

On August 5, 1932, a beautiful adult Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) flew over me on the north shore. This is rather an uncommon bird for this locality, though one or two migrating individuals are usually seen every August.

Another new bird for Big Bear Valley was seen on August 6, when a Mockingbird, presumably of the western race (*Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*), was flushed from some small junipers near the main highway on the north side of the lake near the Ranger Station.

I should also like to record the nesting of the Ruddy Duck (*Erismatura jamaicensis*) on Baldwin Lake. About a dozen pairs were seen there during early July, and by the latter part of that month small young were seen with their parents, swimming near the tules at both the northwest and south ends of the lake. Last year (1931) this lake was nearly dry, but this year it held considerable water and the usual birds found nesting were present again, Ruddy Ducks, American Coots, American Eared Grebes, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds.—WRIGHT M. PIERCE, Claremont, California, September 15, 1932.

The California Spotted Owl in Yosemite Valley, California.—The outstanding adventure of the month for me and for Mrs. Michael was a visit with a pair of Spotted Owls (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*). We were wandering through a cool wood on the south side of the valley about a mile below the old Yosemite Village. It was two o'clock in the afternoon of April 23, 1933, the day was overcast, with the sun occasionally gathering strength enough to cast a shadow. Hermit and Calaveras warblers were singing and we made squeaking sounds to attract their attention.

In response to our squeakings there came what we took to be the barking of a dog. Seemingly the dog was about a quarter of a mile away, but the sound of his barking came distinctly to our ears. In answer to the barkings there came close at hand the unmistakable hootings of an owl, remindful of Horned Owl hootings, yet slightly different, perhaps shorter and not so melodious. As a matter of fact we did not get a clear ear-picture of the sounds, for just at the time of the hootings we caught sight of the owl.

In the filtered forest light this owl looked as big as a turkey. It was a round-faced owl without ear tufts. Its very deep set eyes appeared as dying coals that were turning black, but still had a touch of fire. When the coals went dead a ghostly bird appeared to gaze from empty eye sockets. Those deep-set unearthly eyes were the fascinating feature of the bird; they gave to its face a weird, mysterious, spectral look. Over the eyes were grey eyebrows, then a brown area, and then high on the forehead were heavy dark eyebrows as though the bird wore heavy horn-rimmed spectacles. The hooked bill, sort of tucked in the feathers, was a greenish horn color. The feathers of the crown were a rich brown flecked with white and appeared smoothly brushed back over the round head. Over the shoulders hung a rich brown cape, all neatly flecked with round white markings. Below the shoulder cape there hung a second cape, of the same pattern, which appeared to drape loosely to the banded tail. The breast of the owl was buffy, much lighter than the back, but also flecked with white. The belly was of lighter color than the breast.

While we watched the owl from a distance of fifty feet it uttered soft pitched, whispered, *oooa* notes. When it turned its face directly away from us and sounded these soft notes they seemed to come from a far distance. These notes were answered by a second bird who spoke in owl fashion with a *who—whoo—whoo—whooo*. It was this call that reminded us so much of the Horned Owl. There was also from the second bird a weird jumble of notes, all ventriloquially uttered which suggested to me chatter of several monkeys gathered together to exchange gossip.

After looking us over for a minute or two our owl friend lost interest and as she settled on her perch she appeared to shrink and now we thought her possibly a size smaller than the Horned Owl. After ten, or possibly fifteen minutes, our first owl took wing and although only fifty feet away no sound came to us from her wings. She slipped away through the wood, we thought for a short flight.

Now we went looking for the second bird. A hundred feet up the slope and we caught sight of him. We thought of him as the male bird because of his heavy voice, and because he was the bird that did the barking. This bird was perched on the branch of a chrysolepis oak about twenty feet above the ground, and behind him hung a dead branch that was heavily draped with brown leaves—a background that beautifully camouflaged this brown bird with the white fleckings. This bird was marked like owl number one, but of a darker shade of brown and his upper eyebrows were almost black. This bird appeared not the least concerned with our presence and we finally walked right under his perch. On the ground under his perching tree were a number of old pellets. Here we got a big surprise, for scattered through every pellet examined were a number of muskmelon seeds. Other identified particles contained in the pellets were egg shells, apparently hen's egg shells, hair from a ground squirrel, small mammal bones, and other bones that looked like bits of bone from a pork or mutton chop. As the owl flies, it is just about a half mile to the bear feeding platforms where owls could get such things as egg shells, melon seeds and mutton chops.

On our way down the slope we again located owl number one. Now she was perched in a chrysolepis oak and she also had a heavy background of foliage formed by a hanging branch. We walked up to within fifteen feet of her. She did not seem to mind us at all and went on with her preening. As she rolled her round head about to comb her feathers with her bill she looked almost human, but then she stretched one of her great wings, and we knew that she was not human, albeit, in spite of her wings, she did not look exactly angelic.

In other years when we camped in a wood on the river-bank we were often serenaded at night by a pair of Spotted Owls, but only once before had we seen one of these rare owls in the broad light of day.—CHARLES W. MICHAEL, *Yosemite, California, May 27, 1933.*

Water-thrush in Altadena, California.—On May 15, 1933, about 2:30 p. m., at an abandoned artificial lily-pond, sunk in a dry gully near my house, I saw a small, olive-brown bird with black and white-streaked underparts, tilting up and down as it picked its way over the mud and débris. I was sure that I recognized it, as I am familiar with the species in Massachusetts. I went home, got my field glasses, and was able to observe for several hours, sometimes at a distance of not over six feet, a Water-thrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*).

This little warbler walked over the muck and floating boards in the stagnant pool, and while I watched, picked out several white grubs from under bits of wood and leaves, and often darted into the air for insects on the wing.

The bird was at the pool until dark on the 15th, but has not returned as far as I have observed. I was able, however, to make several sketches of it in pencil and color, and there can be no doubt as to its identification. The tail was flirted up and down constantly. The bird showed remarkably little shyness and fed over the murky pool within a few feet of me. When frightened by a quick movement of my hand, it flew up to the branches of an overhanging sycamore, returning presently to the feeding ground of the pool.—JACOB B. ABBOTT, *Altadena, California, May 20, 1933.*

The Vaux Swift at Whittier, California.—On the evening of May 12, 1933, large numbers of Vaux Swifts (*Chaetura vauxi*) were noticed circling around the barns of Mr. John Gregg near Whittier. As night came on they began flying into a hay loft where they would cling to the walls and to each other. At places they would cover large sections of the wall five or six deep. It was estimated that at least three thousand swifts found shelter in the barn that night.

Next morning the birds began leaving the barn at about eight o'clock. They would fly out, a few at a time, circle around a while and then fly off in groups. They returned again the next two nights in about the same numbers, and for the two nights following these the numbers decreased rapidly, and on the sixth night they failed to return. The birds were heavily parasitized with lice and seemed weak and emaciated. A dozen or more were found dead each morning during the period they were taking refuge in the barn.