

be too much for the birds. They did not seem to mind being moved about continually, but would not tolerate the presence of a man working near them all day, finally deserting the young. I tried to save the little ones by feeding them with bread soaked in milk, but they were too young to live through my rough nursing.

Another pair of House Finches built a nest directly over the entrance to our cabin. As it was apt to be in our way my partner destroyed it. But they were persistent, and tried it again with the same result. They have already built three nests on exactly the same spot and are now working on a fourth, evidently believing in the old saying, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again". Evidently they have taken a strong dislike to my partner and myself, and seem to show their indignation by pecking at the window nearest the entrance whenever either of us is inside.—ERNEST C. MAILLIARD, *Hay Fork, Trinity County, California, June 1, 1917.*

**The Black-footed Albatross off the Coast of Washington.**—While not by any means wishing to intimate that the following notes constitute a new record for the region, the writer considers that the occurrence of albatrosses of any kind near our shores is possibly a matter of general interest. On May 27, 1917, we were so fortunate as to secure three fine specimens of the Black-footed Albatross (*Diomedea nigripes*) which were collected about eighteen miles southwest of Cape Flattery, Washington. Although not observed in abundance, these birds were frequently seen. They occasionally followed the fishing boats, generally by two's, looking for such scraps of fish as might be thrown overboard. The measurements of the birds were as follows, in inches: Male, length 34.25, extent 84.25; male, length 35.00, extent 86.00; female, length 31.50, extent 77.49. All these specimens are now in the collection of Mr. D. E. Brown, of Seattle, Washington.—E. A. KITCHIN, *Tacoma, Washington, August 1, 1917.*

**Nesting of the Wilson Phalarope near Fresno, California.**—In THE CONDOR, XVIII, page 196, I recorded the occurrence of *Steganopus tricolor* near Firebaugh and suggested the possibility that the pair encountered might have been breeding or preparing to do so. Since that time persistent inquiry and some little field work have brought to light much additional information and finally resulted in the verification of my suspicion.

On May 25, 1917, I visited a large, overflowed pasture about twelve miles southwest of Fresno and noted several pairs of phalaropes all of which were in the rich breeding plumage and apparently mated. Sometimes, before the birds were seen, I was aware of their presence by their characteristic notes which sound like subdued, grunting quacks, but from the fact that both birds were together I concluded that they had not yet commenced to nest.

The next opportunity to visit this pasture came on June 18, and again I was soon attracted by the Cinnamon Teal-like quacking of a phalarope. This time, however, the bird was alone, and from its large size and bright plumage I assumed it was the female and that her mate was probably occupying a nest nearby. Accordingly I approached slowly, hoping that this bird might give some slight clue as to its whereabouts, and was much pleased to see that, after a short flight, she flew across a small island of about a quarter of an acre in extent and came back to the exact place from which she took flight. Repeating this experiment several times brought exactly the same results.

The island mentioned was covered, for the most part, with a thick growth of Bermuda grass, so, after blocking it off into several imaginary sections, I began a systematic search and in less than fifteen minutes a phalarope fluttered from its nest and with all the feigned injury of a brooding dove limped away to join its mate. Immediately I concealed myself as best I could and remained quiet. After numerous slow flights around the island the pair finally settled down at the water's edge and the smaller and less brilliantly plumaged of the two came sneaking through the grass from behind, walked directly past me at a distance of not to exceed ten feet and took its place on the nest.

It seemed desirable to make sure that the question of identification might never arise in this case so I threw a clod toward the nest, causing the sitting bird to spring into the air and fly to the water's edge some fifteen feet away where he plowed along with feathers ruffled, grunting and puffing like an angry coot. The four eggs rested in a slight depression in the ground, lined with dry grass stems. Incubation had advanced to feathered embryos. Upon dissection the brooding bird proved to be the male. Anoth-

er female was encountered the same day under precisely the same conditions, but I had no time for an extended search and a superficial examination of the nearby territory failed to reveal her mate or the nest.

The finding of this nest, together with the fact that mated pairs of birds in breeding condition and plumage are present throughout the summer, fully warrants the assertion that the Wilson Phalarope nests regularly, in small numbers, in the grassy tracts surrounding certain shallow overflowed areas in Fresno and Madera counties and probably in Merced County also.—JOHN G. TYLER, *Fresno, California, June 20, 1917.*

**Stomach Contents of an Oregon Ruffed Grouse.**—The Oregon Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus sabini*) is a rare game bird in California. So little is known of its habits in this state, or of its food, that an enumeration of the results of the stomach examination of a specimen obtained by H. S. Prescott at Requa, Del Norte County, California, January 14, 1916, seems worth while. Identification of the seeds and leaves was made by Miss Anna M. Lute of the United States Department of Agriculture. The crop and stomach contained: Berries and seeds of madroña (*Arbutus menziesii*); leaves of thimble berry (*Rubus parviflorus*); stems and leaves of dogwood (*Cornus*); unidentified pieces of stem.—HAROLD C. BRYANT, *Berkeley, California, June 20, 1917.*

**An Early Experiment in Keeping Hummingbirds in Captivity.**—It is not generally known that one of the first experiments in keeping hummingbirds in captivity and shipping them to Europe was made in San Francisco, in pioneer days, by Adolphe Boucard, the well known French ornithologist and authority on the Trochilidae. Boucard reached San Francisco August 16, 1851, and remained until August 18, 1852, when he returned to France via Nicaragua and New York. In his "Travels of a Naturalist" (p. 49) he describes his experiment as follows:

"From March to August [1852], I collected specimens of Natural History. Many were the species of beetles and butterflies that I collected in the suburbs of San Francisco. . . . I also collected many species of birds, and more particularly Hummingbirds. Two species were abundant, *Calypte annae* and *Selasphorus rufus*. I found many nests of these two species during the months of March and April, and at one time I had as many as sixty of them alive, all taken from the nests. I fed them with fresh flowers and small insects. Some of them lived four months. At first I had them all together in a large cage, made on purpose, but as soon as they were grown up, they began to fight so much that I was obliged to put them in separate cages. I put one pair in each, and I succeeded in keeping them alive and well for a long time. My intention was to send them alive to Europe, but even the most robust died at sea, and it was a complete failure.

"Nevertheless, I think if the same experiment was repeated in Florida, New Orleans, or New York, with *Trochilus colubris* there are many probabilities that they would arrive alive in Europe; but of course they could not live long there. Since 1852, I think one experiment of that sort has been made with the Columbian species, and many of them arrived safely in Paris; but they died soon after their arrival. There is more chance with the northern species."

Half a century later five species of hummingbirds were successfully carried from Venezuela to England<sup>2</sup>. These birds were received by the Zoological Society of London, May 27, 1907. About 50 birds were captured of which 35 were shipped and 20 reached their destination alive. But there is a great difference between shipping hummingbirds to Europe from California via the Isthmus in 1852 and shipping them direct from Venezuela in 1907 with all the conveniences on modern, fast steamers, and it is not surprising that the first attempt resulted in failure.—T. S. PALMER, *Washington, D. C., July 7, 1917.*

**Notes From the Southern Sierras.**—In company with Mr. A. W. Hanaford I spent from June 16 to June 26, 1917, at various points in the San Bernardino and Sierra Madre mountains. The following notes do not cover all the species of birds noted, but only some of the more interesting ones.

*Porzana carolina.* Sora Rail. One bird flushed from the pasture at the east end of Bear Lake, altitude 6760 feet, on June 18. Possibly breeding, although we did not locate a nest.

<sup>1</sup>Published in London in 1894; originally appeared in parts in the numbers of "The Hummingbird", III and IV, 1893-1894.

<sup>2</sup>*Bird Notes*, VI, 1907, p. 102.