

approaching to within sixty yards of one of them. This was within chance range of my 20-gauge shotgun and, in fact, my gun was at my shoulder. But I did not pull the trigger, for here was one of the only two egrets on this bird sanctuary, possibly one of the only two in the state of Arizona, and they were probably breeding birds. These egrets, however, were exceedingly wary and usually remained well out on the mud flats where they were fairly safe.

*Nycticorax nycticorax naevius* (Boddaert). Black-crowned Night Heron. Swarth (*loc. cit.*, p. 54) considered the Black-crowned Night Heron less abundant on the lake than the Great Blue Heron, and reports seeing "perhaps 20 birds, all told." My own observations, as recorded directly from my field reports, are: "The most abundant, though probably the least conspicuous, bird on the lake, usually nesting in living cottonwoods partly submerged in the water on the flats. About 120 pairs nested at the Tonto end of the lake (May 20-24) and about 80 pairs (May 26) at the Salt River end. Young in most cases were able to leave the nests and perch on branches, or fly. Some ten nests were seen in dead trees, all others being in trees bearing green leaves."

*Fulica americana* Gmelin. Coot. There were between ninety and one hundred Mud-hens on the Tonto end of the lake, but not one was noted at the Salt River end. A male, collected May 20, had very small testes and apparently was not breeding.

*Actitis macularia* (Linnaeus). Spotted Sandpiper. A single individual of this species was seen on two occasions (May 20 and 22) on the shore near the mud flats at the Tonto end of the lake.

*Oxyechus vociferus* (Linnaeus). Killdeer. Some six or eight Killdeer were observed on the mud flats at the mouth of Tonto Creek, May 22.

*Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis* (Gmelin). Osprey. Ospreys were seen daily (May 19-29) near Roosevelt Lake, where a dozen or more birds obtained food.

*Aluco pratincola* (Bonaparte). Barn Owl. A Barn Owl was seen, May 20, perched peacefully among a colony of twenty-seven cormorant and eight great blue heron nests containing young, in the top of a dead cottonwood over thirty feet of water and 300 yards from the nearest shore. So far as I could observe, it had not disturbed the rookery in the least.

*Bubo virginianus pallescens* Stone. Western Horned Owl. A nest, containing two young fully one-third grown and able to perch on limbs of the tree near the nest, was located in the top of a partly dead cottonwood well out in the water at the Tonto end of the lake (May 20).

*U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C., September 29, 1921.*

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**On the Occurrence of the Buffle-head at Eagle Lake.**—The notes under the above caption by Milton S. Ray in the November CONDOR require some comment. The bird in the first photograph is undoubtedly a female Buffle-head (*Charitonetta albeola*), the young ones following her are indefinite. The two downy young "Buffle-heads" in the other photograph (fig. 33) are obviously and emphatically American Mergansers (*Mergus americanus*), newly hatched. The markings on their heads together with the shape of their bills are both unmistakable, and quite unlike a downy Buffle-head.

Young ducks frequently follow an adult of another species. I have seen a female Buffle-head and a female Barrow Golden-eye both guarding a single duckling of the former species and both equally solicitous. At another time I watched a newly hatched Spotted Sandpiper trotting after a Least Sandpiper while its own parent was a considerable distance away.

Of course it is more than possible that the Buffle-head breeds in northeastern California, but unfortunately Mr. Ray's record fails to prove this, nor does he seem to realize what an extraordinary phenomenon was before him when he saw *both* parents attending the young. In the case of very aberrant ducks like *Erismatyris* and *Dendrocygna* the male parent may assist as in all the geese and swans; also I believe there have been instances of some southern ducks, the Cinnamon Teal for one, that have been

seen with both male and female in attendance on the young brood. But after a lifetime spent among wild ducks I have yet to see the first indication of any solicitude for the young on the part of the male of any species.

In the case of the Buffle-head the males have totally disappeared (apparently all leave the country entirely) before the first broods of young are seen.—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, November 25, 1921.*

**The Black Vulture in Colorado.**—On October 8 or 9, 1921, two young schoolboys, Richard Harvey and a boy named Baer, captured alive, on the foothills near Boulder, an adult male Black Vulture (*Coragyps urubu urubu*), breaking its wing. They tied it in a neighbor's yard to keep it alive until the University of Colorado Museum preparator returned from a short trip, but the neighbor turned it loose just out of town. A few days later two other boys, Elvin Watson and James Mitchell, found it dead in a ditch and brought it to the Museum, where its skin is now preserved. So far as I know there is no published record of this species for Colorado, and it is particularly interesting to find the first one for the state so far north. In 1900 Professor W. W. Cooke, in his Second Appendix to *The Birds of Colorado* (page 204), stated that the Black Vulture "has been taken in Western Kansas and probably will some time be found as a rare summer visitant in Southeastern Colorado"; but Boulder is 270 miles northwest of the southeastern corner of the state.—JUNIUS HENDERSON, *University of Colorado, Boulder, October 25, 1921.*

**A Winter Record of the Kern Red-wing.**—An adult male Red-winged Blackbird (cf. C 590, collection of D. R. Dickey) taken by van Rossem near Corona, Riverside County, on December 8, 1915, is strictly comparable with breeding specimens from Walker Basin, Kern County, and indicates a possible winter range for the race *Agelaius phoeniceus aciculatus*. The bill measurements are as follows: Culmen from base 25.9 millimeters (plus about 1 mm. broken off); bill from nostril 17.5 (broken as above); gonys 16.0; width at base 9.5; depth at base 9.5. This specimen was submitted to Mr. Joseph Mailliard, who concurs with us in our determination of its status.

During a recent trip in Kern County, two days (August 31 to September 1, 1921) were spent at Walker Basin, but not one red-wing was seen. Neither were any in evidence along the Kern River between Onyx and Isabella, where the types of *aciculatus* were taken. This would argue a departure from the breeding grounds immediately after the nesting season. Just what the winter range of this form is will probably not be ascertained for some time. The total number of individuals probably does not anywhere nearly reach a thousand. Such a number would form a very small proportion of the swarms of red-wings wintering in the lowlands and the taking of one would be very much a matter of luck.—D. R. DICKEY and A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, November 26, 1921.*

**Bird Fatalities Resulting from a Shipwreck.**—During the night of October 25, 1918, the Canadian Pacific Steamer "Princess Sophia" was wrecked with total loss of life, on Vanderbilt Reef, Lynn Canal, Alaska, some forty miles north of Juneau. Quantities of heavy fuel oil escaping covered the water for miles about, finally settling on the beaches. It is the writer's theory that the great loss of life, some 343 persons, was largely occasioned by the escaping oil.

When patrolling the shores of Admiralty Island and adjacent waters in a small steamer on October 28, looking for bodies from the wreck, a Murre (*Uria troille californica*) was seen swimming towards the vessel, occasionally assisting its feet with its wings. On coming close it was seen that its breast was heavily saturated with oil, and the wings and other parts to only a lesser degree. The bird came to within a few feet of the boat, which was then drifting, frequently raising itself on the water, shaking itself, and flapping its wings in efforts to get rid of the oil, and occasionally preening its feathers with its beak. The bird seemed not only devoid of fear but actually to wish companionship or a stable place to rest. Threatening movements only caused it to dive a few feet away, barely under the surface of the water, which gave excellent opportunity to observe the use of the wings in assisting the feet in the diving. It was finally killed