

parently the feet only were used for swimming. Ascent to the surface was almost vertical and the grebe came above the water with a bounce like a cork.

The diving of these birds has interested me very much in the last few years, as a few of them are nearly always seen to be active fairly close to the pier through the winter months, but this was the first time that I had been able to observe complete operations in a series of dives.—W. E. ALLEN, *Scripps Institution for Biological Research of the University of California, La Jolla, California, October 28, 1922.*

**The White-throated Sparrow in Los Angeles.**—On November 13, 1922, I saw a White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles. The bird was with Gambel Sparrows on a weedy hillside among tall dry mustard, and presented an exceptionally good opportunity for observation by appearing at two different times within twenty feet of me. With my field glass I saw very clearly the distinctive markings: The black and white striped head; the brilliant yellow of the front end of the superciliary; the sharp contrast between pure white of throat and gray of breast; the rich rusty brown and black streaky back; and the horn-colored bill. As I was familiar with this species in its New York State breeding grounds and know the Gambel here, I feel entirely satisfied with my identification. But as the specimen was not collected, I offer this record with all due modesty.—MARY MANN MILLER, *Los Angeles, California, November 15, 1922.*

**An Early Account of the California Condor.**—In the rare and little known work of Adolphe Boucard, trochilidist, collector, and merchant of hummingbirds, entitled "Travels of a Naturalist" (1894, p. 51), there is a passage which probably sums up the knowledge of this nearly extinct bird, which was current and obtainable about San Francisco in 1851-52, when he was a resident in that city. It reads as follows: . . . "But the rarest of all, the Californian Vulture, *Pseudogryphus californicus*, was seldom seen. It is a very rare bird, peculiar to California. It is the largest of the North American species, rivalling the Condor. It is dark brown, with the head and neck naked. It is very voracious, and when many are together the carcass of a horse or cow is devoured in a very short space of time. The smaller species, *Cathartes aura*, does not dare to approach them. It is not uncommon to see them assemble with the gulls, and greedily devour the carcass of a whale which has been cast ashore, and they will even pursue weak and wounded game".

Boucard had also learned something of the South American Condor, *Sarcoramphus gryphus*, during his visits ashore at Valparaiso on his outbound trip in 1851, for he writes (*loc. cit.*, pp. 21-22) of it as follows: "Among the Chilean birds, the most remarkable species is the Condor, *Sarcoramphus gryphus*, belonging to the family of *Vulturidae*. This giant bird is a native of the Andes, choosing its breeding place between an altitude from 10,000 to 16,000 feet; but they are also seen frequently on the coast, especially when in search of carrion. Flocks are never seen except around a large carcass. Otherwise they are met singly, soaring at great height in vast circles. Its flight is slow and majestic. Its head is constantly in motion as in search of food. To rise from the ground, it must needs run for some distance, then it flaps its wings three or four times, and ascends at a low angle, till it reaches a considerable elevation, when it seems to make a few leisurely strokes, as if to ease its wings, and moving in large curves it glides along without the least apparent vibratory motion. In walking the wings trail on the ground, and it has a very awkward gait. When well gorged with food, it is slow in its movements and stupid, and is easily captured. Although a carrion bird, it also feeds on calves, sheep, dogs, or the like, when it has the chance. It has been said and written that children have been carried away by this bird; but I doubt that any authenticated case has ever been proved.

"They are most commonly seen standing on rocks, around vertical cliffs, where their nests are. It lays two white eggs, three or four inches long, on an inaccessible ledge. It makes no nest proper, but places a few sticks around the eggs. It is very difficult to get at them, and they are still rare in the collections. Incubation occupies about seven weeks, and takes place in the months of April and May. The young at birth are scarcely covered with a dirty white down, and it takes a considerable time

before they can fly. No one has ever been able to state satisfactorily how long they are fed by their parents, but it is probable that it is not much shorter than a year. They are as downy as goslings until they nearly equal in size a full grown bird. During all that time they are very voracious, and the parents are constantly chasing for their support.

"A second species, *Sarcoramphus aequatorialis*, has been described some years ago by Mr. Sharpe; but having actually in my possession one specimen agreeing exactly with the type now in the British Museum, I am of opinion that it is only a young male, aged three or four years, and that it is the usual plumage of that age. It is then brown, or ash colour, all over, meanwhile the fully adult plumage of *Sarcoramphus gryphus* is black, with secondaries exteriorly edged with white, and a downy white ruff on the upper part and sides of neck. This last is naked and of a good size; the skin lies in folds in the male. The caruncles on the head of the adult males are well developed, and have somewhat the shape of a crown. A full grown bird measures from twelve to thirteen feet. The olfactory organs are well developed, and it has been said that it has an extraordinary power of scent; but I am more inclined to attribute the faculty of detecting their proper food, at considerable distances, to their sight, which must be prodigious. Life is scarcely extinct when flocks of these birds, invisible to naked eyes, pounce upon their prey".

There is little or no direct evidence in either account that the author spoke from first-hand experience or observation of either of these birds. The accounts are of interest only as collateral evidence gathered by a widely experienced collector and written up from his diary forty-three years after his original visits. He was an acquaintance of Lorquin and of his grandson, Leon Laglaize, and may have gained some of his knowledge from these widely experienced collectors.—CHARLES A. KOFOID, *Berkeley, California, October 26, 1922.*

**The Status of the Rocky Mountain Downy Woodpecker in California.**—I agree with Dr. Walter K. Fisher (Condor, iv, 1902, pp. 69-70) that the name *leucurus*—*Picus leucurus* of Hartlaub (Naumannia, ii, ii, 1852, p. 55)—ought to be used for the Rocky Mountain Downy Woodpecker. Although excessively brief, the description accompanying it is no worse than that of any one of a dozen other birds which nevertheless bears the name given it on meager basis. I have looked up all the literature cited by Fisher, and am convinced that he made a perfectly good case, even though his proposal in this regard was promptly turned down by the A. O. U. Committee (Auk, xx, 1903, p. 360).

Anyway, the name currently used for the Rocky Mountain Downy ("Batchelder") Woodpecker, *homorus*, is of rather doubtful applicability. *D[ryobates]. homorus* Cabanis and Heine (Mus. Heineanum, iv, ii, 1863 [1864], p. 65, footnote) was described sketchily from simply "Californien", and no type was indicated. I wrote to Dr. Erwin Stresemann of the Zoological Museum in Berlin asking him if the type of *homorus* might not be in the collection under his charge, and, if so, as to what information there might be had concerning it. Dr. Stresemann took considerable pains in the matter; at first he thought he had found the type, but was able later to find evidence ruling out the specimen in question. He is now inclined to think that Dr. Cabanis had no actual specimen in hand, but based his diagnosis on a statement or remark made by some one else, in manuscript or in previous literature. In other words, there may have been no type. Moreover, that a specimen of true *leucurus* had been obtained within the present boundaries of California previous to 1864 seems to me very unlikely.

Somebody years ago expressed the belief that "Downy" Woodpeckers in the Pacific states are more or less migratory. Perhaps this belief arose from the fact that occasional specimens from places in western and southern California had been identified as belonging to races breeding in areas to the northward or eastward. However, all the facts now available lead to the belief that our Pacific "downy" woodpeckers are quite sedentary, being subject only to local wanderings of individuals, about to the extent that most resident birds are.

Thus, with regard to the examples of "*gairdneri*" and of "*homorus*" (or "*leucurus*"), and even of "*pubescens*", which have been recorded far outside of the breeding metropolis in each case, I strongly suspect that what was really concerned in each instance, as far as relates to California, was an individual variant of *turati*. For exam-