

Two More Records for the Widgeon in Washington, and Other Notes.—On January 13, 1918, two fully adult males of the European Widgeon (*Mareca penelope*) were shot on the Nisqually Flats, Thurston County, Washington, and brought in to Edwards Bros., of Tacoma, for mounting. They are in magnificent plumage and Mr. Edwards, who is a true ornithologist, expressed sincere regret that he could not make them into skins for scientific use.

Further notes of interest have reached me from Mr. Walter F. Burton, Victoria, B. C., regarding the Horned Owl invasion of this season. As was the case in Washington, they were not so plentiful as last season. Mr. Burton writes in part: "Dec. 30, 1917. We have paid out 50c bounty on eighty-five owls so far (Dusky Horned). They are not as plentiful as last winter". Truly they must have become scarce in their natural habitat. In this connection Mr. Ernest S. Norman, Kalevala, Manitoba, writes me that Horned Owls of any kind have suddenly disappeared from his locality, where formerly they were fairly common. It would be interesting if more notes could be had from northern collectors on this subject.

The Snowy Owls (*Nyctea nyctea*), in spite of almost summer conditions here, have been even more numerous in some parts of Washington than they were last season. A possible cause for these invasions of the large owls has been suggested to me by Mr. D. E. Brown, of Seattle, Washington. He says that a friend, recently down from Alaska, informed him that the rabbits up there were practically exterminated about a year ago by what he thought must have been some kind of disease, which would just about coincide with the first great owl migration of 1916-1917. In addition to this it is well known from several sources that ptarmigan have been scarce in Alaska for the past year. There is little doubt that rabbits and ptarmigan, especially the rabbits, form two important items in the diet of the larger owls during the winter months, so that the search for food may have started hundreds of them upon what proved to be very long journeys.

One cannot help feeling a great deal of sympathy for the Snowy Owls, as their stomachs have seldom contained any food this winter, in spite of the fact that they are nearly always surrounded by hundreds of ducks of many species. Mammals are scarce in this locality and it seems evident that these owls only eat birds when forced to do so by extreme hunger. Quite the contrary is the case with the Horned Owls, which are killers of birds and mammals alike, although they seldom pay much attention to the smaller species of either.—J. H. BOWLES, *Tacoma, Washington, January 28, 1918.*

Do Purple Martins Inhabit Bird Boxes in the West?—This year the writer erected a martin box at Albuquerque, New Mexico. I have since kept my eyes open for instances of successful martin boxes in the southwest, but have found none. Last summer I found Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) nesting abundantly in pine snags killed by impounded waters at Lake Mary and Coleman Lake, in Coconino County, Arizona. It occurs to me that this bird may not yet have become domesticated in the west. Can any reader of THE CONDOR enlighten me on this question?—ALDO LEOPOLD, *Albuquerque, New Mexico, February 21, 1918.*

Two Midwinter Records for San Francisco County, California.—

Holboell Grebe (*Colymbus holboelli*). On December 23, 1917, while taking a Christmas bird census for *Bird-Lore* with Mr. C. R. Thomas of Berkeley, California, a Holboell Grebe was seen at Stow Lake, Golden Gate Park, a species that is very uncommon in this region. Kobbe writes in *The Auk* (1901) that an individual was taken at Oakland in 1882, and that several were seen off the Presidio shore in 1900. Mr. Loomis also found this Grebe uncommon at Monterey Bay. The Grebe was last seen by the present writer at Stow Lake, February 3, 1918.

Whistling Swan (*Olor columbianus*). Two swans, presumably of this species, were seen feeding at Lake Merced December 23, 1917. This is the first time that I have seen the species in this region and I believe that this is the first record for San Francisco County.—HAROLD E. HANSEN, *San Francisco, February 8, 1918.*