

a great deal of the time for the next six years and did not observe any more here until April 17, 1918, when a pair was seen. In the spring of 1919 a colony established itself, using some large date palms on Grand Avenue for nesting sites.

Since then they have increased and spread all over the village and out into the surrounding country, until at the present time on my rural mail route covering an area roughly four miles one way by two miles the other, there are six well established colonies, besides the numerous flocks in the village. They seem to require palms for roosting and nesting sites. Every colony I know of is established where either the date palm or the Washingtonia palm is growing, using the mass of dead fronds about the trunk of the latter as their shelter. At my home we have no palms, but have a number of large eucalyptus trees that would apparently afford ample nesting sites. The nearest colony is less than one half mile away; and during the winter and spring for the last four years, pairs and small flocks have been frequent visitors to our premises; but as yet they have not nested, nor remained very long at a time.

In Honolulu during 1914-15 they were very common. But I did not notice any decided preference for palms amid the luxuriant tropical gardens of the residence sections. In San Francisco I found them abundant where there were no palms or any other shelter than the cornices of buildings; and in the Taft district of Kern County they lacked palms and seemed to content themselves with the few trees found around some of the oil company camps.

Is the apparent preference for palms a local development, or, given the choice of various shelters, will *Passer domesticus* take palms first?—JOHN MCB. ROBERTSON, Buena Park, California, November 4, 1923.

**The Black-bellied Plover at Buena Vista Lake.**—While at Buena Vista Lake, Kern County, California, in the company of Mr. A. J. van Rossem, I took a male Black-bellied Plover (*Squatarola squatarola*). The bird was captured April 15, 1923, and is in nearly full spring plumage. The specimen was one of hundreds of sick migratory shore birds that were dying from some unknown condition of the lake water. This individual could not have been abnormally detained at the lake for many days, since the disease seemed to attack and kill the birds rather quickly. Although during our stay much of the lake shore was explored, no other individual of this species was seen.

This bird, as far as I know, is the first Black-bellied Plover taken at the lake, and adds to the other interior records of birds taken farther north in the San Joaquin Valley.—ALDEN H. MILLER, Los Angeles, California, November 29, 1923.

**Developmental Color Changes in the Eyes of New Zealand Gulls.**—As every mother knows, the color of her infant's eyes undergoes changes, more or less marked, during the first year or two after birth. But these alterations are negligible when compared with the color variations observable in the irides of some young birds. For example, the pretty and often quite tame little Red-billed Gull (in New Zealand the Mackerel Gull), *Larus scopulinus*, is born with a dark brown, almost black, eye, and yet by the time the immature bird is a year old the iris has changed to nearly pure white. A similar alteration is noticeable in the eyes of the much larger but equally beautiful Southern Black-backed Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) that ranges over the whole Southern Hemisphere. Both these birds are easily domesticated and act the part of scavengers and devourers of caterpillars and other insect pests. I have often seen them about the Australasian harbors and fields going about their useful work unafraid of man.—CASEY A. WOOD, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, December 15, 1923.

**References to Feeding Habits of Certain Birds.**—It is believed the following references will be usefully put on record here. Though they appear in an ichthyological journal they are of direct interest to ornithologists.

Copeia, No. 21, p. 27, "On Fish-bones in a Kingfisher's Nest." The note does not give the specific identity of the bird but it unquestionably refers to the Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*), since that is the only kingfisher known to occur in the region where the observation was made.

Copeia, No. 26, p. 2, "Fish as Owl Food." Notes the Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) feeding on the Yellow Perch.

Copeia, No. 30, p. 31, "Louisiana Water-thrush eating Fish." *Seiurus motacilla* observed catching small fish and picking the flesh.—F. N. BASSETT, Alameda, California, January 11, 1924.