

Florida Gallinule on the Suisun Marshes.—While shooting on Simmons Island in the Suisun Bay, on the last day of the hunting season, December 26, 1937, a Benicia hunter killed and brought to Benicia three "large rails" along with his bag of ducks and mud-hens. When he spoke to me about large rails, I immediately became interested, whereupon he kindly invited me to his home where he showed me the birds. They were Florida Gallinules (*Gallinula chloropus cackinmans*); as I had never seen this species before, he gave me the three specimens. I have preserved two of them as scientific skins and the third as a mounted specimen. All of them are males.

This hunter told me that birds of this species appeared to be common on the island named, and that he knew of several hunters who had killed them there, thinking they were rails, and that they considered them very fine eating. The exact location where the three birds were taken was near the mouth of Noyce Slough, on Simmons Island. This island is in Solano County immediately south of Grizzly Island.

Mr. Henry E. Parmenter of San Francisco advises me that on February 19, 1935, he and Mrs. Parmenter saw a single bird of this species on the Suisun Marshes in a small slough entering Montezuma Creek, near Dutton's Landing, a little to the east of Grizzly Island. In view of its presence here on these winter dates this species is no doubt resident on this marsh.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, February 9, 1938.*

Does the Ouzel Use Its Wings in Swimming?—So often have I seen the statement in print that the Water Ouzel (*Cinclus mexicanus*) uses its wings when swimming under water that in spite of my suspicious nature I had almost reached the point of accepting the statement as truth. However, my own observations through the years and my better judgment still make me hesitate and wonder. Could it be possible that John Muir's famous tale of the ouzel is responsible for the building up of a legend? I believe that any ornithologist who has studied the writings of Muir will admit that he was not outstanding as a bird student.

Through the years I have had much opportunity to study the habits of the ouzel, but never did I see it using its wings to forward its underwater progress. Ouzels usually fish in such turbulent waters that it is not possible to study their underwater movements. However, in the Yosemite Valley there did come the opportunity to study the swimming habits of the ouzel under favorable conditions. In this case a pair of ouzels had built their nest in an unusual situation—unusual inasmuch as the nest was placed on a boulder that was completely surrounded by unbroken water. Directly below and in front of the nest there was practically no current. The pool was of varying depth, from two to six feet, and very clear.

During the time that the river was in full spring flood and while the male ouzel was feeding his mate in the nest he did much foraging on the surface of the pool, swimming about on the water in the manner of a phalarope. From a perching stick, which I had placed for his convenience, on rare occasions he was seen to dive and to swim under water, but at no time was he seen to use his wings. The purpose of these dives I never learned. The bird never went to the bottom or did it appear to forage under water.

If an ouzel does not use its wings as an aid to progress while swimming on the surface of the water why should it be necessary, or even to its advantage, to use its wings while swimming under water?

The ouzel when swimming kicks its feet rapidly and alternately. When foraging under water it shows a preference for strong currents. The preference for swift water is probably due to the fact that the bird has learned to take advantage of the pressure afforded by the current to hold its body down.

Even when fishing in a shallow riffle the ouzel always heads up-stream and works against the current. After working up-stream for some distance the ouzel may unloosen its toe-hold and float down stream on the current to shallow water where it can regain its toe-hold without diving and then once more tread upward, looking like some sort of huge water-beetle. This behavior might be likened to the foraging habit of the creeper, which bird slowly works up a tree trunk and then drops down to start over.

In swimming, open wings against the current would seemingly be more of a detriment than an advantage. Many times in shallow water I have seen an ouzel walking along the bottom of the stream against the current with the water racing over its back. The stream-lined body of the ouzel offered little resistance and such pressure of current as there was helped to hold the bird to the floor of the stream. Headed into the current, with feet firmly planted and head held down the body could be held at the proper angle to keep the ouzel on the bottom. In strong current an ouzel could stand quite still, but in a slight current the ouzel would be forced to move up-stream to produce the necessary current pressure to hold its body down.

Coming up in swift water the ouzel fairly pops to the surface and often takes off with such speed as to give the impression of having taken the first wing strokes while still under water.