

racess *borealis* and *invictus*. Therefore, *borealis* and *invictus* should become *Lanius excubitor borealis* and *Lanius excubitor invictus*, and these names should be adopted in New World literature.—ALDEN H. MILLER, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, March 19, 1930.*

Whistling of Snipe.—In the Condor (xxvi, 1924, p. 175; xxix, 1927, p. 79; xxx, 1928, p. 128) are some interesting observations on the whistling of the Wilson Snipe, by Mr. Ralph Hoffmann, Mr. Aldo Leopold, and Mr. John Main, respectively. Mr. Hoffmann observed that the tail was spread during the dip and believed that to be the source of the sound, Mr. Leopold considers the whistling note is produced vocally, while Mr. Main from his observations believes it is produced by the wing or tail feathers.

In the marshes and paddy fields (fig. 59) of the Philippine Islands snipe occur in incredible numbers during the months from September to February, and an unparalleled opportunity for studying such birds is afforded. Four varieties are found.



Fig. 59. VIEW IN A SNIPE MARSH, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

Photo by Lt. F. Christian, U. S. A.

The most abundant is the Swinhoe Snipe (*Capella megala*), while the Pintail and Fantail snipe (*C. stenura* and *C. gallinago*) are less common. The Painted Snipe (*Rostratula capensis*) is a considerably different type of bird in which the female is more brightly colored than the male and is painted with white, olive green, and chestnut, and marked with ocellated ovate spots. This is a larger and slower flying bird than the Swinhoe, Pintail and Fantail snipe and does not resemble the Wilson Snipe closely as the latter three do.

On September 8, 1929, I went hunting in the marshes of Pangasinan Province, Luzon, and observed large numbers of snipe, mostly Swinhoe, making this whistling or, better, winnowing sound. These marshy plains stretch along the foot of the central Cordilleras of the Mountain Province and form vast stretches of muddy paddy fields and grass grown bogs, intersected with streams bordered with wild sugar cane, bamboo and heavy-foliaged trees. One is wading in water and gluey mud constantly and occasionally dodging truculent water buffalos that at times become very threatening and constitute a real menace.

It was during the typhoon season when a storm was brewing some distance away so that the weather was overcast, rainy, and squally, with occasional brisk showers. We were in the marshes by 7:00 a. m. Snipe in great numbers were

moving about the feeding grounds constantly. On all sides, high in the air, were singles and flocks of as many as twenty birds darting swiftly about to drop with crooked wing and lightning like dives into favored spots.

The winnowing note was made by snipe that were flying singly for the most part, and was produced as they dove downwards at great speed to rise again for another earthward plunge, and seldom as they dropped to feed. As I stood motionless one snipe dove directly on top of me and I was able distinctly to see a rapid vibration of the wings coincident with the production of the loud winnowing sounds. For several hours this was going on all over the marshes, until the heat of the day came on and the weather cleared. The purpose of the sound was not obvious. It did not seem to be an alarm or call note but rather in the nature of an acrobatic performance for the sheer delight of the motion and the sound.

Mr. Main correctly observed that the sound ended abruptly on the upward swing of the flight, which is good evidence that it is not a vocal sound. Brewster writing in Chapman's Handbook ascribes it to the rushing of air through the wings. Barrows, Michigan Bird Life, believes that the sound is made both by the wings and the voice and states that it is produced during the mating season.

I was not able definitely to determine the role of the tail in the sound production, but the observations of Mr. Hoffmann indicate that it is instrumental in this phenomenon. I do not believe that the voice takes any part in the production of the whistle but that it is made by the wings and, accepting Mr. Hoffmann's findings, the tail. One can not observe this phenomenon for many hours without being impressed with the fact that the dive is the all important element in the generation of the sound. Furthermore it is not necessarily a mating phenomenon since none of these snipe breeds in the Philippine Islands.

For those who do not believe in sight identification it may be added parenthetically that we brought home a large bag.—LEON L. GARDNER, *Camp John Hay, P. I., December 17, 1929.*

Winter Record for Long-billed Dowitchers in Suisun Marshes.—On December 18, 1929, Mr. P. A. Wetmore, manager of the Benicia Cannery, brought to me two Long-billed Dowitchers (*Limnodromus griseus scolopaceus*) which had been shot on that date by a hunter in Mr. Wetmore's party who mistook them for Wilson Snipe. These were taken on the grounds of a gun club located eight miles northeast of Benicia, near Cygnus. He reports that the flock consisted of some twenty birds which were flying overhead in a compact group. Both of the birds secured proved to be females.

On December 26, Mr. Wetmore located a flock of about ten of these birds feeding in the shallow water of a small pond in this same part of the Suisun marshes, and knowing that I was interested in securing the evidence to establish a winter record for this species in this section he secured another specimen. This was found to be a male.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, January 25, 1930.*

Utilization by Birds of Water in Hollow Trees.—Two Carolina Chickadees (*Parus carolinensis*) bathing in rain water standing in shallow hollows of trees in a small swamp near Pensacola, Florida, were observed by Gander on April 5, 1928. None of the hollows contained more than a teacup of water and the little birds splashed most of this out as they visited one tiny pool after another.

On January 5, 1929, at Monte Robles, near Ramona, San Diego County, California, the junior author watched a Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) descend about five or six inches into a hollow in an oak to drink from a small quantity of water there. This was in a live oak whose trunk had divided some twelve or more inches above the ground, and one of these divisions had broken off, exposing a hollow which led down into the base of the tree. Through this hollow the bird descended to drink from the water accumulated at the bottom. On February 9, 1930, the same observer saw a Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) drinking from this hollow. On this date the water level was high enough so that the robin could reach it without entering the hollow.—FRANK F. GANDER and LEROY W. ARNOLD, *O'Rourke Zoological Institute, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, February 12, 1930.*