

good field observation. It is concerned with the difference in behavior shown by animals when they are members of flocks and when they are alone or relatively isolated. This question has been much discussed with particular reference to problems of mob psychology, but there is still need of observation on the subject, particularly with respect to such highly specialized animals as birds.

In conclusion, I must explain that I am not an ornithologist. My interest in the animal kingdom is so extended that as yet I have been unable to specialize on any one group in making observations. Consequently I request correspondence on either of these points and I should be especially interested to see, summarized in print, the observations of students of bird life which have a bearing on these matters.

Zoology Building, The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, March 18, 1923.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

A Note on the Voice of the Ruddy Duck.—The queried statement, "Voiceless?" in the excellent account of the Ruddy Duck (*Erismatura jamaicensis*) given in Grinnell, Bryant, and Storer's *Game Birds of California*, suggests that the following may be of interest.

The male in the breeding season has a peculiar and most unducklike note. It is a liquid and faintly explosive sound given at the completion of the characteristic bobbing of the head and neck. Possibly "dook," or "gook," comes as close as it is possible to write it. The sound made by a bubble of marsh gas as it reaches the surface is an almost exactly similar noise. This note is inaudible more than a few yards away.

While I was in a blind one day in the early fall, a female Ruddy and a fully grown juvenile swam past me at only a few feet distance. The young bird was giving at frequent intervals a low but emphatic "quack".—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, March 26, 1923.*

Black Phoebes and House Finches in Joint Use of a Nest.—At the time of a visit, May 11-14, 1922, to Oakzanita Lodge resort in the Cuyamaca region of San Diego County, California, there came to the writer's attention a rather surprising state of affairs in avian home-life, with a pair of Black Phoebes (*Sayornis nigricans*) and a pair of House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*) as principals. The former, whose nest had been built under the projecting roof of an outlying cottage.—proclaimed, by the way, as the "Dove-Cote," where might have been expected only peace and contentment—were experiencing so determined an intrusion on the part of the latter that not only had the nest become a goal of contention, but as a result the phoebes were subjected to intermittent possession and forced to share its use with the finches. Just why the intruders should have disregarded seemingly well-established priority and persistently encroached upon the phoebes' domain has remained an unsolved problem.

Coincident with the finding of the nest, on May 12, the presence of a female finch and absence of the phoebes attracted particular notice, and investigation of its contents disclosed one egg of the finch and two of the phoebe. The logical supposition that the rightful owners had been completely driven away proved erroneous when later in the day the female phoebe was observed on the nest. At an early hour the next morning, however, the finches had already resumed proprietorship, and the phoebes, if in the immediate neighborhood, were not to be seen. During the afternoon the situation was similarly reversed, the male phoebe solicitously flying about while his mate occupied the nest. The morning of the 14th found the phoebes departed and