

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Nests in the Cottonwoods at Gustine, California.—Just south of the town of Gustine, Merced County, California, on Highway 33, there is a road that leads into a farm where a colony of American Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*) are breeding in the tops of some cottonwood trees along a stream. It is a place known to many people interested in birds and I have heard various estimates made of the size of the colony. Looking back in my own notes to May, 1939, I read, "There must be more than one hundred birds in the colony." I have heard others suggest two hundred as a probable figure.

This year (1942), on May 30 and 31, Mr. Frank Scott, Mrs. Dorothy Sheldon and I visited the place and Mr. Scott and I made a count of the nests while Mrs. Sheldon was taking moving pictures of the birds. The count was made from the ground with the aid of glasses. I feel sure there was no duplication in the count, but I am not sure that I have not missed some, for in one or two places the leafage made it difficult to see clearly. There are nine trees in line that are being used by the egrets, although when we first saw the colony from the barnyard it looked as though only five or six trees were occupied. There is a constant movement of the birds about the trees, and a constant chatter, almost like domestic fowl, that can be heard from across the field. A Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo borealis*) was sailing overhead and on the second day when the count was made we found the Red-tail's nest, with two young peering down at us, in the same tree with fourteen American Egret nests.

The heads of the young hawks were still downy but the wings of the one we could best see, because he stood erect, were well feathered out. The hawk's nest was on larger branches than were the nests of the egrets but at about the same level and close to two or three of them. On May 31 we stayed at the site from about 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. It was just as we were leaving that the adult hawk, which had been sailing in the sky, came down to the nest.

There were two or possibly four Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) to be seen about the trees and one was sitting on her nest, clearly visible. Another Great Blue's nest was, I think, in the next tree but the leaves were dense at that place and I could not be sure.

There were two pairs of Lewis Woodpeckers (*Asyndesmus lewis*) in this same group of cottonwoods and we watched one pair busily carrying food into its nest hole in a broken branch. Both pairs of Lewis Woodpeckers were doing a good deal of fly catching. They turn in the air with nearly as much skill as the Western Kingbirds that were also about these same trees. The pair of woodpeckers that I watched most closely did almost an equal amount of flycatching and taking of insects from the end of the same dead branch where their nest hole was situated.

The following count was made: Tree 1, 17 American Egret nests and 1 nest that may have been that of a Western Kingbird. Tree 2, 47 egret nests. Tree 3, 7 egret nests; this tree was nearly dead. Tree 4, 14 egret nests; Red-tailed Hawk nest with young; 1 nest that was probably that of a kingbird. Tree 5, 9 egret nests; 2 holes with Lewis Woodpeckers near them, calling. Tree 6, 31 egret nests; 1 Great Blue Heron nest. Tree 7, 24 egret nests; possibly a Great Blue's nest also. Tree 8, 47 egret nests; 1 hole with Lewis Woodpecker going in and out. Tree 9, 2 egret nests; this is a young tree.

The total of American Egret nests was 198. I have not counted the slight accumulations of sticks that seem to have been abandoned before they were finished. Once we saw an egret bringing sticks. Most of the nests seemed to be occupied. Sometimes young birds could be distinguished through the thin platform of sticks. There were many broken egg shells on the ground below. I still do not know whether each nest represents a family or not but I think they are all this year's nests.
—HOPE M. GLADDING, Berkeley, California, June 15, 1942.

Franklin Gull in Idaho.—That the Franklin Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) should occur at least occasionally within the boundaries of Idaho is a logical certainty, but, so far as is now known, no records for that state have as yet been published. Recent inquiries have disclosed unpublished records, one of which is based on specimens, that will serve to establish this species as a member of the avifauna of Idaho. I am indebted to William H. Marshall of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Victor E. Jones of the University of Idaho, Southern Branch, and Lyle M. Stanford of the University of Washington for their several kindnesses in this connection.

Summaries of the various records, arranged chronologically, are as follows: (1) Two birds were seen at Minidoka Dam on July 28, 1910, by Stanley G. Jewett. Attention was drawn to this record, which is on file with the Fish and Wildlife Service, by Marshall.

(2) Two birds were collected in April, 1937, by Buck Cherry approximately four miles west of Meridian, Ada County, near U. S. Highway 30. Mr. Cherry (letter of March 24, 1942) states that

there were approximately a dozen of these gulls feeding in a cow pasture at the time of the collection. The specimens, now mounted (without data) in the State House at Boise, have been identified by Marshall who mentions the deep red bill color and the white primary tips as diagnostic. They have also been seen by Stanford, who concurs with this determination. Attention was first drawn to this record by Jones.

(3) A flock of about fifty birds was seen on May 24, 1941, near Henry, Caribou County, by Victor E. Jones and L. H. Walkinshaw. The gulls were wheeling about high over head and were identified by Walkinshaw as Franklin Gulls.

(4) An unstated number was seen on November 11, 1941, near Springfield, Bingham County, by V. E. Jones and his son. These birds flew over within shotgun range, but were not recognized until too late for a shot.

Finally, Mr. Stanford states that he has seen this species occasionally in the last five years along the Snake River in the vicinity of Weiser and as far downstream as Old's Ferry, on the Oregon boundary, but his notes are not now available for examination.

From the foregoing it would appear that the Franklin Gull occurs occasionally in spring, summer, and autumn at various points along the Snake River drainage in southern Idaho, although additional specimens are needed to substantiate the several sight records. The possibility that breeding colonies may be established in this part of the state seems good, and stragglers might profitably be looked for on the larger lakes of the northern panhandle during migrations.—JOHN W. SLIPP, *University of Washington, Seattle, June 26, 1942.*

Contacts of Ravens with Other Species.—In the past seven years I have observed three instances of contacts between Ravens (*Corvus corax*) and other species that seem worth recording. The raven was attacked in two cases and was the aggressor in one encounter.

On July 10, 1935, on the Flambeau River in Phillips County, Wisconsin, I was watching the activities of a pair of Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) in the tops of some dead spruce spars. They had young near by. A raven flew past and was immediately assailed by the crows. The squawks of the raven as it twisted and dodged were very much like those of the crows, yet deeper and louder. A few days later (July 12) I watched a raven on a tall snag near its young. A Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo borealis*) which was soaring in circles chanced to pass near in one of its movements. It was set upon by the raven much in the manner of a crow; the hawk was pursued approximately a mile before the raven gave up the attack.

On April 30, 1942, I visited a cliff in the "scablands" near Lamont, Whitman County, Washington. A Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*)erie on the cliff was but a hundred feet from the nest of a raven. The falcon's nest had undoubtedly been used for many years; the accumulation of material probably exceeded a ton in weight and the bottom material was much decomposed. Decomposition takes place slowly in the semiarid atmosphere of this region. The raven nest was apparently a new one. It was placed in a wide crack behind the pillars formed by weathering of the cliff. As my companion and I approached the nest, the raven flew off the nest and away from the cliff. It was immediately set upon by the falcon which launched itself from its nest. The raven wheeled quickly, passed over the cliff and across the highland. It kept a few feet from the ground during its flight, and the falcon gave up the pursuit rather quickly. It appeared that the "hedge-hopping" flight of the raven was a mechanism for making it difficult for the falcon to stoop.

The explanation for the proximity of the nests of the two species seems to be that the raven began nesting before the falcon had returned to the old nesting site. The seven young of the raven were well-fledged, but the falcon nest contained four eggs which did not hatch until the following week.—LEONARD WING, *The State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington, July 20, 1942.*

Blue-winged Teal Nesting in Sacramento County, California.—On June 4, 1942, Mr. Terrence Potter and I were checking bass nests in the spawning pond at the Elk Grove bass hatchery in Sacramento County, when a pair of Blue-winged Teal (*Querquedula discors*) alighted close to us in an adjoining pond. The white crescent at the base of the bill of the drake showed very plainly. The large, white spot on either side of the body near the base of the tail was also prominent. I was positive of the identification.

On June 12, while draining the spawning pond, a male dropped into the pond about 60 yards from us. This was too far to observe the white crescent, but the white spot near the base of the tail showed plainly. Mr. Abe Woodard and Rudolph Gerhardt were with me at the time.

Later the same evening a male and female were in rearing pond No. 8 with a brood of seven ducklings. I had to approach quite close for positive identification because there were a number of