles above Potholes. This general locality presents unusually interesting features and merits much further work on the part of ornithologists, especially in the summer and early fall.

*Marila valisineria.* Canvas-back. We found this duck to be rather common. Two that were shot on January 21 and 28, respectively, were feeding in an abandoned canal that was thickly surrounded with brush, and in which the water was not over four feet deep. This was obviously a poor place for them, and it was not until we spent a day, the 28th, among the sloughs above Laguna Dam that we met with them in any numbers. Here a number of flocks were noted and an adult male secured by a Mr. Reckart. The latter person, who was thoroughly familiar with the ducks of the region, assured us that during some winters, the "Cans" were present by the thousands, while but very few were seen in other years.

*Dendrocygna bicolor.* Fulvous Tree-duck. One of these birds flew close over van Rossem on the 17th, allowing him to be positive of its identity.

*Herodias egretta.* Egret. A few may possibly breed near Yuma, but it is pretty certain that the majority of the birds to be seen here during the winter, have come to us from farther south. We were told on good authority that a flock of thirty or forty had been roosting for weeks on one of the islands above the dam. A number were seen by us on the 28th, and a male was secured on which the plumes of one side of the back