

to 29 are occupied by a communication from Professor J. D. Whitney on the progress of the Geological Survey of California. On page 27 appears the following statement and table: In the zoological department—in charge of Dr. J. G. Cooper, who has been employed about half the time since the survey was commenced—the annexed table gives a succinct idea of what had been accomplished, up to the close of the year 1862, in the way of collecting.

| | Number of species in the collector | Of which there are new to California | Believed to be new, or un- described | Other Califor- nian species not yet collected | Total number credited to California | Of which there are found east of the Mississippi |
|----------------|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| Mammalia | 32 | 10 | 3 | 45 | 77 | 14 |
| Birds | 170 | 28 | 4(?) | 150 | 320 | 141 |
| Reptiles | 36 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 45 | 0 |
| Fishes | 58 | 16 | 16 | 75 | 133 | 0 |
| Mollusca | 335 | 123 | 123 | 65 | 400 | 0(?) |

—H. S. SWARTH, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, October 10, 1935.*

Unusual Sets of Bush-tit and Green Heron.—On April 15, 1935, while on a trip through the willows of Del Rey tide flat near Los Angeles, my wife and I found a nest of the Coast Bush-tit (*Psaltriparus minimus minimus*) containing 15 eggs. As this was an unusual set, we took particular pains to search the immediate vicinity for any disengaged individuals, or pairs not already nesting, but without results. The event was duly recorded "with reservations" until every element of doubt was eliminated. A week of watching failed to disclose any other birds than the one pair claiming the nest. The parents deserted the set after the 3rd day, no doubt, because of our continued presence in the vicinity. The nest and set were then taken and are now in our collection.

We were a little hesitant in reporting this find until, on May 4, we located a new nest, presumably of this same pair, some 60 feet from the old site. This nest contained 11 eggs, all well-incubated. On account of pressing business matters, we were unable to follow up this last set to see just how the parents handled the brood to maturity. It certainly would have been interesting to have observed how the parents kept fifteen or eleven young supplied with food.

There can now be no doubt in our minds that these two sets were laid by the same pair, and that both sets are unusual. Dawson states (*Birds of California*, 2, 1923, p. 628) that *P. m. minimus* lays from "5 to 8, usually 7". In over 100 nests I have examined previously, 7 eggs comprise the largest set found.

On returning to this same swamp one week later (May 11) to make a nesting survey of Anthony Green Herons (*Butorides virescens anthonyi*), a nest of this species, apparently an old one, was discovered 25 feet up in a large willow and placed some eight feet out. Although we had seen a green heron fly from the tree, we were inclined to pass it up, for only rather insecure footing was available to reach it. However, my wife, who is considerably lighter built than myself, made the climb and found the "old nest" overflowing with ten eggs, the bottom sagging so badly that it was a miracle just how it held, especially with the additional weight of the parent bird. While attempting to get the camera in position for a shot, there was an ominous report. The limb on which the nest was located, and upon which my wife had put too much pressure, snapped at the trunk—and I found myself suddenly smothered in an avalanche of limbs, camera, eggs and wife.

When the "dust settled," I found that, by some miracle, I had made a despairing dive for the nest as it descended and saved it from being dashed to bits. However, the bottom came out even as I lowered it to the ground and eggs were scattered everywhere. *Yet not one egg was cracked.* A reason was discovered when they were blown. The shells were too thick to drill by the ordinary method, so I used a large darning needle to puncture them.

As there were only four pairs of Green Herons nesting in this area (and each pair had its own nest), there is no doubt in our minds that this is a legitimate set, laid by one female. In examination of over forty nests of this heron, we have never found more than five, the average set being of four eggs.—L. B. HOWSLEY, *Los Angeles, California, October 10, 1935.*

Large Set of California Jay.—A number of years ago I was surprised to find a nest of the California Jay (*Aphelocoma californica californica*) containing six young birds. It was in a juniper tree on the Mohave Desert, about forty miles from Colton. Since then diligent search has been made for a nest containing such a large number of eggs or young, and on April 21, 1935, I found one containing seven eggs. This nest was in a juniper two feet from the ground and so

close to a road that the automobiles kept the foliage on one side worn down. The nest was within a foot of my car as it stood on the road. The eggs were almost at the point of hatching but there were only six large young in the nest two weeks later. This is the largest set of this jay that I know about.

My records from southern California indicate that four eggs to the set are the most common, thirty-five per cent being of this number; either three or five are also common, while two are not rare. The average weight of forty fresh, or almost fresh, eggs was 5.996 grams, and the extremes were 6.85 and 5.10 grams. The brown type of egg is rare as I have seen but a single set in the field. The extremes of nesting dates which I have are April 6, 1919, four eggs, and May 31, 1931, five eggs; the average date is April 26.—WILSON C. HANNA, *Colton, California, October 22, 1935.*

Remarks Stimulated by Brodtkorb's "Two New Subspecies of the Red-shafted Flicker".
—Mr. Pierce Brodtkorb recently (Occas. Papers Mus. Zool. No. 314, Univ. Mich., May 29, 1935) has given names to the Red-shafted Flickers of the Rocky Mountain region and of north-western Mexico. To take up the two names in order of their appearance, there is *Colaptes cafer canescens* with Bear Lake, Idaho, as the type locality and an ascribed range, speaking broadly, which includes the Rocky Mountains and adjacent areas to the east and west.

Now this area is, of course, on the edge of the meeting ground of the species *Colaptes auratus* and *Colaptes cafer*, a circumstance which is not even mentioned in the paper referred to! An analysis of the characters which are given as diagnostic of *canescens* shows that, in part at least, they may well be accounted for by an *auratus* influence. Briefly, there is the grayer pileum obviously an *auratus* tendency, the grayer back (concerning which see the comment by Ridgway on page 22 of Part 6 of the Birds of North and Middle America), and the more pinkish sides (in part, at least, *cafer cafer* or partly *auratus*). The "longer wing" is a matter of an average of three millimeters (less than 2 per cent), with the maximum (175 mm.) given as the same for both "races" (*collaris* and *canescens*). The claim of broader bill is not supported by any measurements.

Now it is not the intention of these remarks to enter into a discussion of the merits of recognizing, by name, a "new" flicker from the region of intermingling between *cafer* and *auratus*. The case has been exhaustively discussed by several eminently competent writers, a list of whom may be found in the cited volume of Ridgway. It is simply my contention that no description of a red-shafted, or any other, flicker from the Rocky Mountains region is entitled to serious consideration unless the author re-opens and gives careful analysis to the whole problem. In this connection, also, there are two old names, *Picus ayresii* Audubon, and *Colaptes hybridus* Baird, to be disposed of before any new ones are manufactured.

The case of the second description, *Colaptes cafer chihuahuae*, differs considerably from the foregoing in that the only question involved is a difference of opinion on how far to go in naming intermediates. The writer recently had occasion to investigate in considerable detail the geographic behavior of Red-shafted Flickers in central and northern Mexico and at that time came to the conclusion that there were increasing tendencies toward *mexicanus* from the Arizona border southward to Durango, but that there was insufficient stability of characters in this area to justify the bestowal of a name. However, he has not the slightest objection if anyone else desires to take such action.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, September 20, 1935.*

Additional Bird Records from Death Valley.—A summer, that of 1935, spent in Death Valley, California, brought to light several new bird records which are listed here.

Aix sponsa. Wood Duck. Two seen September 28 on a pond formed by overflow water from the Furnace Creek Ranch.

Mycteria americana. Wood Ibis. One seen at the same pond on July 30. Seen again the two following days at the same place and was very tame, allowing me to approach as near as ten feet. On the morning of August 2, I found the bird dead at the edge of the water. I found no marks of violence on it, so disease probably caused its death.

Egretta thula. Snowy Egret. Four seen August 21 at the pond. At the same time there was a flock of 26 Avocets. Two more of the Egrets were seen at the same place on August 31, one on September 1, and two on September 5. At one of my visits to the ponds I saw a flock of eight of the big American Egrets.

Lobipes lobatus. Northern Phalarope. July 1, two were seen swimming on the pond, and on August 6 two more were seen on the same pond.

Tryngites subruficollis. Buff-breasted Sandpiper. One seen on July 1 on the pond so often mentioned here. There were two overflow ponds about 100 yards apart and the sandpiper was seen for the next four days at one or other of the ponds. When flushed it would fly to the other pond. Before it left it became much tamer and would allow a reasonably close approach.