

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Nesting of the Wilson Snipe in California.**—According to Grinnell, Bryant and Storer (*Game Birds of California*, p. 355), there is only one published record of the taking of the eggs of the Wilson or Jack Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) in California. That record is of a set taken by A. Van Rossem for J. Mailliard near Tejon Pass, in the extreme northern part of Los Angeles County (J. Mailliard, *CONDOR*, xvi, 1914, p. 261). These authors say, however, that Belding (MS) states that the species breeds at Webber Lake, that Cooper was informed that it bred at Lake Tahoe, that George Neale reports two small young as found at Lake Tahoe early in August, 1912, also that three young were found in Sierra Valley, Plumas County, September 1, 1899, and that Bryant in the first week in June, 1914, saw Snipe in nuptial flight at Lower Klamath Lake. The Mailliard record is, therefore, the only one of eggs actually taken or even seen in California. In view of these facts it seems worth while to put on record my recent experience with this bird.

During June and July of 1918, I accompanied Dr. John Van Denburgh and Mr. Joseph R. Slevin on a collecting trip through northern California and southern Oregon. We traveled by automobile and were equipped for camping. Our collecting activities were confined primarily to reptiles, amphibians, and birds' nests and eggs.

On the night of June 1, we camped at the edge of Grasshopper Meadow which is in Lassen County, California. Dr. Van Denburgh has told (*CONDOR*, xxi, 1919, p. 39) of our finding the Western Willet nesting in this meadow. Soon after making camp, our attention was attracted by the noise made by a number of Jack Snipe in their nuptial flight. Although it was too dark to see the birds, the noise was characteristic and not to be mistaken. We had spread our blankets in the lee of a haystack in the edge of the marsh and the peculiar booming noise made by the Snipe could be heard very late in the night; indeed, I think I heard it throughout the night whenever I was awake. The next day while searching through the meadow, about twenty Jack Snipe were seen and heard flying about in broad circles high in air, as vividly described by Grinnell (*Game Birds*, p. 356). No nests, however, were found.

A few days later (June 7), we camped again at this meadow, where we again saw several Jack Snipe performing their interesting flight, as before. This time I was more successful and succeeded in finding two nests. The first contained one egg, the other three. I took the set of three, but left the one until the next day, hoping another might be laid before we left that camp. The next morning about eight o'clock the nest was visited again but it still contained only one egg, which I took, as we were leaving the locality that morning. This nest was found by flushing the bird when only a few feet distant. The bird circled about a few moments, then alighted on the top of a hay-press derrick near by, which was at least thirty feet high. Each of these nests was in a small clump of fine *Carex* growing in water perhaps six inches deep. The nests were simple structures composed of short pieces of *Carex*, some still greenish or not altogether dead. The nest material, although scanty, was sufficient to support the eggs above the water.

Two days later (June 9), while working a small wet meadow about three miles west of Alturas I found my third nest of the Jack Snipe. This nest contained three eggs and was in construction essentially like the other two, but it was in short grass on dry ground at the edge of a marsh.

All the eggs in these three sets were fresh. The single egg (measuring 1.48x1.14 inches), and the first set of three (1.44x1.12, 1.42x1.16, and 1.37x1.13 inches) are in the Museum of the California Academy of Sciences; the set taken near Alturas is in the collection of Dr. Van Denburgh.—BARTON WARREN EVERMANN, *Museum, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California, February 5, 1919.*

**Records of *Larus heermanni* with White Primary Coverts.**—Mr. George Willett (*CONDOR*, xx, 1918, p. 127, fig. 21) has recently described and figured aberrant specimens of *Larus heermanni* having the primary coverts of each wing white. Mr. P. A. Taverner (*CONDOR*, xx, 1918, p. 187) has recorded like specimens from Alert Bay, British Columbia. The writer observed several such birds at Redondo, California, in 1911, and one at Pa-

cific Grove, on June 21, 1918. Each of these had a large squarish white blotch symmetrically located near the angle of each wing, in some cases more definitely and more extensively developed on the one side than on the other. It is probable that these variants are "sporadically recurring" mutants, as suggested by Mr. Taverner.—CARL L. HUBBS, *Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois, January 23, 1919.*

**An Albino Black-chinned Hummingbird.**—Albino hummingbirds are of comparatively rare occurrence, and it seems, therefore, worth while to put on record an individual *Archilochus alexandri* of this character. It was taken at the ranch of Mr. Howard Lacey, on Turtle Creek, a few miles southwest of Kerrville, Texas, by Mr. Shirley Coppock, on July 20, 1913, and was presented to the Biological Survey collection, in which it is no. 241043, U. S. Nat. Mus. It is an adult female and is entirely pure white without a dark feather anywhere.—HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C., February 3, 1919.*

**Relative Abundance of Ducks in the Rio Grande Valley.**—An observer who hunts ducks regularly, in the same general locality, by the same general methods, ought to find in the record of his daily bag a very reliable indication of the relative abundance of the various species. The following is such a record, based on two years hunting in that part of the Rio Grande Valley within 50 miles of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Species	Killed	Relative abundance on basis of 100	Relative abundance (corrected)
Mallard	77	43	40
Green-winged Teal	28	16	18
Pintail	20	11	12
Spoonbill	19	11	10
Baldpate	9	5	5
Mottled Duck (?)	9	5	5
Red-breasted Merganser	0	0	5
Blue-winged Teal	7	4	1
Gadwall	4	2	1
Canvasback	2	1	1
Redhead	2	1	1
Golden-eye	1	1	1
	178	100	100

In the third column I have made estimated allowances for certain extraneous factors. For instance: Mallards are reduced because they winter here, and hence are available for hunting during a longer period. Green-winged Teal are raised because they are mostly gone by November 5. Pintails are raised because only a very few winter. Spoonbills are reduced because they always occur in small flocks, and the number killed is for this reason relatively great as compared with the number seen. Their stupidity is about offset by the fact that when Mallards are abundant, they are not often shot at. Mottled Ducks pass southward early in the season and accordingly are not reduced, as was done with Mallards. Red-breasted Mergansers are not killed, but are common in winter,—their relative abundance is estimated. The remaining species are not common. The table does not include the Cinnamon Teal, since this is a spring but not a fall migrant here, and is not seen during the hunting season.

The hunting was done about equally over river, ponds, sloughs, and flooded fields, and about equally as pass shooting, jump shooting, and decoy shooting, so that the figures given should not be particularly affected by specific habits or habitat.

This table is offered as a suggested method, rather than as a final conclusion. Based on five years instead of two, it ought to be quite the most accurate possible method of determining relative abundance of species.—ALDO LEOPOLD, *Albuquerque, New Mexico, February 1, 1919.*

**The California Shrike Probably Mates for Life.**—The recent article by Mr. F. C. Willard (CONDOR, xx, 1918, p. 167), suggesting the probability that many pairs of birds remain mated for life, has brought to light considerable information on this subject;