

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.

Since there was considerable snow in the mountains when the swifts were staying over, it is assumed that the unfavorable weather barrier caused them to accumulate here until warmer days and better feeding conditions called them farther north.—S. A. WATSON, *Whittier College, Whittier, California, May 24, 1933.*

Some Subsistence Items of Western Burrowing Owls.—Some interesting items of food found in a few nesting cavities used by Western Burrowing Owls (*Speotyto cunicularia hypugaea*) excavated near Benicia, California, by H. W. Carriger, William Douglas and the writer on April 23, 1933, were the following. A male Black-headed Grosbeak (*Hedymeles melanocephalus*) in full spring plumage, a San Joaquin Valley Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus inornatus*) identified by Dr. Seth B. Benson of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at Berkeley, a meadow mouse (*Microtus*), a small frog and a large blue centipede. In addition, there were the segments of Jerusalem Crickets (*Stenopelmatus*) and black ground beetles nearly always found about the entrances and in the cavities of this owl.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, May 28, 1933.*

European Widgeon Recorded from Lower California.—The San Diego Society of Natural History has come into possession of a mounted male European Widgeon (*Mareca penelope*) taken on January 13, 1933, at Descanso, Lower California, Mexico, which is about 30 miles south of the international border.

It appears that Alfred Crosthwaite, who lives at a small rancheria at Descanso shot "a pair" of these birds in a slough close to the ocean. One he sold for food at Tijuana; the other, in the belief that it was a "cross," he brought to show his friend W. Y. Wetzel, an employee of Muehleisen & Company, sporting goods house in San Diego. Wetzel had the bird mounted by Ted Huff, San Diego taxidermist, for Muehleisen's exhibit of game birds. Due to the generosity of all these persons, the specimen has now been donated to the San Diego Society of Natural History and will be placed on exhibition at the Society's museum in the case devoted to local ducks. It constitutes, I believe, a first record for Lower California.—CLINTON G. ABBOTT, *San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, June 5, 1933.*

Electrocution of Purple Martins.—During the latter part of May and the first part of June, 1933, hundreds of Purple Martins (*Progne subis subis*) gathered every night upon the electric wires near Bingham's pond, an irrigation reservoir about one-fifth of a mile in length, six miles northeast of Tucson, Arizona. On the evening of May 31, I estimated the number at 1500. One span of bare 2300 volt wires is rather long and in the center the separation can hardly be more than eight or ten inches. Below this point I found a dead male Purple Martin and wing feathers of several more.

I was puzzled to account for these deaths until, on the morning of June 3, the matter was solved. A female martin was found hanging head downward, its claws grasping the wire tightly. Evidently when the wires were crowded with birds, the wind or the movement of the birds as they sometimes left in large groups, was sufficient to swing the wires dangerously close together. The moment two birds on different wires touched they would, of course, be electrocuted. Stray cats probably accounted for the feathers on the ground.—A. H. ANDERSON, *Tucson, Arizona, June 5, 1933.*

White Mountain Fox Sparrow in Arizona.—Records of *Passerella* from Arizona are somewhat scanty, and but four records of a single form were included in Swarth's Distributional List of the birds of that State published in 1914. It is therefore a matter of interest that a specimen taken 53 years ago by the veteran collector, Frank Stephens, has hitherto remained unrecorded. The specimen is no. 1149, collection of the San Diego Society of Natural History, and was taken at Big Sandy Creek, Mojave County, Arizona, February 9, 1880, by F. Stephens. This bird, now considerably faded by age, was submitted to Mr. H. S. Swarth, who identified it as *Passerella iliaca canescens*.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, June 8, 1933.*