

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Ivory-billed Woodpecker's Beak in an Indian Grave in Colorado.—A WPA crew excavating near Johnstown, Weld County, Colorado, last January unearthed two human skeletons, male and female, probably either Arapaho or Cheyenne Indians. With the skeletons were various pieces of trade goods secured from whites, showing the remains were not of very great age; but of interest to bird students were the bills of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) and a Pileated Woodpecker (*Ceophloeus pileatus*). As there was no direct contact of the plains Indians with those of the Gulf coast area, it is probable that the beaks changed hands several times before reaching Colorado.

W. Z. Parks (Northwestern University Studies in the Social Sciences, no. 2, 1938) states that specific animals were thought by the northern Shoshone to be useful in curing specific diseases. Eagles were associated with fevers, bears with open and bloody wounds, and woodpeckers with venereal diseases. According to Parks, head-dresses of woodpecker scalps were worn by the Klamath and Shasta shamans, and in California they were donned by dancers participating in Yurok and Hupa jumping dances. Consequently, from the above, it may be judged that the finding of woodpeckers' beaks in Indian graves should not be unusual, except for the geographic location of the find of a portion of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker upon the Colorado plains.—ALFRED M. BAILEY, *Colorado Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado, March 24, 1939.*

European Jack Snipe and Franklin Gull in California.—On November 20, 1938, while shooting Wilson Snipe about four miles northwest of the Marysville Buttes, Butte County, California, I saw an unusual snipe get up in front of me. The bird appeared small and did not fly in a zig-zag erratic flight, nor did it give any call upon rising. I shot the bird and discovered it to be a female adult European Jack Snipe (*Lymnocyptes minimus*). I believe that this is the first record for the United States proper, and the third one for North America, one having been taken on the Pribilof Islands and one in Labrador. This specimen is now in my collection.

On May 18, 1939, while checking the southwest end of Tulare Lake, Kings County, for possible duck disease, I collected a female immature Franklin Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) that was in company with a number of immature Ring-billed Gulls and a few California Gulls. There were also a few Bonaparte Gulls on a sand spit. It was easy to distinguish this species from the Bonaparte because of the lack of a large amount of white on the primaries. The birds were feeding on carp that had died in a barrow pit along the southwest border of the lake. This particular bird was changing from the first winter plumage to the first breeding plumage. It is, therefore, a rather interesting specimen.—D. D. McLEAN, *Division of Fish and Game, San Francisco, California, May 20, 1939.*

The House Finch in the Willamette Valley, Oregon.—In April, 1937, at Corvallis, Oregon, two pairs of House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*) for a time came regularly to the same feeding table as purple finches and sparrows. Later in the spring, House Finches were seen about Corvallis, and at least one pair nested on the campus. In the last two years this has become a fairly common bird on the campus and it has been seen in the surrounding country. I have also seen it at Eugene, and have had unverified but quite circumstantial reports of it from other towns in the valley. In the past it has not been recorded in western Oregon north of the Rogue and Umpqua river valleys.—KENNETH GORDON, *Department of Zoology, Oregon State College, Corvallis, Oregon, May 15, 1939.*

Notes on the Distribution of the Lesser Canada Goose and Cackling Goose in California.—*Branta canadensis leucopareia*. Lesser Canada Goose. Of the several kinds of geese wintering in California, this is the latest to arrive in autumn. Its migration appears to be largely inland, in contrast with the more coastal flights of Cackling Geese, and Lesser Canada Geese enter the state in its northeastern corner or along the eastern border.

On account of confusion with the much more abundant Cackling Geese at Tule Lake, Siskiyou County, H. M. Worcester (MS) records the present subspecies definitely in the autumn of 1932, first on December 3, and common by the 5th. It is probable that some Lesser Canadas were present earlier. His notes for the same season record large numbers arriving at the Refuge, which was then solidly frozen over, on December 15, 17, and 20. About 2000 were present December 27, but all had departed by January 2, 1933. I observed no Lesser Canada Geese among thousands of Cackling Geese at Tule Lake on November 29, 1933. Worcester (MS) noted the first Lesser Canadas for the spring of 1933

as arriving here on March 6. The next day, Dr. J. C. Phillips and I found about 5000 present. On March 9, 1933, we saw several thousand of these geese migrating north along the South Fork of Pit River, between Likely and Alturas, Modoc County, where I saw several hundred moving similarly as late as April 23, 1931.

R. D. Murphy provides no early dates for arrival at Honey Lake. The earliest is December 3, 1932, when he recorded a few flocks as appearing. These left on the 13th during a blizzard with other kinds of geese save Canadas, and none has been observed to winter there. A specimen in the L. B. Bishop collection in Los Angeles was taken on the Murphy Ranch, near Honey Lake, December 9, 1930. Dr. Phillips and I saw about 2500 Lesser Canada Geese in Honey Lake Valley, March 10, 1933. In the period March 16-19, 1939, very few, not more than 100 all told, Lesser Canada Geese were observed here.

My earliest autumn record for the Sacramento Valley is of a specimen collected near Willows, Glenn County, November 20, 1928. Only nine individuals were seen that day, but the form was abundant by early December. On November 22, 1938, these geese were numerous about Willows and near Butte Creek, Sutter County, when several specimens were taken. Lesser Canada Geese usually are numerous in the Sacramento Valley by the last week in November. From early December to January they are among the most abundant of the geese, their numbers probably exceeding those of Cackling Geese and approximating those of White-fronted and of Lesser Snow geese. About mid-January, these and most other geese depart from the Valley, probably on account of food shortage, when great numbers are to be found on the grassy plains from Davis, Yolo County, to Rio Vista, Solano County, and in the San Joaquin Valley. At this period in some seasons, especially in dry ones when new grass is scant, as in the present year, geese may be relatively scarce in the Sacramento Valley, where very few were noted February 25-26, 1939. On the latter date, many thousands were observed near Davis. This movement has also been observed in other years. The geese return to the Sacramento Valley on the spring migration during March, but they do not remain for long, and press northward. The Pit River Valley, as above indicated, appears to be a heavily used migratory path. It is probably reached from the Sacramento Valley by the low mountain gaps north of Lassen Peak and leads northward to the easterly route followed by this form, east of the Cascades of Oregon.

The Lesser Canada Goose is now rare on the Suisun marshes, Solano County (Moffitt, Condor, vol. 40, 1938, p. 83), where recorded as abundant in 1852 (Heermann, Pac. Railroad Rept., vol. 10, part 6, no. 2, 1859, p. 67), and in the San Francisco Bay region (Grinnell and Wythe, Pac. Coast Avif. No. 18, 1927, p. 58, as *Branta canadensis hutchinsii*).

North of the Tehachapi, the Lesser Canada Goose is now preëminently a bird of the inland valleys and plateau lakes and meadows, and it is rare along the sea coast. I have examined a typical specimen in the collection of Dr. B. M. Marshall of Eureka that was shot near Arcata, on Humboldt Bay, in 1914.

This can be reckoned as one of our most abundant geese, but it is a late arrival and is numerous only from late November to early April.

Branta canadensis minima. Cackling Goose. Lincoln (Condor, vol. 28, 1926, pp. 153-156) has satisfactorily worked out this form's migration route, which follows the coast south to Oregon, thence mainly through the Willamette Valley to Tule Lake, California. His earliest seasonal return for a banded bird from Tule Lake was October 24. Worcester's notes (MS) indicate that these geese reach this point in numbers considerably earlier than Lincoln's record suggests. In 1931, thousands of Cackling Geese were present on October 4. The lake froze up on November 19, but the birds persisted in numbers until December 8, when many left, but the last, not until after Christmas. In 1932, first seen in autumn on August 30, thirty-five individuals, then not again until September 10, when about 2000 appeared, after which date they increased rapidly until abundant by October 30. Most left before December 15, but some were present on the 27th, and all had departed by January 2, 1933 (Worcester MS). This is by far the most abundant kind of goose on Tule Lake, where at least 50,000 were observed by me on November 29, 1933. The spring migration is apparently considerably later than that of the Lesser Canada Goose, just as its fall migration is much earlier, for we found no Cackling Geese at Tule Lake on March 7, 1933.

I could secure no valid record of this little goose's occurrence in the Pit River Valley of Modoc County, and it appears to be unknown in Honey Lake Valley, which bears out the coastwise nature of its migration. Apparently the birds go no farther inland than Tule Lake in northern California, thence south to the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys to winter.

That the form arrives in numbers at Tule Lake before individuals reach the Sacramento Valley is indicated by the fact that my earliest autumn record for the latter area is of about 100 birds seen near Willows, October 14, 1928. Extensive travels over the greater part of the Valley in the next three days failed to reveal presence of any Cackling Geese, although White-fronted Geese were fairly

common, with a few Lesser Snow Geese in evidence. On October 27, perhaps a thousand Cackling Geese were seen in flocks south of Colusa and two birds were collected. The next day more were found near Willows, and two more were taken. By November 20, 1928, Cackling Geese were abundant about Willows; over 10,000 were seen and 120 shot by gunners I accompanied. The birds were then abundant elsewhere in the Valley and continued so through at least January 12, 1929. No Cackling Geese were seen in a visit to the Butte Creek area, or in the vicinity of Willows, February 16-17, 1929, although a thousand Lesser Canada Geese were noted in the first locality. March 3, 1929, a single flock of 15 Cackling Geese was observed in flight near Butte Creek with flocks of Lesser Canada Geese totalling 300 birds. Scarcity of the birds at this season is comparable to experiences with other geese of the region. From March to early April, huge numbers of Cackling Geese have been observed in the fields of the delta region west of Sacramento and south of Davis, Dixon and Elmira.

The autumn arrival of Cackling Geese in the Sacramento Valley in 1929 was much as in the preceding season. On October 31 only five to six thousand were found about Colusa. The birds were extremely abundant about Willows by November 3. Here, the abundance of Cackling Geese at periods of heavy concentration belies attempts at census taking. The birds were always found most abundant on the 12,000-acre Spalding Ranch, now a Federal Wildlife Refuge. Here, in November, 1928, I once saw a solid cloud of Cackling Geese arise at daybreak, that extended at least four miles across the horizon; certainly many hundred thousand birds were involved. Geese remained abundant in the Valley through December, 1929, but a decided reduction in numbers was observed on January 12, 1930, when few of any kinds were seen. March 30, 1930, only 20 Cackling Geese were encountered among about 2,000 Lesser Canada Geese noted on the Spalding Ranch.

The area of winter habitation of the Cackling Goose in California is similar to that of the Lesser Canada, with the metropolis in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley; but there is no evidence that the present subspecies now migrates to southern and southeastern California, as does the Lesser Canada. Cackling Geese are now rare on the Suisun marshes and San Francisco Bay, in fact anywhere along the coast. I have seen typical examples taken on Humboldt Bay, in the collections of C. I. Clay and Dr. B. M. Marshall, of Eureka. Evidence that there is a small but regular (formerly large) migration down the coast to the vicinity of Eureka, thence inland, up the Trinity and Eel river valleys, probably east to the Sacramento Valley, was provided by the late F. J. Williams, of Ferndale, Humboldt County, who stated he had for years observed such autumnal flights, now much reduced in numbers.

The Cackling Goose is about fourth in point of numbers of the kinds wintering in California, being exceeded by Lesser Snows, White-fronts and Lesser Canadas. It is an abundant bird on Tule Lake from early October to December, and in the central valleys from late October to early April.—JAMES MOFFITT, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, May 15, 1939.*

"The Mississippi Kite in Spring."—The fine paper of this title by George Miksch Sutton (Condor, vol. 41, 1939, pp. 41-53), like all work of this well-known ornithologist and artist, is a valuable contribution. But rewording of the last four paragraphs with greater accuracy in view could easily have improved the paper.

That "black picture" of oologists has absolutely astounded me! I am an ardent oologist of over fifty years' field experience and have been personally acquainted with numerous collectors of eggs. Being a western oologist who has never collected a bird or egg of this fine species and with but two sets of the eggs in my collection, I feel that I am qualified and should make some defense of the oologist. If I were not reasonably certain that I had done no harm by collecting eggs, I certainly would try to make my studies without collecting.

It has never been my misfortune to meet any oologist in these United States who would behave as claimed in these four questionable paragraphs. On the other hand, I have found them to be eager conservationists, serving all of us in the protection of the hawks, owls, and other birds which have so often been persecuted. They are busy with their cameras, instead of guns, and you will find them helping to direct boy scouts, teachers, and others in bird study. They seldom kill a bird, as they well know that this is not apt to be conservation. They also know that the taking of a few sets of eggs will do no harm, as the birds will normally in almost every case soon have another set. They would be the first to give protection to the Mississippi Kite and would be the first to detect any threatening danger to that bird.

What has our friend Sutton done to help the Mississippi Kites around Arnett? **KILLED SIXTEEN BIRDS!** On the premise that these birds were of average age and that they nest each year after they are one year of age and up to the age of ten years, we find that the killing of these sixteen birds would in only ten years be equal to 400 sets of eggs for only the first and second generations of birds. Why figure the third or more generations? The figure is large enough without doing so!