

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

The White-tailed Kite in Marin County, California.—A note in the *Condor* (XXXI, 1929, p. 36), contributed by E. L. Bickford of Napa, records the breeding of the White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) in Napa Valley, California. This stimulates me to remark that during recent years I have several times seen individual kites of this species in Marin County, usually over the marshes bordering the north shore of San Francisco Bay.

The first one noted was hovering over the flat below Mill Valley just east of the school house on the morning of October 11, 1920. About a month later (November 14, 1920) J. Eugene Law saw one on the flat between San Rafael and Point San Quentin. On May 21, 1925, while Dr. F. V. Coville and I were driving north on our way to the Redwood highway we saw one near Ignacio station, seven miles north of San Rafael.

The last kite seen by me was on November 2, 1928, when returning from a field trip by way of Black Point Cut-off. Approaching the Petaluma Creek drawbridge I was delighted to see one of these beautiful kites gracefully circling and darting about over the open meadows. Just before arriving at the draw it dropped to a post close by and remained there while I passed. This is the only time I have seen one alight. Usually they are on the wing.

Mr. Bickford's breeding record is of much interest, being so far as I am aware the first one for many years for the north side of San Francisco Bay.—C. HART MERRIAM, *Lagunitas, California, August 7, 1930.*

House Finches Eating Watermelon.—The house finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*) of the San Joaquin Valley are certainly developing a great fondness for watermelon. On July 7 and 8, 1930, I watched them at a feeding station thirty miles north of Bakersfield. During the morning hours, and still more during the afternoon hours, there was a steady stream of these birds to some watermelon rinds for the ripe watermelon pulp still present. Most of these feasting birds were young of the year, but there was also a fair number of both adult males and adult females. At first I thought the birds were attracted because of thirstiness; but soon after that, I noted that pulp that was almost dry was taken as well.—M. P. SKINNER, *Long Beach, California, July 16, 1930.*

The Cardinal in Oregon.—During midday, July 22, 1930, on a field trip in Douglas County, Oregon, a stop was made for lunch along a small mountain stream beside the highway. Much to my surprise, two Cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis* subsp.), a male and female, were seen chasing each other through the scattered small trees and bushes bordering the stream. A few moments later, another male was seen up-stream.

These birds were observed at a distance of thirty feet and there is not a shadow of doubt about their being Cardinals; but as to their subspecific identity and as to when and where they came from into the state of Oregon, I have not the slightest idea.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, August 4, 1930.*

The Common Mynah Breeding in Los Angeles.—Early in July, 1930, Dr. Hildegarde Howard Wyde, of the Los Angeles Museum, received a message from Dr. Calla E. Starbuck, of 1363 Lucile Avenue, Los Angeles, stating that some strange birds had appeared in that neighborhood and had bred there. On July 22 Dr. Wyde and the writer called on Dr. Starbuck and saw one of the birds which proved to be a Common Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*).

Dr. Starbuck informed us that a pair of the birds had appeared early in May and soon thereafter had built a nest in a drain-pipe near the top of a two-story building across the street from her residence. Three young were raised, one of which was later killed by an automobile. At the time of our visit the birds were apparently nesting a second time. The male was seen to enter the nesting cavity, where it remained for some time before emerging. Also, according to Dr. Starbuck,

a considerable amount of new nesting material had been carried to the cavity after the first brood had been raised.—G. WILLETT, *Los Angeles Museum, Los Angeles, California, July 23, 1930.*

The Asiatic Mynah in Los Angeles, California.—In the present issue of the *Condor*, Mr. George Willett reports the sighting by Dr. Hildegard Howard Wylde and himself of the Common Mynah (*Acridotheres tristis*) in Los Angeles. I was able to call at the locality on the following day in company with Agricultural Commissioner H. J. Ryan, and, by permission of the Police Commission, to secure a specimen of the species, collected by Deputy Neville. This specimen is now no. 56175 of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and proves Mr. Willett's diagnosis to be correct.

Commissioner Ryan has devoted great energy to the matter and states that six individuals have thus far been collected and that all reports of other colonies are being followed up with energy. The appeal to the Agricultural Commissioner was made upon the basis of my own three years' contact with the Mynah as naturalized in Hawaii and of the accounts of Dr. Raymond B. Cowles who has had long experience with the species as introduced into South Africa. In both areas the bird is looked upon as a most undesirable alien.

In Hawaii the following charges are laid against him:

Direct attack upon small fruits.

Dispersal of seeds of fruiting shrubs that rendered useless large areas of grazing lands.

Invasion of forest areas to the detriment of native species (though probably these species were doomed anyway).

Obnoxious habits about cities and home grounds.

Add to these charges the possibility of introducing parasites or disease-producing organisms and the danger seems too great to be justified by the pleasure (?) of a new addition to the list of our bird acquaintances.—LOYE MILLER, *University of California at Los Angeles, September 2, 1930.*

The Cassin Auklet Breeding off the Coast of Oregon.—During a trip along the southern Oregon coast, a visit to Island Rock off the Curry County coast near Port Orford was made, to study the sea birds nesting there. This rock is about three miles off-shore and comprises about five acres in area where numbers of California Murre, Cormorants, Western Gull, Tufted Puffin and Beal Petrel, with fewer Forked-tailed Petrels, were found nesting, while the presence of a few pairs of Cassin Auklets (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*) proved of the utmost interest constituting, as it does, the first positive nesting record of this species off the Oregon coast. One adult breeding bird and two downy young were collected as evidence to substantiate the record.—J. C. BRALY, *Portland, Oregon, July 13, 1930.*

Observations upon Hummingbirds.—On January 4, 1929, while staying at Monte Robles, near Ramona, San Diego County, California, I noticed a single female Anna Hummingbird (*Calypte anna*) flying within a few feet of the ground. As I watched, she flew down and lit in the middle of the path ahead of me. She then seemed to pick something off of the somewhat sandy ground, which had been moistened by a recent rain. Following this, she stuck out her long tongue. She then flew around for a moment but returned within a foot of the same place on the ground. Here again, she went through almost the same motions. On arising the second time she flew off into a grove of near-by oaks. The ground where she had been was examined but it was found quite clean and covered with fine sand.

On March 16, 1929, while in Balboa Park, San Diego, I watched an Anna Hummingbird which lit on some plaster that had been dumped there. While the bird was sitting there it appeared to pick something off the plaster. After remaining there about half a minute it flew away. On examining the plaster closely I could see minute black mite-like creatures running about on its surface.

On July 26, 1930, I observed a pair of Anna Hummingbirds in copulation. When first observed, the birds were playfully chasing each other about and suddenly swooped down to within about eighteen inches of the ground where the leading bird, which