

the various published notes and articles. We also recommend that someone, preferably someone who is acquainted with aviculturists, should make a careful search, among all who are known to keep or to have kept caged birds, for information on the liberation of cardinals in California. We welcome the increase in the numbers of these birds.—HAROLD MICHENER and JOSEPHINE R. MICHENER, *Pasadena, California, October 19, 1937.*

A September Mourning Dove's Nest.—In a list of nesting dates of the Western Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura marginella*) in Grinnell, Bryant and Storer's "The Game Birds of California" (p. 595) three September nestings of this species are recorded. However, all of these September records are from southern California. It might therefore be of interest to report a nest with small young from which I flushed a Mourning Dove, at Benicia, Solano County, California, on September 10, 1937. This nest was in a heavy growth of shoots coming from a eucalyptus stump.—J. D. GRAHAM, *Benicia, California, September 24, 1937.*

Some Waterfowl Nesting Records from Vicinity of Redlands, California.—American Pintail (*Dafila acuta iztzihoa*). A female and her brood of small young were seen on Baldwin Lake, San Bernardino Mountains, August 5, 1937. The female was observed several times at close range as she flew back and forth in front of me in an effort to distract my attention from her young.

Cinnamon Teal (*Querquedula cyanoptera*). A female with young was seen at some small ponds near Loma Linda in the summer of 1935.

Ruddy Duck (*Erismatura jamaicensis rubida*). Two broods were seen in the summer of 1936 at Fisherman's Retreat, south of Redlands. I was told that a pair nested there several years ago.

Wilson Snipe (*Capella delicata*). About a dozen were seen August 5, 1937, in a small marsh on Bear Lake, San Bernardino Mountains. Two or three birds acted as if they had nests or young, and one nest containing egg shells from which young had hatched was found. Mr. Wilson C. Hanna checked the identification of the egg shells.—HAROLD M. HILL, *Redlands, California, September 19, 1937.*

Another California Record of Red-billed Tropic-bird.—George Willett's note on the taking of a Red-billed Tropic-bird (*Phaethon aethereus*) off southern California on June 26, 1937 (Condor, vol. 39, 1937, p. 226) was of particular interest to me, as I myself unmistakably observed a bird of this species in California waters on October 3, 1937. I was fishing for marlin, from a 22-foot open cockpit runabout, about five miles directly west of Point Loma, when I observed a bird in flight, the long central tail feathers of which, black eye-band, heavy red bill and quick wing-beat declared it to be something altogether new to me. It came close to the boat and alighted upon the water, holding up its tail, rooster-fashion.

The bird was very tame and we circled it twice at a distance of 50 to 75 feet before it took off. It alighted on the water again about half a mile away and we followed it. This time we ran the boat slowly up to the bird and shut off the engine—so close, in fact, that we debated the chances of catching it in a hand net. I could easily have collected it, had I had a gun of any sort. Under the circumstances, I had to satisfy myself by filming it with a hand motion-picture camera. My friends aboard and I had ample opportunity to study the bird at close range, and there can be no question of the identification which I made as soon as I had access to my books.

Willett informs me that there are only three previously published records for the State: Specimen (whereabouts now unknown) taken by W. H. Graves between Long Beach and Catalina Island in August, 1916 (Condor, vol. 21, 1919, p. 88); sight observations by Loye Miller (Condor, vol. 28, 1926, p. 14); and his own recent capture of a specimen referred to above.—J. W. SEFTON, JR., *San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, October 19, 1937.*

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Southern California.—On October 2, 1937, I was en route from Palmdale to Los Angeles, via Mint Canyon, Los Angeles County. Six miles east of Saugus, I had the good fortune to see a visitor rare to California, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora forficata*). My wife and I were within forty feet of the bird, which was flying out apparently in pursuit of insects. The prolonged tail feathers and the beautiful salmon tint of the posterior under parts were plainly visible as it sat upon a barbed-wire fence. The bird appeared to be in excellent plumage.—GILBERT PHILP, *Beverly Hills, California, October 12, 1937.*

Snowy Plover Nesting in Merced County, California.—The Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*), although common on our sea-coast, is noted but rarely and in small numbers in the interior of the State. On May 13, 1937, the writer while in the field near Los Baños, Merced County, worked a shallow alkaline pond of about five acres which contained ten small bare islands. These were occupied by American Avocets (*Recurvirostra americana*) and Black-necked

Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*). Many sets of eggs of both these species were scattered over these islands. The highly interesting sight of a pair of Snowy Plovers acting as though they had a nest started an eager search and in a very short time a set of three eggs was found on the shore near-by. As it was nearly dark no further search was made.

On May 30, 1937, the writer, accompanied by H. R. Eschenberg and Geo. Brem, Jr., both of Gilroy, again went to the pond just referred to. A heavy wind was blowing and birds would not fly unless forced to do so. By working both sides of the pond and the islands, a small band of plovers was slowly worked to one end where a count was made. Eschenberg counted eleven birds at one time, which was the largest number noted. A nest on one island held a single egg and on another Brem found three heavily incubated eggs almost entirely covered with flakes of dirt carried by the wind. June 6, 1937, again found us at the pond, with J. G. Tyler added to our party. Here Tyler (after nearly forty years of field work in this section) found his first set of eggs of the Snowy Plover and recorded this species for the second time in the San Joaquin Valley. Eschenberg also found a full set. These were on small islands, and small flakes of dirt were used to line the nesting hollows. This is the first time the species has been noted by the writer in fifteen years of field work around Los Baños.—W. E. UNGLISH, *Gilroy, California, October 6, 1937.*

California Ground Squirrel Robs Nest of Valley Quail.—On May 17, 1937, a California Ground Squirrel (*Citellus beecheyi*) was caught in the act of robbing the nest of a Valley Quail (*Lophortyx californica vallicola*) on the San Joaquin Experimental Range in the Sierra Nevada foothills about 20 miles east of Madera, California. The nest (S.J.E.R. No. 24, 1937) was built under a clump of *Lotus scoparius* near a granite outcrop. The clutch of 16 eggs had been incubated since some date prior to May 14, when the nest was first seen.

At 10:15 a.m., from an observation point 60 yards away, loud and rapid scolding notes attracted attention to the pair of quail hotly pursuing a ground squirrel across the granite boulders near their nest. Both birds had their tails raised and widely spread over their backs, their heads lowered, and their wings drooped to the ground as they rushed after the squirrel. Ten feet from the nest they abandoned the chase; the female dashed back to her eggs, while the male, less excited than his mate, took a perch on a rock about 15 feet from the nest and about 10 feet from the squirrel. There he stood scolding anxiously for five minutes while the squirrel took a large, light-colored object from his mouth or cheek pouch and proceeded to eat it. Later search revealed half of the shell of a quail's egg at this spot, rather crushed but roughly held intact by the adhering shell membrane. There is little doubt that this is what the squirrel had been eating.

Having finished the egg, the squirrel worked slowly back toward the nest, nibbling here and there on heads of wild oats and brome grass which overhung its path. Coming to the rim of a rock about 3 feet from the nest, it was met by a sudden charge from the female. The bird, in her excitement, mounted the squirrel's back and clung tenaciously as the latter spun around trying to shake her off. The male quail rushed about in a threatening attitude with tail and wings stiffly spread, but remained aloof from the tussle. After ten seconds of wild scuffling, the squirrel was temporarily repulsed, and the female, wings and tail widely spread, rushed back to her nest. But within two minutes the squirrel had returned and was feeding casually about three feet from the nest. Again the female charged, but this time she was not so successful. The squirrel, ridden by the frantically fighting bird, made a dive for the nest, hastily snatched an egg in its mouth and retreated 8 feet before shaking her off. The male joined in the fracas this time but was not nearly so aggressive as his mate. Twenty feet from the nest the female abandoned the chase and dashed back to her nest, the male retired 5 or 6 feet to the top of a rock where he scolded anxiously while the squirrel leisurely consumed the second egg.

Once more the squirrel turned toward the nest, and just 9 minutes after the last encounter was within 3 feet of the incubating female. Again she rushed out, but like a flash the animal shot past her, snatched a third egg and made off with it. Harried for 8 feet by the female and for another 6 feet by the male, the squirrel retreated across the rock pile to a point out of view and fully 30 feet from the nest.

The squirrel did not make its appearance again during the next 45 minutes. Upon investigating the scene of activity, there was little that could be interpreted as definite evidence of the predator's identity. The inconspicuous egg shell fragments already mentioned and a half dozen small body feathers were the only signs of the recent conflict. There were, however, 8 eggs in the nest, instead of the 16 which had been present three days before. On May 21, at 10:00 a.m., the nest was visited and found to be completely empty; the lining and roof were left intact, but a number of contour feathers were scattered about, indicating further struggle, presumably with ground squirrels.

A number of other quail nests showing evidence of a similar fate were found and examined by Glading at the San Joaquin Experimental Range during the 1937 nesting season. A report on these