

woods along the beaches by October 9, and remained so throughout the following winter. In fact, in this locality it proved to be a much more common bird in winter than in summer. Numerous specimens were taken during the winter months but few toward spring, as at this latter season they become so fat as to be difficult of preparation.

The fact that this bird winters commonly at the southern end of the Alexander Archipelago must necessarily modify Swarth's definition of its winter habitat in Oregon and northern California.—GEORGE WILLET, *Wrangell, Alaska, November 1, 1920.*

The Nuptial Flight of the Allen Hummingbird.—The description of the nuptial flight of the Anna Hummingbird (Hunt, CONDOR, xxii, p. 109) has prompted me to offer an account of the mating antics of the Allen Hummingbird.

On the afternoon of April 16, 1920, I was walking through the hills back of the Claremont Club golf links when I was brought to a halt by a rather prolonged buzzing sound, very penetrating and metallic in quality, somewhat similar to the sound produced by drawing a fine-grained file over the edge of a piece of sheet steel with a sudden jerk. Looking in the direction of the sound I saw poised in the air about twenty-five feet from the ground, a male Allen Hummingbird (*Selasphorus aleni*), uttering his commonly heard mouse-like squeaks. Then followed the performance of the nuptial flight, similar to that of the Anna Hummingbird, though the path described in the air was somewhat different. He "rocked" back and forth over the female, which was perched on a twig of a low poison oak (*Rhus diversiloba*), describing a semi-circle about twenty-five feet in diameter. There was a pause at each end of the arc, and before the pause he spread his tail and shook his whole body so violently that I wondered how his feathers remained fast. During this time he continued uttering the characteristic squeaks. After several of these semi-circles were described he began his climb to a height of about seventy-five feet; and then came the "high dive". He swooped down with the speed of a comet, and on passing over the female gave the low-pitched but resonant buzzing sound which had first attracted my attention; then he curved upward and came to a pause about twenty-five feet in the air, where I had first seen him. The sound emitted on passing over the female was of a second or more in duration, and differed greatly from the instantaneous, metallic *clink* of the Anna Hummingbird.

Following the accompanying diagram in which X represents the female, he started at A, describing the arc AB with the violent shaking just before arriving at B. After a short pause at B (one or two seconds) he returned to C, repeating the shaking just before arriving, and again pausing. This much of the performance he usually repeated one or more times, thus describing several semi-circles from A to B and from B to C. The last time from C, instead of pausing he continued upward with a slow, heavy flight, describing spirals or undulations until he reached the top at D, when, without pause, he made the downward swoop, sometimes bringing up at E to recommence the whole performance, and at other times darting off to perch a few yards distant for awhile and then return.

Mr. Hunt states (*loc. cit.*) that he does not know whether the Anna Hummingbird adheres rigidly to the evolutions described or whether it varies them. I had the good fortune on the morning of March 15, 1920, at Washington Park, Alameda, to witness the nuptial flight of this bird and it was slightly different from his description. My bird, in making the long dive from *c* to *d* (fig. 27, *loc. cit.*) made a sudden jump of about six feet to the left at a point about opposite *a*, and then continued his downward swoop to *d*. Otherwise this performance was identical with that described by Mr. Hunt.—FRANK N. BASSETT, *Alameda, California, September 2, 1920.*

A Unique Visitor.—On the tenth day of October, nineteen hundred and twenty, at one o'clock in the afternoon, after two days of intermittent showers—some heavy, some light—a beautiful young gull landed on the woodpile in back of our cottage, which is

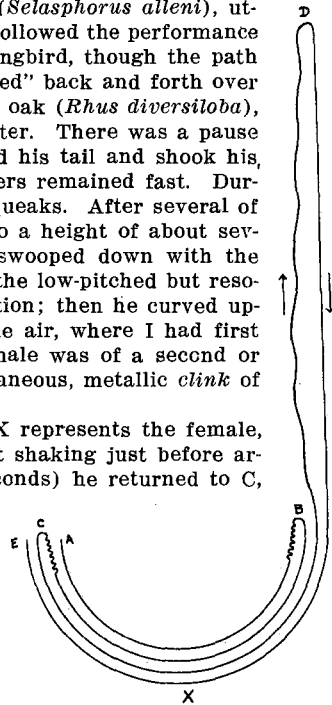


Fig. 8. DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING THE NUPTIAL FLIGHT OF THE MALE ALLEN HUMMINGBIRD.

situated in a lonely canyon about thirty-two miles east of the Pacific. He appeared very hungry and tired, alternately feeding and resting. He violently shook and ate the head of a rabbit discarded by our collie; he mangled a hornet attracted by the rabbit, but suddenly decided not to devour it; he snapped at passing insects; he thrust his bill with such force into a cluster of white geraniums that the petals flew in fragments to the ground; he stalked under the fig trees, with his pale lavender-gray webbed feet, and tossed the figs about, though he did not seem to relish them especially. He circled the collie, who had been nonchalantly watching him, and would have alighted on her back if she had not flicked her ear. He appeared absolutely fearless, often walking within touching distance of our hands, and occasionally resting close beside us, partially shutting his eyes, and fluffing out his breast in drowsy content.

One hour he stayed with us, and in that hour I had ample opportunity to examine him minutely and identify him as a young Sabine Gull (*Xema sabini*). This identification was later corroborated by Dr. Grinnell, who added that the bird was "evidently in full juvenal plumage—a bird hatched last June". Then he lifted his beautiful wings and flew away, flew low, over the mesas and the sage-grown hillsides, flew toward the east in a faltering manner, as though he fain would return. Did our beautiful bird, Pearlecito (for so we named him), safely voyage over the chaparral?—MELICENT HUMASON LEE, *El Cajon, California, November 29, 1920.*

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

New Year's morning, Mrs. Amelia S. Allen, Secretary of the Northern Division of the Cooper Club, gave a reception to the Club at her home on Mosswood Road, Berkeley. The occasion was a pleasant one socially, and in addition there was an ornithological feature of remarkable interest. The bird feeding table just outside the large plate window of the dining room where breakfast was served to the human guests was continually patronized by numerous avian visitors. These latter represented some ten or more species—thrashers, thrushes, wren-tits, towhees, etc.—all wild birds, behaving normally. The differential lighting on the two sides of the window, darker within than without, doubtless in part accounted for the charming obliviousness of the birds. Within, the considerable company of people was able to observe the birds closely under most comfortable conditions, even to comment upon them freely in ordinary conversational pitch of voice, without alarming or distracting the principals in the nature play being acted outside.

Mr. Aretas A. Saunders, author of *Avifauna No. 14 (Birds of Montana)*, now in press, has called our attention to an error in the postcard pre-notice of this publication sent out recently by our Business Manager. Mr. Saunders was for five years with the United States Forestry Service, and during two summers worked at the Biological Station of the University of Montana; but at no time has he been connected with the United States Biological Survey, as was stated.

Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Bailey are in camp for the winter in the foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains, Arizona (post office, Continental, Pima County). Their camp mascot is a Roadrunner who "comes regularly for spare mice".

We learn from Dr. T. S. Palmer that the meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in Washington, D. C., November 8-11, 1920, was one of the largest in the history of the Union. One-half of the Fellows and about ten percent of the entire membership were in attendance. The business meetings were held at the Cosmos Club and the other sessions at the U. S. National Museum. The election of Fellows and Members included Mr. Robert Cushman Murphy of Brooklyn, N. Y., as Fellow; Mr. E. C. Stuart Baker and Dr. Percy Lowe of London, Honorary Fellows; and Mr. Ira N. Gabrielson, Dr. Loye Miller, Mr. Aretas A. Saunders, Prof. T. C. Stephens, and Prof. Myron H. Swenk, as Members in the restricted sense. The program of nearly 40 papers, five of which were illustrated by motion pictures, covered a wide range of subjects relating to North American birds and also included papers on the birds of Argentina, Nicaragua, Peru, Europe and Madagascar. In connection with the meeting an exhibition of drawings, paintings, and photographs of birds by American artists, supplemented by a series of prints showing the development of zoological illustration as applied to birds from the earliest times down to date, was arranged in the Division of Prints in the Library of Congress.