

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Coot Caught by Turtle.**—On May 3, 1924, my brother, Carl S. Leopold, and myself were fishing in Crystal Lake on the Illinois shore opposite Burlington, Iowa. We noticed a flock of a dozen American Coots (*Fulica americana*) on a marshy point, one of which continuously flapped its wings. We thought at first the flapping was some sort of courtship antic, but it continued so steadily that we concluded the bird must be caught in a muskrat trap. The flock dispersed as we drew near. It was evident that they had gathered around the flapping bird as a crowd gathers around a street accident. I lifted the bird by one wing and pulled up the head of a huge hardshell turtle, which had gripped about an inch of the middle toe of one foot. We dispatched the turtle with a .22 bullet through its head. It did not relax its grip until shot. We estimated its weight at 15 pounds.

The remarkable thing was that the coot's foot was absolutely uninjured, in spite of its large size and rather fragile construction. I know from experience that this size and species of turtle can bite a large sunfish in two, or almost sever the fabric of a rubber boot. The turtle was evidently holding on gently, awaiting the exhaustion of the bird. It could have drowned the coot by backing out into deeper water, but made no move to do so during the ten minutes when we were watching the flapping process.—ALDO LEOPOLD, *Burlington, Iowa, May 2, 1924.*

**More Birds that Grasp Objects with the Feet.**—Since the issue of a query in the CONDOR for May, 1924, page 112, as to what birds beside raptores hold objects with the feet, the following instances have come to my notice.

A Green-backed Goldfinch (*Astragalinus psaltria hesperophilus*) while seeding a batchelor button head, bent the slight stem to a horizontal position. When through with it, the bird reached deliberately out with one foot and grasped a nearby spray and pulled it under his feet on the original stem and ate from the new supply of seeds.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Francis Saunders tell me that Arizona Hooded Orioles (*Icterus cucullatus nelsoni*) in their yard are fond of the flowers of the flowering maple (so-called) and probe the pendant bells by reaching down with the foot and pulling the face of the flower up. Another friend says these orioles frequent the flowering maple when in bloom. During mulberry season I observed these orioles several times holding the fruit with a foot while eating berries that had been plucked from the stem.

A butcher-bird (*Lanius ludovicianus gambeli*) observed on May 2 placed a grasshopper in one foot and held it close to the twig upon which it was perching. As described by Mr. J. Eugene Law at the July meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club when reporting a similar observation, the tarsus was rested across the twig in rather an ungainly position. The bird I watched tried in vain to get some nourishment from the carcass held so insecurely, though many perches and positions were tried. The hopper was held close to the twig. In flight, the bill carried it. Who has seen the California Shrike eat "butchered" food, that is, after being hung up?

An immature male Anna Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) feeding in the flowers of the bird-of-paradise shrub made a peculiar batting sound that attracted me fifty feet. It proved to be the wings hitting the very long protruding stamens of the flowers. The bird was annoyed but would not desist and finally took to grasping the offending filaments with extended feet. Flower after flower was thus worked; but after the first few experiences the bird settled full weight upon the stamens, carrying them down so far his body swung even past the vertical, the belly facing up under the flower. The wings went "dead" on one occasion, but usually they vibrated slightly while held high above, after the fashion of swallows gathering mud. The beginning of this clutching with the feet I consider an effort to *grasp* the interfering stamens and hold them down—because of the extension of the feet in the unusual forward position displayed at the first. Later, the bird merely settled upon them in a perching attitude. From my study window this clinging to a flower or a flower stalk is seen nearly every day. The vigor and strength shown by these "weak" feet, that grasp one canna stalk in particular in a sidewise position and hold the body out in better poise than most finches in similar attitudes, makes me believe the texts are wrong in describing them as weak.

A Mrs. Rodewald, living in Altadena, California, has been feeding hummingbirds syrup and has gained quite a following. When perched on the little stick held out for them, I noticed the vigorous manner in which the birds sidled down to the end of the

stick nearest the syrup pot. The hummers have been coming several years and Mrs. Rodewald thinks two of this year's pensioners are from two years back. At least one of them has the individual habit of perching upon the lip of the syrup cup (all of them know where it is kept and go to it and hover). Those that perch on the rim of the cup often sidle half way around at one move, to get a better position. To see this movement is to be impressed with the freedom and ease with which such foot work is accomplished.—ROLAND CASE ROSS, *Pasadena, California, September 22, 1924.*

**The Red-eyed Vireo as a Bird of Oregon.**—The first reference to the capture of the Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireosylva olivacea*) in the literature on Oregon birds that I can find was in Shelton's Distributional List of the Land Birds of West Central Oregon, published by the University of Oregon (University of Oregon Bulletin, New Series, Jan., 1917, vol. XIV, no. 4, p. 37), in which an adult male was reported taken on the Middle Fork of the Willamette River near Oakridge on the west slope of the Cascade Mountains. The species was next brought to my attention during the summer of 1923, when Mr. William Sherwood, of Salem, Oregon, collected a number of them on the Imnaha River near Imnaha Post Office in Wallowa County near the northeast corner of the state. One of these specimens, an adult male, was taken on June 14, 1923.

On June 18, 1924, at Union, Union County, Oregon, my attention was drawn to a vireo song which, upon investigation, proved to be from a Red-eyed Vireo in a near-by cottonwood tree. This bird was seen at a distance of ten or twelve feet and positively identified. On July 6, 1924, in the company of I. N. Gabrielson, of Portland, I found a nest of this species in a wild crabapple tree on the banks of the Columbia River about twelve miles east of Portland. The nest was typical of the species and contained three fresh eggs. On this day, Gabrielson and I saw no less than seven Red-eyed Vireos and heard several more in about two hundred acres of well wooded river-bottom land. Two adult males were collected. On July 13, 1924, Mr. Gabrielson again visited this locality and took an additional adult male and heard several more.

In view of the above, it appears that the Red-eyed Vireo has recently become a fairly common breeding bird of Oregon. The species probably invaded the state from the north, as it has long been a common breeding species in the eastern part of the state of Washington.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, July 14, 1924.*

**The Anna Hummingbird Takes a Shower Bath.**—In connection with a former note on the bathing of hummingbirds (CONDOR, XXIV, 1922, p. 63) the following incident may be worthy of record.

On August 17, 1924, while watering my lawn at Alameda, California, I placed the sprinkler in position and had just turned on the water when an adult male Anna Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) flew into and poised in the dense spray. After glancing about for a moment he gradually assumed a vertical position and spreading his tail, then slowly settled to the ground, meanwhile drawing the tail back until it nearly reached the horizontal plane, when he actually "sat" on the grass, the body erect and the tail spread out fanwise behind him. The wings continued to vibrate while in this position, but the strokes were much less frequent than when flying, being just sufficient to maintain a vertical balance. In a few seconds he began increasing the wing strokes and slowly ascended about a foot above the ground where he poised a moment and then repeated the entire performance several times, after which he flew to a wire overhead.

Thinking he might be "contemplating" another plunge I summoned an audience of several persons who arrived just in time to witness the rare spectacle of a hummingbird "sitting" on the ground in a rain storm! When the "point of saturation" was reached he darted away as suddenly as he had come.—F. N. BASSETT, *Alameda, California, August 22, 1924.*

**Western Tanagers in Berkeley in Midsummer.**—On July 28, 1924, a male Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) was seen in the top branches of a red plum tree located east of the University of California Infirmary and south of Stadium Drive. It flew from this tree into a locust tree about twenty-five feet away. It was not seen again that day.

On July 30, a male Western Tanager was seen in a plum tree neighboring the red plum tree. There was little if any fruit left on these trees, and neither time the bird