

on a limb or trunk but quite as often sit horizontally on the smaller branches, often at the top of the tree, and there remain motionless for considerable periods, after the manner of the Sparrow Hawk. The flight is crow-like. Near the ranch house there was a fence post, with a shallow notch in the flat top. This these birds used for opening acorns, which were fitted into the notch and opened with the bill. At almost any time a bird could be seen at this business, which evidently had been going on for a considerable time, because the ground about the post was covered with empty acorn shells. The top of the post was invariably left quite clean and free from shells, except when a bird was disturbed and forced away before the meal was finished and the table cleared. The use of this crevice or notch to secure acorns while being opened, suggests one of the reasons for the habit of the California Woodpecker, of placing acorns and nuts in holes drilled in wood and bark of trees. At least it is one of the advantages secured.

No evidence of nesting was found, but the birds were often seen in pairs and some of them probably breed in this region.—CLAUDE GIGNOUX, *Berkeley, California, April 8, 1925.*

**Western Martin Colonies.**—In the CONDOR for September, 1924, p. 195, Dr. H. C. Bryant mentions certain cities in which the Western Martin (*Progne subis hesperia*) colonizes. I should like to add the two colonies found at Santa Barbara and Balboa, respectively. The latter colony originated in 1919 with one pair of birds, according to J. P. Greeley, secretary of the Newport Bay Investment Company. The birds nested in the large boat-house and pavilion owned by this company, and from the first were given protection. English Sparrows and Linnets have been discouraged from nesting by the Company, and boys and others warned of molesting the martins. Early in July of 1920 I, personally, first discovered the martins there. Since then I have kept track of them and have found the colony increasing each year in number of breeding pairs. In July, 1924, there were fourteen nests. It is interesting to note that the nests are located on rafters over the boat slips, some of them being directly over water. The feeding parents do a good deal of their hunting over the waters of Newport Bay. The trash and "sweepings" cast out from the nests, especially in early mornings, make quite a litter on the dock, and consist mostly of the wings of dragon flies, damsel flies and some lepidoptera. The excreta seem to be carried away from the vicinity.

Dr. Bryant recalls a single pair of birds on Mt. Wilson; that colony also has thrived and is most vigorous and noisy in the breeding season, being one of the conspicuous features of the top of Mt. Wilson.

William L. and Irene Finley (*Condor*, xxvi, 1924, p. 7) ask if anyone has seen Western Martins nesting in bird houses. A friend informs me that in Sierra County, California, a colony nested in a bird box on the roof of the ranch barn, and did so for years. In the CONDOR for March, 1919, page 76, a colony is reported as nesting in the center of a town in bird boxes.

Believing with the Finleys that Western Martins will eventually adopt artificial nesting cavities, I assisted the Park Department of the City of Pasadena, California, in planning and locating a martin house. The local colony is at present nesting in the cornice of the Security Bank Building and we sought to place the house, for the sake of gaining success for the experiment, on the roof of the same building. Neither the Board of Directors of this nor of any other nearby down-town building would accept our donation for a sky-piece, basing their objections variously: unsightliness, wind-hazard, insurance, vermin and botheration. The house has lost a year's trial in the meantime, but is going up in Central Park in time for 1925 inspection. We feel that our chances for success are much lessened by the removal of three blocks from the selected haunts. The house follows government specifications, is equipped for lowering and inspection, but has not the sparrow trap-doors.—ROLAND CASE ROSS, *Dept. of Nature Study, Los Angeles City Schools, May 10, 1925.*

**Pigmy Owl Killing a Quail.**—Meeting Mr. Bentley of the forest service at the Portal Ranger Station, Chiricahua Mountains, on the afternoon of January 21, he informed me that on the previous evening he had been attracted by a commotion on the hillside nearby and upon investigation he had found a female Gambel Quail grasped by the

neck with both sets of claws by a small owl, the quail still warm. The owl, made captive with a loop of string, proved to be *Glaucidium gnoma pinicola*.—H. H. KIMBALL, *Paradise, Arizona, March 27, 1925.*

**Unusual Notes of Texas Nighthawk.**—During the summer of 1923, I was engaged in field work in southern Arizona. During June I occasionally camped out in the sahuaro groves south of Phoenix, and was up before daybreak to try and observe nocturnal species. Toward the end of the month, at this time of day, I several times heard a loud ringing whistle—"whee-eeep'-poor-will". The notes were not at all like those of the Whip-poor-will, which are repressed and muffled by comparison. As a matter of fact, my only theory was that it might be an odd note of an Elf Owl. Later I began to think perhaps it was the Arizona Crested Flycatcher. I knew Texas Nighthawks were common there, and their peculiar bubbling notes (resembling the Screech Owl's) were much in evidence at this time of day, but I did not connect them, then, with this call.

During the same time of year in 1924, I was doing some rather intensive field work in the lower Rio Grande Valley, around Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Mexico, as the guest of Mr. R. D. Camp, who is game warden in that territory and in charge of the collecting of material for the Texas State Museum. I was able to help him a little in collecting Caprimulgidae, and we had good opportunity to study the species of that region, including the Merrill Parauque, Texas Nighthawk, and Aserri Nighthawk. Here again I heard the same wild, ringing cry of "whee-eeep'-poor-will". Mr. Camp said it was the Texas Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis texensis*), and sure enough, on further investigation such seemed indeed to be the case. At least, the bird we saw making the noise was certainly a nighthawk, and while the Aserri occurred in the same flock it did not occur in Arizona. Both Mr. Camp and myself were confident it was the Texas Nighthawk uttering this cry.—M. W. DELAUBENFELS, *Pasadena, California, March 29, 1925.*

**The Second Occurrence of the Louisiana Heron in California.**—In the late afternoon of March 22, 1925, while collecting specimens for the Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, I chanced to spy a peculiar-looking heron of slender stature, standing in the middle of a wide slough where the Sweetwater River enters San Diego Bay. As the tide was low and the bottom of the channel was exposed, dozens of shore-birds were feeding all about the heron, and, as there was no cover, I had but little hope of successfully approaching it. However, by slow, steady walking, I was able to get within easy gun range, in spite of the warning calls and timely departure of a greater part of the waders, and I shot the heron as it flushed. A knee-deep wade through black, odorous mud brought me to a fine adult female specimen of the Louisiana Heron (*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*) and it is now no. 9788 in the collection of the San Diego Society of Natural History.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, April 25, 1925.*

#### **Purple Gallinule in Utah.**—

*Ionornis martinica.* Purple Gallinule. On November 23, 1924, a female bird was seen at Haynes Lake, Salt Lake County, about twelve miles southwest of Salt Lake City. The bird was in the rushes bordering the lake and was noticed when it flew a short distance to another part of the shore. No others were seen, but this one was taken and definitely identified. So far as we know this is the only time the Purple Gallinule has been found in Utah. The weather was cold and there was some snow on the ground, but the bird was active and well nourished. We do not know why or how it came here.

*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus.* Yellow-headed Blackbird. At the mouth of the Bear River, Boxelder County, Utah, June 4, 1922, a Yellow-headed Blackbird's nest was found with one pure white egg. Three days later the nest contained four white eggs. The bird was flushed at each visit and definitely identified. In the same locality were many other nests of the same species.—JOHN W. SUGDEN, *Salt Lake City, Utah, June 3, 1925.*