

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

The Gray Jay at Lake Tahoe.—On August 17, 1923, my wife and myself while studying birds at Glenbrook, Nevada, on the eastern shore of Lake Tahoe, had an excellent view of a Gray Jay (*Perisoreus obscurus griseus*). We were on an elevated point some three hundred feet above the Lake, or at about 6500 feet above sea-level. The jay was perched on top of a large pine tree and we observed him there at rest for more than ten minutes.—HENRY E. PARMENTER, *Santa Barbara, California, November 10, 1923.*

The Nesting Places of Two Albatrosses in the South Seas.—The Museum of Vertebrate Zoology has recently had a gift from Captain John Bollons, New Zealand Government Marine Service, of a number of eggs of Australasian sea birds.

Captain Bollons, who is well known in New Zealand as a practical ornithologist and careful observer, in transmitting these eggs points out some of the breeding differences between the albatross peculiar to the New Zealand seas, the Royal (*Diomedea regia*), and the Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*). On the eastern side of Adams Island, one of the Auckland Group, 300 miles south of New Zealand, only *D. regia* nests. Four miles away on the same island, but to the southwest, only the nests of *D. exulans* are to be found. On Adams Island the latter bird nests four or five weeks earlier than *regia*. On Antipodes Island are found only the nests and eggs of *exulans*, none of the Royal. On the other hand, Campbell Island is the chief nidification ground for many *regia*; only a few nests of *exulans* have been found there. The eggs of the two species resemble one another; those of *D. regia* are, however, the larger.—CASEY A. WOOD, *Chicago, Illinois, December 8, 1923.*

An Intelligent Crow.—The following incident showing good power of adapting means to accomplish a desired end, as exhibited by a captive Northwestern Crow (*Corvus caurinus*), was related to me by Miss Adelaide King, of the U. S. Biological Survey, at Portland, Oregon. It is hereby presented in Miss King's own words.

"While passing through the City Park in Portland, Oregon, one afternoon recently, I saw a crow in one of the bird enclosures trying to pry a peanut out of a crack in a bamboo perch on which he was sitting. This bamboo perch had a rather large crack in it, and a peanut that had been thrown into the cage had lodged there. The crow worked with his bill for quite a time, unsuccessfully. He then stopped and looked on the floor of his cage. Observing a small stick he picked this up and flew back on the perch and worked on the peanut with the stick. With this he was able to push the peanut along the crack, but not to get it out. When he had pushed the peanut quite near the edge of the cage, he hopped around to the other side and pushed in the other direction. He finally succeeded, with the little stick in his bill, in prying the nut onto the floor of his cage, where he jumped down and got it."—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, October 18, 1923.*

Late Occurrence of the Broad-tailed Hummingbird in Colorado.—During an early snowstorm on October 24, 1923, a female Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*) flew into an open window in one of the rooms of the University of Colorado Museum, at Boulder, where it was taken by the writer.

This is a later date than any heretofore recorded from Colorado. Sclater in his *Birds of Colorado* says of this species: "It departs again in September, the males leaving some little time before the females and young birds. It was seen as late as October 15 by Robert Rockwell in Mesa County."

I have seen no reference to the occurrence of this species in the northern portion of the state later than September, although it is very common throughout the summer, and several pairs nested in Boulder last summer.—EARL THERON ENGLE, *Department of Biology, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, November 3, 1923.*

Are the Feet of the Western Gull Ever Yellow?—Allan Brooks (*Condor*, vol. 24, p. 94) inquires as to the color of the feet of the Western Gull. He quotes Ridgway as saying that they are "yellow (in life)" (*Birds of North and Middle America, Part*

viii, p. 610). There seems to be a contradiction in the latter work, for on page 582 in the key to the genus *Larus* I find "legs and feet flesh color in life . . . *Larus occidentalis*." Either this is a contradiction or else the Western Gull has been found with feet both colors.

When Ridgway's Bulletin appeared, in 1919, I noticed the statement first quoted above and, not daring to dispute it, set out to find a Western Gull with yellow feet. My field of observation did not cover much territory, being mostly from the Alameda Pier to the Ferry Building at San Francisco, but I have made daily round trips between these two points, and during the winter months and many days in summer two round trips daily, making a total of about 575 round trips or 1150 single trips in a year. There were 365 of these trips made at night which leaves a total of 785 daylight trips a year looking for a yellow-footed Western Gull. I have counted from 50 to 300 birds of this species on a trip for nearly four years and while it is certain that I saw the same birds again and again, it is safe to assume that I have seen a good many thousand individuals and I have yet to find a Western Gull with yellow feet. All had flesh-colored feet.—F. N. BASSETT, *Alameda, California, January 11, 1924.*

The Subspecific Status of the Hermit Thrushes Breeding in the Humboldt Bay District.—It has long been known that some form of *Hylocichla guttata* breeds, though sparingly, in parts of the densely vegetated humid coast belt of Humboldt County, California. For instance, W. K. Fisher (Condor, III, 1901, p. 91) includes the species (under the name *aonalaschkae* then current) as among the distinctly boreal types of birds found by him there.

Apparently the first specimens of breeding Hermit Thrushes to be examined from Humboldt County critically are the two recorded by J. Mailliard (Condor, XXIII, 1921, p. 165) from Myers' Ranch, on the South Fork of the Eel River, under the name *Hylocichla guttata slevini*. These two specimens (nos. 23975-76, coll. Calif. Acad. Sci.), taken in Douglas firs, are before me as I write these paragraphs, and I agree with Mailliard as to their determination, though they are not quite as small as *slevini* from the coast counties south of Mendocino County.

In the latter part of July, 1923, I did some field work in the vicinity of Carlotta, Humboldt County, with headquarters at the hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Wilder. Penetration of the dense redwood forest on the benches within two miles north of Carlotta quickly disclosed to me the presence of Hermit Thrushes there. Their wonderful songs swelled and waned among the otherwise dead-silent groves. The birds must have been fairly common, for on several occasions I was within hearing of two of them from one listening point. But, owing to the twilight dimness beneath the close-growing and lofty redwoods, intensified by the continuous high fogs, it proved a difficult matter to obtain specimens. While singing mainly from perches overhead, the birds did most of their foraging on the ground, over which they moved intermittently and with no commotion. The ground which they were searching was so shaded that there was scarcely a green thing to relieve the dominant brownness of the view, and in the gloom nothing at all could be seen of them until or unless they hopped up above the near horizon line from some uphill point of observation.

On July 20, I obtained two adult males (now nos. 43986-87, Mus. Vert. Zool.). These prove distinctly different from *slevini*, as also from *sequoiensis* of the Sierras. They are darker toned and larger than *slevini*, darker toned and smaller than *sequoiensis*. Furthermore, they cannot be referred to *nanus*, as might have been predicted on fairly reasonable argument, for their darkness of tone does not lead towards the warm brown of *nanus*. The astonishing thing is that, after much comparing, I am forced to call them *Hylocichla guttata guttata*. In other words, I am unable to find differences between them and birds from southwestern Alaska. Exact duplicates are to be found among this Museum's series of Hermit Thrushes from the Prince William Sound region (see Grinnell, Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., vol. 5, 1910, p. 417). Of course, this is another case where with no probable immediate genetic affinities, representations of a variable species in two separated breeding areas have come to have, incidentally, identical characters. In the present instance, the Sitkan race *nanus* occupies territory intervening between the two areas, remote from one another, occupied by *guttata*. The Humboldt Bay district *guttata* might be interpreted as an intergrade between *nanus* and *slevini*, I suppose, though it may be remarked that breeding Hermit Thrushes seem to be rare or altogether wanting in the humid coast belt between Humboldt County and the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia.