

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Notes on Certain Injured Birds.**—In the course of the past year the following examples of self-preservation and recovery by injured birds have come under our observation.

1. Black-headed Steller Jay. In late September, 1926, while trying to kill a hawk, we lodged a stray shot in the shoulder of a Black-headed Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri annectens*). The harm was local, probably an injury to the joint, but it caused the point of the right wing to droop to the ground and prevented true flight, though "planing" downward was still possible. The victim was given the run of the house which, for ten days, with the endless fund of humor and mischief which is the birthright of most corvids, he turned into a one-ringed circus. Then one night he escaped through the bedroom window. Overwhelmed as we are by hawks, owls and weasels, we mourned him sincerely as having left us for semi-starvation, dragged out to a merciful but violent end. However, in the deep snow of late November we were surprised to find him again in the spruce forest not far from the house, still trailing the injured wing, but using his feet and legs in the trees even more brilliantly than he had used them on our stairs. We watched him climb to the top of a tall spruce, almost as quickly as the eye could follow, pluck a cone (in our experience a new food for the species), spread both wings, and plane away at an angle which carried him fully 100 yards before he reached the ground. While meat and other relished foods, as he well knew, along with the peril of the ground and the open, were available close by, he had chosen the safer mode of life under the new conditions, and was utilizing the resources which were left him with 100 per cent efficiency and intelligence.

The episode was half-forgotten by October 3, 1927, when what we cannot doubt to have been the same bird appeared in a crowd of others at our traps, having dragged his right wing triumphantly through the rigors of a winter in latitude 53° N., and the perhaps still more abundant terrors of the ensuing summer. Very slowly the power of flight was returning, though in a wobbly, veering fashion, and for very short distances. The body in flight was, so to speak, rolled over upon the sound left wing, which, pointing downwards, beat with great speed, while the injured right, or upper, wing was able, with slow, jerky strokes, to maintain for a moment the new equilibrium. The art of tree climbing with the feet alone had become remarkable. We watched him mount the tall naked trunk of an aspen like lightning, using bark projections and ancient knots which were scarcely visible to us. It was interesting to note his realization of the difference between himself and his fellows. When a Sharp-shinned Hawk appeared the rest merely remained alert for a possible last-moment dodge or position of defense, but he was off to a spruce without more ado. Now he wears a band, to ensure future identification. May it prove a talisman to a very gallant bird!

2. Great Horned Owl. On or about June 1, 1927, one of us knocked a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) out of the lower branches of an aspen with a charge of small shot. The slow, wheeling fall, with open wings, was characteristic of a dead bird, so the gunner took his time and was rewarded by an hour's search, several large secondaries, and no owl. In another case, on November 4, 1927, the junior author was more fortunate and brought in perhaps the most superb owl we have seen in this land of owls, splendid not only in size and general condition, but covered with a blanket of pure white fat of a depth which would have been surprising on the fattest of waterfowl. By chance we skeletonized this specimen, and found that, at some earlier date, the ulna had been completely shattered for a length of about an inch and a half, and had knit, at a somewhat false angle, in a large, perforated bony mass. The principal metacarpal bone had also been smashed, and had knit in a similar way. The probability that this was the missing owner of the secondaries was very strong. Such a condition presupposes other "ills we know not of", for the side and back must have been badly peppered. The owl had been able to maintain life without flight for a considerable length of time, in spite of

the abundant coyotes, and either kill some prey under the same conditions or endure an amazing fast and still regain its superb condition within one short northern summer.

3. American Rough-legged Hawk (*Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis*). On November 6, 1927, we shot one of these hawks that was in melanistic phase of plumage. It was sitting in an evidently normal position on a high limb of an ancient cottonwood. When the bird had been retrieved we found that the right leg had already been severed, either by a pole trap or a rifle bullet, near the top of the tarsus. The stump was thoroughly healed, but the injury was probably not older than the preceding summer. The bird was in very poor condition, though the stomach was full of the hair and bones of mice. The curious and pathetic point was that the head and neck, that is, all such parts as could not be reached by the bill, were literally swarming with lice, sometimes to the extent of dozens to the square centimeter. These had devoured all the softer, concealed parts of the head and neck feathers, so that while the rest of the body, which was quite free of the vermin, was so densely coated with white under-plumage that it was very difficult to reveal even the principal inter-tract spaces, the bare skin of the infested areas was merely shingled over by the tips of the contour feathers. Furthermore, a few smaller and more transparent lice, which were yet true lice and not mites, at least in so far as the number of legs is a criterion, unquestionably contained blood. The hawk had been able to strike its prey with one foot, but was being literally tormented to death, and deprived of its protection against the bitter cold, by the tragic circumstance of being unable to scratch its head!—THOMAS T. MCCABE and ELINOR BOLLES MCCABE, *Indianpoint Lake, Barkerville, B. C., Canada, December 20, 1927.*

**The Short-tailed Albatross in Oregon.**—Among bones of birds secured by S. G. Jewett and members of his family from Indian shell-mounds near Maxwell Point, two miles north of the entrance to Netarts Bay on the coast of Oregon, during August, 1927, is the lower part of a left tibio-tarsus from the Short-tailed Albatross (*Diomedea albatrus*). This occurrence is of interest because of the relatively few definite records for this species in this general region. The specimen is preserved in the osteological collections in the Division of Birds, U. S. National Museum (cat. no. 291268).—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C., January 21, 1928.*

**Winter Occurrence of Sierra Nevada Rosy Finch and Black Rosy Finch in California.**—In the bird collection of the California Academy of Sciences there is a series of *Leucosticte tephrocotis dawsoni* collected by Theodore J. Hoover at Bodie, Mono County, California, during the winter of 1903-1904. Dates of capture and number of specimens on each date are as follows: December 8, one; January 15, three; March 25, two; March 26, seven; April 5, six; April 7, one. These captures are of interest as including mid-winter occurrences, of which there are few, if any, on record for this subspecies. In the four birds taken during December and January the bill is light-colored; in those collected on March 25 and later it is black.

Included in the series of *dawsoni* there was an example of *Leucosticte atrata*. This bird (coll. Calif. Acad. Sci. no. 15167), collected as were the others by T. J. Hoover at Bodie, is a male taken on January 15, 1904. It appears to be a typical example of the species *atrata*, and constitutes, I believe, the first occurrence of this bird in California. The nearest points at which it has been found are St. George, Utah, where one was collected on January 21, 1889 (Fisher, *North American Fauna* no. 7, 1893, p. 83), and the Grand Canyon, Arizona, where four were seen on December 8, 1924 (Townsend, *CONDOR*, xxvii, July, 1925, p. 178).—H. S. SWARTH, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, February 1, 1928.*

**Occurrence of the Golden-crowned Sparrow in Massachusetts.**—The following note may be of more interest to western ornithologists than to eastern ones.

On January 26, 1928, I collected a Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia coronata*) at Bedford, Massachusetts. It was a male in first winter plumage, and is now in the mounted collection of the Boston Society of Natural History. It was first recognized on January 23, 1928, by Mrs. John C. P. Riese, of Bedford, at whose feeding station it had appeared with a small flock of Tree Sparrows, following one of the first real