

**Notes on the Behavior of Pintail Ducks in a Hailstorm.**—On October 20, 1918, I was hunting ducks on the Rio Grande south of Las Lunas, New Mexico. I was sitting in my blind on a sandbar, with some dead ducks set out as decoys, when a very severe hailstorm set in. During the thick of the storm I discovered that a flock of about forty Pintail Ducks (*Dafila acuta*) had settled among my decoys not twenty yards distant. Each bird was facing toward the storm, and each had his head and bill pointed almost vertically into the air. The flock presented a very strange appearance, and I was puzzled for a moment as to the meaning of the unusual posture. Then it dawned on me what they were doing. In a normal position the hailstones would have hurt their sensitive bills, but pointed up vertically the bill presented a negligible surface from which hailstones would naturally be deflected. The correctness of this explanation was later proven by the fact that a normal position was resumed as soon as the hail changed into a slow rain.

Has any other observer ever noted a similar performance in this or other species of ducks, or in any other birds?—ALDO LEOPOLD, *Albuquerque, New Mexico, October 22, 1918.*

**Unusual Occurrences of Bendire Thrasher, Forked-tailed Petrel and Western Goshawk.**—In his *Distributional List of the Birds of California*, under Bendire Thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*) Dr. Grinnell says "no verification" of the Palm Springs record is now to be obtained. The specimen upon which this record was based is now no. 1507 in the collection of the San Diego Natural History Museum. It was taken April 8, 1885.

On December 23, 1918, as I was walking along the beach at Ocean Beach, California, looking among the drift marking the high tide line for dead fulmars, which occasionally wash ashore there, I found a Forked-tailed Petrel (*Oceanodroma furcata*). The place was within the city limits of San Diego. I believe this is the southernmost record for this species up to this time. The skin is no. 2031 of the Natural History Museum. As this was the first specimen of this species that I had handled I looked it up rather carefully. In reading Ridgway's description in his *Manual of North American Birds* I find that he divides the family into two subfamilies, *Procellariinae* with 13 secondaries, in which he places the genus *Oceanodroma*; and *Oceanitinae* with 10 secondaries. My *furcata* has but ten secondaries in each wing. The bird was in poor condition, but the flight feathers seem to be all there. Our *O. melania* and *O. socorroensis* appear to have 13 secondaries. Someone having the opportunity to examine fresh specimens of *furcata* should count the secondaries.

A Western Goshawk (*Astur atricapillus striatulus*) was shot by Rudolph Wueste at the Lower Otay Reservoir (about five miles north of the Lower California line) on November 9, 1916. It is now in the collection of the Natural History Museum of San Diego.—FRANK STEPHENS, *Natural History Museum, San Diego, California, January 13, 1919.*

**The Sandhill Crane in Northeastern California.**—On September 30, 1906, when studying the animals and plants in American Valley, not far from the town of Quincy, I was suddenly startled by the unmistakable rasping cry of a Sandhill Crane. It was loud and clear and came from the willow-bordered meadows near where I was standing, but the bird kept hidden by the tall bushes so that I was unable to actually see it. However, since there is no other bird whose note could possibly be mistaken for that of the Sandhill Crane, there can be no question as to the record. And as the date was too early for the arrival of migrants from the north, there is little room for doubt that the bird had bred on these meadows.

The absence of recent records in the splendid work on *The Game Birds of California*, by Grinnell, Bryant, and Storer, the latest being Henshaw's for 1878 and Townsend's for 1887, impels me to record the above note.

And while on the subject of Sandhill Cranes in California, it may be worth while to mention that on November 12, 1904, while witnessing an elk drive at Buttonwillow Ranch, at the southern end of San Joaquin Valley, I saw half a dozen Sandhill Cranes flying over. The people at the ranch told me that the Cranes would be common a little later, and that in the winter they were very destructive to sprouting grain.—C. HART MERRIAM, *Washington, D. C., January 29, 1919.*