

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**English Sparrow Eaten by Bullfrog.**—One of the most interesting spots in our garden at Compton, California, is a pool inhabited by goldfish, two small turtles, and several frogs and toads, including two large bullfrogs of six and eight inches in length. Many hummingbirds, sparrows, warblers, and phoebes come to the pool to drink from the dripping water source or to bathe at its shallow end. The many water lilies and water hyacinths doubtless conceal the frogs from these birds.

One morning a commotion attracted me to the pool, where a few moments before a flock of English Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) had been bathing. I was amazed to find that the smaller bullfrog had a female English Sparrow in its mouth. The frog submerged, but appeared again with the wings, tail, and legs of the unfortunate sparrow still protruding. After six minutes, it had succeeded (with great effort) in swallowing the entire sparrow except for the tips of the tail feathers.

Once before I had found in the pool the skeleton of a bird, lacking all flesh, but with the larger wing and tail feathers still attached. It puzzled me at the time, but I believe the above incident explains it as the regurgitated remnant of another bullfrog feast.—FRED H. W. LUEDERS, *Compton, California, January 5, 1941.*

**MacFarlane Screech Owl in Harney County, Oregon.**—A female MacFarlane Screech Owl (*Otus asio macfarlanei*) was taken by a local trapper in a steel trap set for mink near Ruby Spring on McCoy Creek in the Steens Mountains, Harney County, Oregon, on December 13, 1940. The bird was given to John C. Scharff of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, who had it preserved as a study skin. This is the first record of the occurrence of *macfarlanei* in Harney County coming to the writer's attention. The specimen is typical of the race as compared with specimens from other parts of eastern Oregon. Ruby Spring in the Steens Mountains is at about 4500 feet altitude, which is considerably higher than other localities where this bird has previously been taken in Oregon. The present specimen is being preserved in the bird reference collection at the Malheur Refuge.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, January 2, 1941.*

**A New Record of the Semipalmated Plover in Nevada.**—On May 5, 1940, while we were making a bird survey in the Truckee Meadows, about three miles southeast of Reno, Nevada, we noted a strange bird flying with three killdeers; it alighted near a small flock of feeding Least Sandpipers. The bird was about forty feet away, but by careful maneuvering, we managed to approach within fifteen feet of it. The single neck ring, stubby, black-tipped bill and orange legs left no doubt that the newcomer was a Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*).

This is the first record of this species in the Truckee Meadows, but it possibly is not as rare as might first be supposed. The species is recorded by Linsdale (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 23, 1936:52) from Smoke Creek, Washoe County, where Streater took a male on May 11, 1896. Grater (Condor, 41, 1939:221) reported two individuals from Lake Mead, near the site of the abandoned town of St. Thomas, Clark County, on May 7, 1938.—GLEN CHRISTENSEN and THOMAS TRELEASE, *Reno, Nevada, February 10, 1941.*

**Nesting of Band-tailed Pigeons at Altadena, California.**—In the past fifty years I have frequently seen flocks of Band-tailed Pigeons (*Columba fasciata*) in the fall and winter feeding on the acorns at my home in Altadena, Los Angeles County, California. Not until 1933 did I notice pigeons nesting or staying here throughout the year. The elevation at Altadena is 1000 feet and the distance from the nearest regular nesting place known to me, on Mount Wilson, is about one and a half miles. There are many live oaks and Englemann oaks on and around my place.

In 1933 one pair of pigeons was seen frequently from May to September but no nest was found. In 1934 one pair was seen frequently from April to August and in July a nest was found and a dead young pigeon on the ground under it. I have no record for 1935.

In 1936 pigeons were seen feeding young on July 4, incubating on July 7, and building a nest on August 25. This latter nest was deserted a few days later.

In 1937 a pigeon was seen on March 19 sitting on a last year's nest, which it apparently deserted later. At least one pair was seen about all summer. On October 6 a nest was found with a young bird. This young one was raised and left the nest on November 1.

In 1938 at least two pairs were seen around all summer. On August 8 I found a pigeon incubating. The young bird left the nest September 11. On September 12 five pigeons were seen, two of which were young.

In 1939 a pair was seen building a nest on February 27. On April 1 I found a dead young bird

under this nest. On March 15 two birds were found incubating. On April 18 these two nests were still occupied, but I could not see what was in them. On April 22 ten pigeons were seen together on the telephone wire, some of them apparently young birds. On May 12 a pair was seen building, and the young bird left this nest on June 24.

In 1940, on May 20, a pigeon was found sitting, this being the third successive year that this nest was used. On July 15 several pairs were about, one of which was feeding young. On July 20 I found a nest with a young bird, which left the nest on July 29. On July 31 a pair was building, and later sitting; but after a few days they deserted. On September 2 I found a pigeon incubating, and the young bird subsequently was raised. On October 5 I found a nest, with the bird incubating; the juvenile was still in the nest on October 27.

All of these nests were in oak trees, from fifteen to thirty-five feet above the ground and mostly inaccessible. I am told on good authority that pigeons have nested in San Marino, Los Angeles County, in recent years and also near Covina. A young pigeon fell from a nest in the southwest part of Pasadena about July 1, 1940, and was raised by hand and released by me. The earliest date of nesting was on February 27, 1939, when a nest was being built, and the latest, November 1, 1937, when a young bird left the nest. As far as I know there has not been more than one egg in each nest and the proportion of successful nestings has been small.—WALTER I. ALLEN, *Alladena, California, February 13, 1941.*

**Additional Records of the Western Mockingbird in Oregon.**—On July 25, 1940, while the author and Mr. Forrester Carpenter were assisting in taking the monthly bird census on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon, a Western Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) was observed at the south end of "Big Sagebrush Field" in unit 10. The following day Mr. John C. Scharff observed what probably was the same individual near the place where it was noted the day before.

In the course of the next monthly census, on August 23, another mocker was seen at "Grain Camp Dam" in unit 6 by the author and Mr. R. M. Tullar. Also, Mr. Groves of the refuge staff reported that the day before a mockingbird (evidently the same bird) lit on a hay rack he was preparing to load in the grain field just east of the dam.

Previous to these records a group of ornithologists from La Grande, Oregon, while visiting the refuge in the latter part of May, reported seeing a Western Mockingbird in Burns (Hyde, Condor, 42, 1940:305). Gabrielson and Jewett (Birds of Oregon, 1940:462) cite five records from the Steens Mountains and the Blitzen Valley, and recorded the bird as rare.—CLARENCE A. SOOTER, *Fish and Wildlife Service, Burns, Oregon, December 26, 1940.*

**Prairie Falcon Parasitizing a Marsh Hawk.**—About 1:15 p.m., on January 27, 1941, while driving on the highway from Benicia toward Cordelia, Solano County, California, about two and one-half miles south of the latter place, Mrs. Parmenter and I saw a Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*) take a Coot (*Fulica americana*) from the surface of the water. When abreast of us, it dropped the coot and at that instant we saw that the hawk was being pursued by a Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*).

As the Marsh Hawk dropped the coot, the falcon landed on the ground where the coot had fallen, it having caused the hawk to drop its prey. The hawk continued its flight, leaving the falcon at the dropped coot. The Marsh Hawk returned shortly, accompanied by a second hawk, and the two drove off the falcon. The two hawks remained at the spot only a short time and then flew off to the northward. The falcon in a few minutes returned to the spot and we had a perfect view of it with our binoculars.

On our return home we consulted various sources in our literature concerning the Prairie Falcon. In Fisher's Hawks and Owls (U. S. Dept. Agriculture, Div. Orn. and Mamm., Bull. 3, 1893:104) is a quotation from Ridgway: "Late in November, of the same year [1867], . . . [the Prairie Falcon] was noticed again among the marshes along the Carson River [Nevada], near Genoa, where it was observed to watch and follow the Marsh Hawks (*Circus hudsonius*), compelling them to give up their game which was caught by the Falcon before it reached the ground; this piracy being not an occasional, but a systematic habit."

Decker and Bowles (Auk, 47, 1930:25-31), state that "a large female [Prairie Falcon] at Santa Barbara, California, had killed a Coot (*Fulica americana*) with which it tried to fly across the road." This shows that Prairie Falcons are not averse to taking a coot occasionally. Most authorities agree that the Marsh Hawks frequently take water birds and wounded ducks.

In the twelve miles from Benicia to Cordelia we saw about seventeen Marsh Hawks. New moon occurred that day and accordingly there was a six-foot tide. Because of this and the fact that the numerous fields were covered as a result of the previous rains, conditions were ideal for the Marsh Hawks in their search for food.—HENRY E. PARMENTER, *San Francisco, California, February 14, 1941.*