

made a trip to the park on October 15; and on approaching the lake, I saw, swimming near some lily pads, a waterbird which appeared to be a very nervous Coot, but on second sight proved to be something different, although there was a similarity in size and shape.

The field description is as follows: Head, neck, and throat, sooty gray; wings, rich brownish color, the outer primaries being edged with white; the under parts of the tail were also white, like that of the coot. The bill and shield were of a yellowish color, as were the legs, which were very long.

This bird, evidently a Florida Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*) was seen up to and including November 13, either walking over the lily pads, feeding on the banks, or swimming on the lake, which it did in true Coot fashion.

Judging from skins seen at the University of California, the Gallinule seen at the park is an immature specimen. Mrs. Morton Gibbons also saw the Gallinule, and identified it as such before knowing my views. This record should be of interest to San Francisco ornithologists as this is but the second time this species has been reported for this county, although it has been found breeding around Los Baños.—HAROLD E. HANSEN, *San Francisco, California, November 23, 1916.*

The Valley Quail Occupying Nests of the Road-runner.—On the afternoon of April 10, 1915, near San Diego, in company with Mr. A. M. Ingersoll, a female Valley Quail (*Lophortyx c. vallicola*) was discovered by the latter sitting close, and apparently incubating, upon what proved to be a deserted nest of the Road-runner (*Geococcyx californianus*). This nest had been built, well in toward the center and about two feet above the ground, in a large lemonade berry (*Rhus integrifolia*) bush. Investigation showed the nest to contain three eggs, warm to the touch, and the fragments of a fourth, all of the Road-runner; two eggs were rotten, and one was cracked, discolored, with contents dried.

Another instance of the Valley Quail occupying a nest of the Road-runner came under my observation this past season (1916), and is particularly noteworthy for the fact that the nest was eight and one-half feet above a dry wash. During the forepart of April the nest received finishing touches and was evidently ready for the depositing of eggs, when it was deserted by the Road-runners; it had been built among the terminal branches of a drooping sycamore limb, and was about five feet from, and almost on a level with, the top of an abrupt bank skirting the wash at this point. In passing under the nest on April 30 I was quite surprised to flush a Valley Quail from it, and to find that four eggs



Fig. 6. VALLEY QUAIL OCCUPYING NEST OF ROADRUNNER, 8½ FEET ABOVE GROUND IN A SYCAMORE.

had been deposited. There were thirteen eggs on May 14, when next visited. Possibly two dozen small feathers of the quail distributed over the surface of the lining formed the only noticeable addition to the nest material. While removing a few overhanging leaves preparatory to securing, from the nearby bank, a photograph, the female left the nest and it might be interesting to note that it was a trifle over fifteen minutes before she returned. Several photographs were attempted and again she departed, this time remaining away seventeen minutes.—HAROLD M. HOLLAND, *Los Angeles, California*.

Game Bird Conditions in Sutter County, California.—I have just come from a shooting trip at the West Butte Country Club, in Sutter County, California. The shooting grounds comprise a swamp and overflowed land along Butte Creek. The birds there—the ducks and geese—are in numbers beyond description. There must be several thousand swans, and there are certain favorite localities in which all these birds seem to congregate at certain times. The rice fields adjoining are now all drained. Great quantities of the birds go to the rice fields at night and there feed upon the waste rice that has been threshed out by the wind, blackbirds, etc. The farmers regard this as a positive benefit, since it cleans their land of what would otherwise be an annoying and worthless volunteer crop during the following year. All the farmers bear testimony to this, and their grounds are all posted forbidding shooting. Toward daylight the birds move down to the marshlands literally in myriads. Some of the Mallards are fairly wobbling in their flight, and their crops and necks distorted, with the rice they have eaten.—F. W. HENSHAW, *San Francisco, November 21, 1916*.

The Snowy Owl in Humboldt County, California.—Two specimens of the Snowy Owl (*Nyctea nyctea*) taken in Humboldt County, California, have been recently sent to me to be mounted. One was secured by W. Snow, at Trinidad, the other by Thomas Johnson, at Upper Mattole, November 17, 1916. An old newspaper clipping in my possession describes a previous flight of Snowy Owls in this region during December, 1896.—FRANKLIN J. SMITH, *Eureka, California*.

Western Grebe Breeding in Southern California.—On May 13, 1916, I secured a set of eggs of the Western Grebe at Mystic Lake, Riverside County, California. The nest was in a thin clump of tules, close to the edge, and floating on water about two and a half feet deep. It resembled that of the Pied-billed Grebe in structure and appearance, but was at least twice the size. The eggs were three in number and far advanced in incubation. The parent bird was seen, and heard making a cackling noise like the croaking of a great toad.—I. D. NOKES, *Los Angeles, California*.

Notes on the Western Grasshopper Sparrow.—Breeding localities of the Western Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum bimaculatus*) seem to be few and far between in California. The coastal zone in the southern part of the state seems to be more favored than elsewhere, and by occasional notes of the sort here presented we will in time be able to state more exactly the range of this species.

In middle June of 1915, in company with Ralph Arnold, I noted this bird in rather large numbers on the extreme western end of the Santa Monica Mountains in southeastern Ventura County, California. The hills here have steep slopes entirely bare of vegetation other than grasses, while the canyons harbor a few live oaks and some thickets of shrubs. High up on the northern slopes of these open grassy hills and about two miles from the ocean were found many pairs of the bird. Their peculiar buzzing note called attention to their presence; otherwise they might have been overlooked, for in their habits they seldom fly, preferring to run along the ground between and beneath the tufts of grass.

Three nests were found on June 12, 1915. Two of these were practically finished though containing no eggs, while the third contained three eggs in which incubation had just begun. The first nest, which contained the eggs, was discovered through the bird being flushed almost from beneath my feet and was located near the summit of one of the highest hills. The other two nests were found through search and were also located only a short distance away on the upper slopes of the same hill.

The nests were identical in every way. They were placed in slight depressions at the base of the northern or leeward sides of large tufts of grass and were composed entirely of fine dry grasses with no appreciable lining. They were poorly built and the one