

While it is perhaps dangerous to generalize from a single locality, it seems likely that the Marbled Godwit is a not uncommon transient in the San Francisco Mountain region, determined dates being May 6 and 7 and August 20 to September 13.—ALLAN R. PHILLIPS, *Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff, April 8, 1936.*

**Occurrence of the California Clapper Rail away from Marshes.**—The California Clapper Rail (*Rallus obsoletus obsoletus*) is an inhabitant of the salt-water marshes around San Francisco Bay. Information concerning its distribution shows a remarkable restriction to this habitat which not only is small, but which now is being invaded rapidly by development of this area for human use. Any clues as to what may become of the rails when the marshes are drained should have significance for the future welfare of the species.

I am acquainted with two occurrences of rails which bear upon this situation. On the morning of September 3, 1928, at the corner of Hearst and Walnut streets in Berkeley, I picked up a dead rail at the south base of a woven wire fence which surrounds a plot of ground used for experimental purposes by the College of Agriculture of the University of California. The bird's bill was broken and bent, and it obviously had been killed by striking the fence. It was a male, weight 330 grams, and is now skin number 53226 in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. The second specimen was brought to the Museum by Mr. Gordon Bolander who found it on October 4, 1932, "dead beneath a barbed wire fence" at the corner of 14th Avenue and East 14th Street, Oakland. This one also was a male; it is skin number 62350.

Both these birds evidently were flying low, over dry land, and at a distance from the water. The first one was at least two miles from the nearest point on the Bay and considerably farther from the nearest suitable habitat for rails. These examples give basis for the suggestion that the birds move about by lengthy flights, at least in the fall, and further that so long as there is marshland available in the region the species may be expected to occupy it, if not already fully populated, by moving in from reclaimed areas when these are being drained.—JEAN M. LINDSALE, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, February 15, 1936.*

**Unusual Nesting Site of the Eastern Kingbird.**—The weather records of eastern Montana, in common with those of most of the Great Plains,

have shown unusually low rainfall during the past decade; and the series of dry years culminated in the great drought of 1934. May we conclude, then, that it was with a humorously shrewd eye to safety that a pair of Eastern Kingbirds, *Tyrannus tyrannus*, the following year selected a rain gauge for a nest? (See fig. 39.)



Fig. 39. A pair of Eastern Kingbirds selected a rain gauge for a nest site; near Miles city, Montana, July 2, 1935.

The gauge was kept by the Forest Service at Hogback Well, Fort Keogh, near Miles City, Montana. The writer noticed shreds of grass and soft sagebrush bark in the inner container on June 20 or 21, 1935. It seemed odd at the time; but he did not see the birds bringing nesting material and connect cause with effect until the 23rd. Another gauge was set up promptly so that records could be made without disturbing the birds. By the morning of July 1 the nest had been lined with horsehair and there were two eggs in it. By evening there were three. Next day a fourth egg was laid.

The question in all observers' minds was whether the bird would sit and the eggs could remain viable in that metallic depression under the terrific heat of midsummer. However, tragedy ended the speculation. In the evening of July 3 a rainstorm was in progress. Mr. F. M. Benson, who was living in the Hogback cabin at the time, reports that the bird sat during all the rain. But when hailstones as much as one-half inch in diameter began to fall, so heavily that they made the ground almost completely white, the bird had to desert the nest, and the eggs were smashed. Neither of the pair was seen in the vicinity afterward.—LINCOLN ELLISON, *Miles City, Montana, April 21, 1936.*