

to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology after my own personal examination had suggested that its measurements checked closely with *M. a. californicus*; under date of June 4, Dr. Jean M. Linsdale advised me that this specimen proved surprising, falling more nearly into the average of the race *obscurus*, and stated that "your bird is actually smaller than the average given for *obscurus* in all the measurements listed by Dickey and van Rossem". However, considering all the circumstances he referred the specimen to *californicus*.

The Cowbirds present during the winter, and until late April, consorted entirely with the flocks of blackbirds, flying, feeding, and roosting with them. In late April, while continuing to be with the blackbirds, they began to drift apart in groups of their own kind. Late in May they appeared in pairs. The first sign of the nest-hunting instinct was that described on May 22. Continued search has failed to reveal their eggs, but the female collected May 28 proved the breeding status.

It appears that a considerable series of skins must be collected before we can definitely report the exact status of these birds, and give definite information on the two races. In any case the summer type will prove quite an extension of the breeding range. I hope to be able to present further data in a later report after I have studied these birds through another migration period. Other observers in the Sacramento Valley should also accept this opportunity to clarify the status of this group.—JOHNSON A. NEFF, *Bureau of Biological Survey, Marysville, California, June 10, 1931.*

Red-breasted Merganser in Orange County, California, in June.—Rather hasty reference to available literature indicates but one summer record of the Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) for California (see Squires, *Condor*, XVIII, 1916, p. 232). Therefore it seems desirable to record four individuals of this species positively identified on the grounds of the Bolsa Chica Gun Club, Orange County, California, June 9, 1931. The birds were swimming on a slough one mile south of Sunset Beach and were scrutinized at close range through binoculars. All appeared to be immatures in ragged plumage; one male had assumed but a trace of breeding plumage. No doubt immature and non-breeding individuals of this species remain along most of our coastline in summer, as do scoters and other ducks that breed far north but do not mature until the second summer.—JAMES MOFFITT, *510 Russ Building, San Francisco, California, August 3, 1931.*

Re-use of its Nest by Spotted Towhee.—An instance in which a San Francisco Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus falcifer*) re-used its first nest for a third brood was brought to my attention in Palo Alto, California, by a friend, Miss Olga Bandel, who followed very closely the "doings" of a pair of this species which nested and raised three broods in her yard during the season of 1931.

The first nest was constructed early in May among some geranium bushes growing against a private garage. After the young had been successfully reared and had left this first nest, a second nest was built closer to the house in a hedge of cherry oak some thirty feet from the first one. The young left this second nest about July 10. Within a week after the departure of the young from the second nest, the parents returned to the first nest and successfully raised a third brood therein, the young of the third brood leaving the nest on August 9.

Miss Bandel closely observed these birds daily, sometimes for several hours at a time, and became so acquainted with their individual actions and characteristics that she knows definitely that it was the same pair of birds that raised all three broods in her yard.

It has been my impression and I believe that of others that our native song birds which build nests in the open, seldom use a nest again after the young have left. This instance shows the value of continued observation of a pair of birds throughout their nesting season—without which, occurrences of this kind would not be known.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, August 25, 1931.*