

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Bears and Birds' Eggs.—Mr. Taverner's note (CONDOR, xxx, 1928, p. 157) drawing attention to an observation made by Mr. Henderson of Belvedere, Alberta, on bears climbing trees in which are hawks' nests, suggests that it may be worth while to comment on another eggging activity of the black bears. Several instances have been brought to my notice of these animals hunting ducks' eggs on a wholesale scale. Although outside my personal experience, there seems no doubt that bears, certain individuals at all events, will systematically work the edges of lakes and for a time live almost exclusively on ducks' eggs. How common the habit may be I have no idea; but the fact that I have heard the same thing from three or four independent sources suggests that it may not be of such rare occurrence.

With regard to Mr. Henderson's observation, I noticed when collecting wood bison in the extreme north of the Province where the black bear is abundant, that trees with hawks' nests in them formed only a small percentage of those that had been climbed. Here and there were trees that had been heavily scarred as though they were particularly popular; but none of these contained nests. A scarred trunk and a hawk's nest are probably often but a fortuitous combination and mere coincidence. It would be decidedly interesting to get ocular and conclusive evidence as to the inferred procedure.—WILLIAM ROWAN, *Edmonton, Alberta, April 2, 1928.*

Some Winter Records from Montana.—The following notes from my records and those of my brother are of winter occurrences of birds for which, in "A Distributional List of the Birds of Montana" (Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 14), the one inclusive reference on Montana birds, A. A. Saunders cites only one or a few winter records; or in some cases, no instances of occurrence in winter. The period covered by our notes dates from January 1, 1921, and extends through the winter just ended. The instances of winter occurrence given here are largely the result of chance observations in a few parts of the state, and can not be taken as an index to the winter status of any of the species in any of the localities mentioned. They are considered worth publishing because of the absence or rarity of previous winter records of the several species in Montana. Except in one case, as noted, these records are based upon sight identification.

Barrow Golden-eye (*Clangula islandica*). December 20 and 22, 1926, one seen in Kootenai River, at Libby. December 7 and 22, 1927, two seen near Fortine. Recorded by my brother, D. R. Weydemeyer, near Fortine on the following dates: December 25, 1921; January 15, 21 and 29 and February 4 and 25, 1922; February 7, 13, 14, 15 and 17, 1923.

Buffle-head (*Charitonetta albeola*). December 21, 1925, Kootenai River near Jennings, and Whitefish Lake. November 2, 1926, Kootenai River at Libby; November 14, 1926, Fisher River, near Libby. November 6, December 19 and 22, 1927, in a slough near Fortine.

Sora (*Porzana carolina*). On December 2, 1927, at Fortine, in a spring-fed slough that never freezes over in winter, we caught a Sora in a trap set for muskrat.

Killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus*). Observed along the Kootenai River at Libby on the following dates: December 30, 1925, seven seen; December 20 (two) and 22 (five), 1926; January 23, 1927 (one). My brother noted this species at Eureka commonly during October, and on November 4, 14 and 27 and December 4 and 9, 1921.

Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*). One noted November 15, 1922, at Fortine. One seen at Moccasin, Judith Basin County, December 16, 1925.

Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter velox*). Observed at Bozeman on the following dates: February 6, 1922; November 14 and 24, 1922; January 25 and 27, 1923; December 11 and 12, 1924.

Western Goshawk (*Astur atricapillus striatulus*). November 6 and December 25, 1922, at Bozeman. November 21, December 1 and 22, 1927; January 2, 18, 21 and 25, 1928, at Fortine. Recorded by my brother at Fortine January 1, 1923.

Desert Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius phalaena*). January 27, 1921, one at Fortine. December 20, 1925, one near Great Falls. Observed at Bozeman on the following dates: November 4 and 20 and December 15 and 25, 1922; November 1,

2, 5 and 11, 1923; January 7, 1924; November 26 and December 11 and 23, 1924; January 16, 17, 27 and 29, and seven days during February, 1925.

White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*). December 22, 1926, twenty-four seen in mountains near Libby; February 7 and 27, 1927, same locality. December 22, 1927, two seen in mountains near Fortine.

Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis*). January 23 and February 16, 1921, at Fortine, one bird each time. A bird of this species, in company with Oregon Juncos, visited my feeding table at Libby every day except seven from January 14 to March 20, 1927.

Oregon Junco (*Junco oreganus*). Four to six juncos identified as belonging to this species visited my feeding table at Libby on December 28, 1926, and every day except three from January 14 until April 3, 1927. They were watched through a window at a distance of a few inches, and one was examined in my hands.

Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*). At Fortine we found this nuthatch common all during the winter of 1920-21, and fairly common the following winter. A few individuals were observed on November 10, 12 and 27, and December 22, 1927; one was seen January 5, 1928. At Libby, I found the species occurring commonly in the Canadian zone during November and December, 1926; a few were seen on January 10, and February 7 and 27, 1927.—WINTON WEYDEMEYER, *Fortine, Montana, March 15, 1928.*

California Black Rail in Los Angeles County.—On a field trip to the Playa del Rey marsh, February 25 of this year, an adult California Black Rail (*Creciscus jamaicensis coturniculus*) was found impaled on a barb wire fence that crosses the salicornia from the Pacific Electric tracks. The fact that the body was impaled, points to the work of a California Shrike. Due to the mutilated condition of the body, only the feet and a wing were preserved. The measurements of wing and tarsus correspond perfectly with those given in Bailey's "Handbook", while the speckled coloration and size of the wing proved convincing. The record has been verified by Dr. Loye Miller of the University of California at Los Angeles. There appear to be no recent records of the occurrence of this rail in this locality.—JOSEPH EWAN, *Los Angeles, California, March 13, 1928.*

Unusual Singing of the Eastern Chewink.—In THE CONDOR (XXIV, 1922, pp. 193-203) appeared a paper by Richard Hunt entitled "Evidence of Musical Taste in the Brown Towhee." In the same magazine (xxv, 1923, p. 134) further observations along the same line were recorded by the same author in a paper entitled "Another Musical Brown Towhee." Hunt in these articles is speaking of a western species of towhee, *Pipilo crissalis*. He heard the type of song in question on June 22, 1919, in the Santa Lucia Mountains, Monterey County, California, and again on May 2, 1922, in the Botanical Garden at the University of California. He says of this song: "Over and over again the bird sang the typical 'bouncing' song of the species, plus a low bubbling warble of four syllables." "They were low in pitch, and were sung softly, almost as if whispered." Hunt has discussed his theories accounting for this anomalous singing rather fully, and is inclined to believe they indicate a racial rather than an individual behavior.

I will now relate similar experiences with our eastern Chewink (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) which I observed in North Carolina while attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill during the winter of 1904. I shall give all my journal records bearing on this strange winter singing of these birds, which passed the winter in a patch of woods there.

February 12, 1904. "Through the winter I have heard a squeaky, unusual song, if it can be so called, which I could not identify. This morning I saw a handsome male Chewink in full view on a low tree, uttering a strange, squeaky song. Is it its winter song? It was interspersed with its familiar *tur-ee - tur-ee*. It finally flew into the under-brush with a lively *tur-ee - tur-ee*, frequently repeated, as if surprised at its own strange, unfamiliar musical efforts."

February 28, 1904. "In the woods back of the Dissecting Hall, I find the Chewinks ever busy, lively, cheerful. I have this winter become acquainted with a new expression of this bird, it seems quite unknown to students of birds, and unlike its