

ler was turned on but he did not fly through the spray as I have heard hummingbirds will do.

That hummingbirds bathe, and quite thoroughly, then, is certain, despite the scarcity of references. No doubt they enjoy the bath as well as other birds, but the ease with which they penetrate thickets and cover distances has enabled them to escape observation.—FRANK N. BASSETT, *Alameda, California, January 21, 1922.*

**Notes on Some Water-fowl.**—Regarding the nesting of the Canvasback (*Mareca valisineria*), I have on two occasions caught young ones, nearly full-grown, in New Mexico, where I believe they nest in considerable numbers in the mountain lakes. Half a dozen pairs used to breed every year on a prairie pond on the C. S. Ranch, the property of Mr. Charles Springer, near Cimarron, Colfax County, New Mexico. I found them there last in 1915. In California, the southward migration of Canvasbacks leaves the coast at about the latitude of San Luis Obispo, and from that point follows the mountain lakes south. Many of them winter in the lakes of the San Pedro Martir Mountains, Lower California, but one never sees them on either coast of the Peninsula. The records of a club like the Bolsa Chica show how rare the "Cans" are along the southern coast of California, and yet on the grounds of the San Timoteo Gun Club, near Banning, Riverside County, one used to bag two Cans for one of every other kind of bird!

I once handled two fine specimens of the Black Brant (*Branta nigricans*) that were shot by a friend on a reservoir near Redlands in 1903. They were members of a flock of about a dozen, and I remember my surprise at seeing this strictly maritime species so far from the sea. I question whether the numbers of these birds have been so greatly diminished by shooting. They still winter in vast numbers on San Quentin Bay, Lower California, where the few gunners who have sought them have had no difficulty in making disgracefully huge bags. Perhaps the brant have learned to avoid our coast entirely, and pass by each year, in scarcely diminished numbers, to winter on the Mexican bays, where the report of a shotgun is seldom or never heard.

I believe that changing conditions, brought about by the deplorable influx of settlers into California, lead one to think that the fowl have decreased more than is perhaps the case—though Heaven knows the decrease is pitiful enough. In 1919, when I spent a few months at home, I found that dozens of ponds and lakes formerly alive with waterfowl, were deserted. Were the birds nearly all dead, or had they changed their wintering places? The geese are gone, like the cranes which, less than twenty years ago, used to pass in thousands over Riverside and San Bernardino counties, migrating northward from the Colorado delta. But concerning the ducks, I am not so sure. There are at present in California two great wintering regions for countless myriads of wild duck: the Sacramento Valley about Colusa, and the Imperial Valley in the south. The number of fowl concentrated in these two regions is staggering to the imagination. Only two years ago I sat in a blind near Gridley and forgot to use my gun while I watched tens of thousands of sprig trailing like films of lace across the sky. I believe that in an hour not less than a quarter of a million birds passed southward. The rice plantations of this region account, in part at least, for the desertion of other parts of the valley; the great irrigated areas of Imperial, with the tule swamps where the New River runs into the Salton Sea, seem to me to account for much of the desertion of once populous waters in southern California. A generation ago ducks were almost unknown in the Imperial district. If Imperial were suddenly to go dry, and all the birds wintering there to scatter out, as formerly, over the lakes and marshes of southern California, the prospect might look less depressing.

The fresh water marshes of Lake Chapala, in the state of Jalisco, Mexico, form another haven for waterfowl. At one end of the lake there is a great area of flooded land cut by a veritable labyrinth of sluggish channels, 400 square miles, I should say. The far interior of this swampy paradise, reached after three days' travel in a native canoe, is a vast sanctuary for wildfowl, a region of gently-rolling damp prairies, set with small ponds, and traversed by a network of navigable channels leading to the great lake. I saw as many geese, White-fronted (*Anser albifrons*) and Snow (*Chen hyperboreus*), as I have ever seen in the Sacramento Valley, and the number of ducks was past belief, with some interesting species, like the Masked and Florida Black or Dusky, to

lend variety. A more thorough investigation of this field would be worth while, for I have reason to believe that several species of northern ducks breed there, and breed at a much later season than in our country. On November 20 (1909) I found a brood of young Shovellers (*Spatula clypeata*) unable to fly, and the natives told me that hundreds of ducks nested there, among them Gadwall, Dusky, Sprig, Shoveller, and Cinnamon Teal.

The South Pacific, where I am living now, is a poor place from the point of view of a lover of the Anatidae. We have only one duck in the islands south of the Line (though I know a man who claims that Shovellers come to Penrhyn Island every year about Thanksgiving time, and remain for two or three months), called *Anas superciliosa*, and reminding one of a small dull-colored Gadwall. Three migrating waders reach Tahiti every year from the north: The Pacific Golden Plover (*Charadrius dominicus fulvus*), the Wandering Tattler (*Heteractitis incanus*), and the Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis*).—C. B. NORDBOFF, *Papeete, Tahiti, Society Islands, November 22, 1921.*

**Second Occurrence of the Yakutat Song Sparrow in California.**—On September 19, 1915, Mr. Laurence M. Huey took a specimen of *Melospiza melodia caurina* Ridgway, at Fortuna, Humboldt County, California. The bird is a female (no. C 281, coll. Donald R. Dickey), and becomes, I believe, the second recorded instance of the capture within the state of this rare winter visitant to the northwest coast of California.

The bird was taken on a brushy hillside in the immediate vicinity of Fortuna, and at a distance, therefore, of several miles from the sea. In this connection, it is interesting to note the wide departure from normal in the associational behavior exhibited during migration by this individual. In its breeding range and on its winter ground the bird is essentially a "beach-comber". This has been clearly indicated by the single winter capture heretofore recorded for California (Grinnell, Condor, XII, 1910, p. 174), and by the Oregon experience of Shelton (Condor, XVII, 1915, p. 60), and the Alaskan notes from Admiralty Island given by H. S. Swarth (Condor, XIV, 1912, p. 73). Here, on the contrary, it was found far inland in the characteristic habitat of the host of Townsend Fox Sparrows that were coming in at the time from the north, and in an association quite distinct from that of the beach.

Dr. Joseph Grinnell and Mr. H. S. Swarth have kindly compared the specimen with the birds from more northern stations that are now in their care at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California.—DONALD R. DICKEY, *Pasadena, California, December 22, 1921.*

**Rufous Hummingbird Tragedy.**—On April 24, 1920, Mrs. Stoner found in the back yard a male Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), badly stunned and fluttering on the ground beneath the clothesline, with which no doubt it had collided. The line was one of the continuous wire lines working on a pulley at each end, and quite possibly in trying to avoid one of the wires it flew into the other, some ten or twelve inches above or below. It was taken into the house, but lived only a few minutes. The outer tail feathers measure 3 mm. in width, and the next to middle tail feathers are notched. The skin was preserved. This incident cites a date of the northward migration in this locality, as well as one of the many hazards birds have to contend with.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, December 31, 1921.*

**Wintering of the Nuttall Sparrow in Los Angeles County.**—Because of the paucity of records of this species from Los Angeles County, California, it may be of interest to note that this sparrow was found to be fairly common in Placerita Canyon, near Newhall, during December, 1920, and January, 1921.

Mr. E. J. Brown and the junior writer spent several odd days collecting in this locality with the following results: December 15, 1920, we took four adult specimens of *Zonotrichia leucophrys nuttalli* and saw several more at sufficiently close range to make us fairly sure that they were of the same form; December 30, 1920, we took three additional adults and saw what we were confident were two more; January 24, 1921, we took another adult.