

also common. One gopher snake, about six feet in length, was regularly seen about the barn and corral, which were 150 feet from the nest. In view of the circumstances it seems that the disappearance of the eggs can be most logically attributed to some species of snake.

The attraction of the observed king snake to the nest can probably be explained by the egg material spattered in and around its edges. This, doubtless, gave rise to an odor that possibly could be detected by a foraging snake or other predator to whom quail eggs might appeal as food. It is interesting to note the relatively short time that elapsed between the initial disturbance of the nest and the appearance of a hungry animal to finish the destruction. It is probable that, had the nest been near an ordinary farm or ranch, where there are numerous dogs and house cats, the remaining eggs would not have lasted as long as they did.

There may have been any one of three reasons for the wounded appearance of the bird when it fluttered from the nest at its initial disturbance. The bird may have been actually wounded by the striking of the hoe. Its peculiar behavior may have been an attempt to draw away the intruder; or, it may have resulted from a lack of coördination and direction, brought on either by extreme fright, or by a conflict of instincts, due to the suddenness and intensity of the disturbance. In considering these possible reasons the following facts should be kept in mind. Only in the first observation did the bird display any signs of being wounded. All subsequent flights were perfect and the response quick. In the succeeding observations the bird made no attempts, either when flushed from the nest or when the snake was eating the eggs, to draw away the intruder. These facts lend strength to the supposition that fear, or a conflict of instincts, may have been responsible for the wounded-like actions. This infrequently expressed hypothesis for the explanation of the broken-wing trick is advanced and argued for in detail by Douglas Dewar (*Birds at the Nest*, London, John Lane, the Bodley Head, Limited, 1928, pp. 167-194).

The fact that the incubating bird returned to the nest after the eggs were suddenly reduced in number from thirteen to six, their contents smeared over the nest, and finally, after two more were taken by a snake, makes this an unusual demonstration of dominance of parental instinct. This could hardly have been the devotedness that is frequently observed to accompany long incubation, since the eggs were almost fresh.—LAWRENCE V. COMPTON, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, January 20, 1933.*

The Hudsonian Curlew at Wales, Alaska.—Among the specimens received by the Chicago Academy of Sciences this past season from its representative, Dwight Tevuk, at Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska, was an adult male curlew (*Phaeopus hudsonicus*). The specimen (C. A. of S., no. 5840) was taken near the Mint River on July 1, 1932. This is the first record, so far as I know, of the species from the Wales region, although I saw a few curlew in this vicinity on July 6 and 8, 1922, and recorded the sight observations in the *Condor* (XXVIII, 1926, p. 84). As I had taken *P. tahitiensis* at Wales, these observations were mentioned under that heading.—ALFRED M. BAILEY, *Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago, Illinois, December 1, 1932.*

Two Duck Records from the Imperial Valley of California.¹—During the past several winters the writer has shot at a small, ten-blind club between Mecca and the northern end of Salton Sea and consequently has had opportunity to observe enough ducks to gain a fair idea of the species which go to make up the winter duck population of that locality. Of course, by far the great majority of ducks seen or killed belong to the "common" species (though "once common" would be a better term) and only two have been of sufficient rarity to be noteworthy. The Ring-necked Duck (*Nyroca collaris*) is a rare, though apparently regular, visitor; for one or two have been killed each season. Dates are from November 11 to December 20, the last one being November 27 of the present (1932) year. A still rarer visitor to this desert locality is the Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*). On November 13 of this year a male was unwittingly killed by one of the other members, who brought it to my blind to have it identified! The bird is now a skin in the collection of the California Institute of Technology.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, December 7, 1932.*

¹ Contribution from the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena.