

**Starlings Nesting in Montana.**—On May 15, 1943, Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) were discovered bringing food to nestlings in a cavity in a barn at the North Montana Branch Station, seven miles southwest of Havre, Montana. On the day following, a pair was seen carrying material to an opening high up on the side of a grain elevator at Laredo, a few miles southwest of the Station, and it was presumed that they were nesting at this point also. As far as I am aware this is the first record of nesting of this species in Montana.

In the course of the past five years I have had opportunity to collect a number of records of this species in Montana. The first one for the state, of which I have knowledge, is based on a bird found dead at Lindsay in January, 1939. In February of the same year I examined a caged Starling which had been captured on a ranch near Great Falls. This occurrence is discussed by Wessel (Montana Farmer, 26, 1939:10). Other records, exclusive of those given by Wright (Condor, 45, 1943:119) are as follows:

Big Timber	Stillwater County	October, 1939
White Sulphur Springs	Meagher County	December, 1939
Sieben	Lewis and Clark County	March, 1940
Silesia	Carbon County	July, 1943
Savage	Richland County	July, 1943
Chinook	Blaine County	July, 1943

As yet, I have seen no evidence of flocking of this bird in the State, all of my records being for one or two birds. Wright (*op. cit.*) mentions but five or six in the group observed by him. It would seem that as of this date the Starling is uncommon but widespread in Montana.—HARLOW B. MILLS, *Department of Zoology and Entomology, Montana State College, Bozeman, Montana, July 12, 1943.*

**Starling in Northern Idaho.**—In the course of my recent study of the birds of northern Idaho, Bill Musgrove reported to me that he had observed a Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) on a telephone wire one mile east of Moscow, Latah County, Idaho, on December 13, 1941. He has collected this species in Montana and was certain of his identification, which to the best of my knowledge is the first record of the Starling in northern Idaho, if not in the whole state. This individual was apparently a winter straggler as were those seen in western Montana by Wright (Condor, 45, 1943:119).—ANDREW C. OLSON, JR., *San Diego, California, June 14, 1943.*

**Notes on the Shore Birds of Washington.**—The following is a miscellany of unpublished data on shore birds of the State of Washington which for various reasons are considered worthy of record. Unless otherwise stated, they are the results of my field activities in the past four years.

*Charadrius semipalmatus*. Semipalmated Plover. A solitary female was taken by the writer on the Tacoma tideflats on July 22, 1940. On August 25 of the same year I saw one, with a killdeer, on the Nisqually flats, and on August 29 a group of about 12 were seen at the same place. The species has been rarely recorded on Puget Sound, although it is common on the ocean beaches at Westport.

*Squatarola squatarola*. Black-bellied Plover. Miller, Lumley, and Hall in their "Birds of the San Juan Islands, Washington" (Murrelet, 16, 1935:51-65) were able to include this species in their list only hypothetically. It was common at Smith Island, southernmost of the islands of San Juan County, during a visit there from March 25 to 27, 1942; a specimen was taken on the 26th.

*Arenaria melanocephala*. Black Turnstone. Miller, *et al.* (*ibid.*: 58) list only a single spring record of this species for the San Juans. On April 23, 1939, I saw at least a score on Decatur Island, and at Smith Island from March 25 to 27, 1942, I saw large numbers, collecting one on the 26th. They are quite rare on southern Puget Sound; on August 12, 1940, I saw a single bird near Dash Point, north of Tacoma, and on the 28th following, took two from a barnacle-covered snag at the mouth of the Nisqually River.

*Actitis macularia*. Spotted Sandpiper. Gabrielson (Condor, 25, 1923:106) has published a winter sight record of this species for the Olympic Peninsula and mentions that it has occasionally been taken along the Washington and Oregon coasts in winter. While fishing for steelhead in the Nisqually River a few miles above its mouth on February 4, 1940, I observed a single Spotty repeatedly and at close range, as it worked along the river's edge. The majority of this species seems to arrive in May and leave in August in the vicinity of Tacoma.

The ability of this species to dive into, swim under, and take wing from either still or running water has been frequently mentioned in the literature (see Bent, U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 146, 1929:87-89; Sutton and Pettingill, Auk, 59, 1942:10). The plight of a bird found on a warm spring day (May 19, 1940) in a rearing pond at the state fish hatchery near Steilacoom may be of interest as an indication of the limitations of these abilities.

As we approached the long, vertical-sided concrete pond, a Spotted Sandpiper flew up and away to a near-by lake. To our surprise we found a second bird, an adult with spotted breast, struggling to rise from the water, heaving its shoulders up with frantic wing-beats or lying exhausted with back awash and wings outstretched just below the surface. I fished it out and placed it on the back seat of the car where it crouched, shuddering, and nearly toppling on occasion. As its matted plumage dried it became progressively more active, scampering about the back of the car, teetering for all it was worth, and occasionally voiding. The bird was silent except once when it gave a shrill *weet* and other more obscure notes while I was attempting to catch it. By 4:30 p.m. (3 hours and 45 minutes after capture) it seemed wholly recovered. Placed on the lawn of a residence a few miles removed from the scene of capture, it flew off and was lost to sight. Mr. Foster, the hatchery superintendent, said the bird was not in the pool at 12:15, half an hour before we found it there. How this bird could have gotten into such a predicament is hard to understand. The pool was filled with trout, but these did not seem to be attracted to the bird. The water was clear; perhaps the depth was deceiving. The appearance and behavior of the bird while captive led us to consider it in normal good health.

*Tringa solitaria*. Solitary Sandpiper. Solitary Sandpipers are rare indeed in western Washington, if not in the entire state. On May 2, 1939, a single bird was observed at a distance of only a few yards as it fed and made short flights about a temporary pond at the north end of Snake Lake in Tacoma. Light and other conditions were ideal, binoculars were used, and the identification was made carefully on the basis of appearance, behavior, flight, and notes, all of which were recorded on the spot.

*Totanus flavipes*. Lesser Yellow-legs. Considered rare in western Washington generally. My experience at Tacoma indicates that they are regularly present from July to September, occasionally outnumbering the common Greater Yellow-legs in the latter two months (as on September 11, 1940, and August 11, 1942). Two females in my collection were taken September 11, 1940, and September 7, 1941, the latter being taken away from a Pigeon Hawk (*Falco columbarius*). I have carefully identified this species on the Tacoma flats as early as July 6, 1940.

*Calidris canutus rufus*. Knot. I have seen this species on but two occasions. Two, in the company of other shore birds at the mouth of the Nisqually River, were observed closely and positively identified on August 28, 1940. Opportunities for collection were missed. The birds showed considerable curiosity, flying together out to, and around, our rowboat on two occasions. The note as they flew by or stood on the ground was an occasional rather low and harsh *tchurk*. Again on August 23, 1942, a single bird was identified on the Tacoma flats. Bowles (Auk, 23, 1906:141) records a specimen taken at Tacoma in September, 1897, and Rhoads (Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 1893:36) implies their presence (not collected) at Nisqually in April, 1892.

*Arquatella ptilocnemis couesi*. Aleutian Sandpiper. Two males taken on March 26, 1942, from flocks of Black Turnstones on the shores of Smith Island, San Juan County, by Dr. V. B. Scheffer and the writer are in my collection (nos. 1076 and 1077). Measurements of number 1077 are nearly average for *A. p. ptilocnemis* as given by Ridgway (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 50, Part 8, 1919:245), and this specimen is likewise noticeably lighter colored than the other. Both are *couesi*, however, according to Dr. Herbert Friedmann, who kindly examined the skins. This is an addition to the list of the birds of the San Juans (Miller, *et al.*, *op. cit.*).

*Pisobia acuminata*. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. I have seen this species in the field only once. On August 11, 1940, a single bird was observed on the edge of a salt marsh at Tacoma. Two specimens in the D. E. Brown collection at the Washington State Museum are from Washington and bear the following data: W.S.M. 7800, female, October 29, 1927, Westport, Grays Harbor Co.; W.S.M. 7801, female, November 2, 1927, Nesqually (*sic*), Pierce Co., collected by Stanton Warburton, prepared by D. E. Brown.

*Pisobia melanotos*. Pectoral Sandpiper. In my experience, irregular at Tacoma during September and October. On September 13, 1939, I saw one of this species at Sprague Lake, Lincoln County, in eastern Washington.

*Pisobia bairdii*. Baird Sandpiper. On July 30, 1940, I collected two of three individuals seen on the ocean beach north of Grayland. A group of skins in the D. E. Brown collection at the Washington State Museum are of interest because they come from Neppel, Grant County, in the eastern part of the state, and because two are spring records. Data are: September 14, 1935 (1 male?), September 15, 1935 (female), September 24, 1934 (female), April 8, 1936 (2 males). A specimen in the E. A. Kitchin collection at the College of Puget Sound comes from southern Puget Sound (Tacoma tide-flats, Pierce County, male, August 3, 1918).

*Limnodromus griseus hendersoni*. Interior Dowitcher. Three fall birds in my collection from Nisqually (August 28, 1940, and September 23, 1941) have bills measuring 56 (male), 57 (unsexed), and 62 (female) millimeters, and seem otherwise to agree with Rowan's (Auk, 49, 1932:14-35) and

Conover's (Auk, 58, 1941:376-380) diagnoses of *hendersoni*. Jewett (Condor, 44, 1942:79) has recently recorded this race for the first time in Washington on the basis of a single spring bird collected at Westport, on the coast.

*Tryngites subrufficollis*. Buff-breasted Sandpiper. This rare species was met with on two occasions at Nisqually during late August, 1940. On the 25th a single bird was seen near the mouth of the river, and on the 28th one was collected in the same area (♂, 1080 JWS). There is, moreover, a male in the E. A. Kitchin collection taken on the Tacoma tideflats on September 7, 1919.

*Crocethia alba*. Sanderling. The Sanderling is rare on southern Puget Sound. On September 19, 1940, I collected a solitary female on the beach northeast of Dash Point near Tacoma, and on September 21, 1941, I saw a flock of 7 at the same place. In the San Juans it was "seen in considerable numbers on Smith Island by Rathbun, March 26, 1910" (Miller, *et al.*, *op. cit.*:58). Dr. Scheffer and I found them common at the same place precisely 32 years later (March 25 to 27, 1942; one collected on the 26th).

An albino skin of this species in my collection may be of interest. It is a female, collected on March 5, 1939, on the beach at Ocean City, Grays Harbor County. The soft parts were noted at death as follows: iris and bill dark brown, feet pale grayish brown. A normal specimen collected at the same time had the feet and bill black, iris dark brown. The plumage is generally white except for notable amounts of dull brown on the primary coverts, the pigment continuing proximally in a more dilute tint as far as the wrist and distally for about half the length of the outermost primaries.—JOHN W. SLIPP, *Tacoma, Washington, August 21, 1942.*

**Uncommon Birds at the San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary, California.**—A Harris Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) was seen by many people at various times between March 27 and April 25, 1943, at the San Gabriel River Bird Sanctuary, 12 miles east of Los Angeles, California. It was among a concentration of White-crowned (*Z. leucophrys*) and Golden-crowned (*Z. coronata*) sparrows. Once the writer heard its soft musical notes. It was generally found on or near a local garden adjacent to the sanctuary where birds were fed daily.

A Green-tailed Towhee (*Oberholseria chlorura*) also spent most of the winter around the feeding table of the sanctuary.

A Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) was seen and heard in the sanctuary by the writer on February 12. It showed reddish on the rump and shoulders. Although the spot was visited for several days, the bird was not seen again.

A Western Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*), not uncommon in summer, was seen and heard by the writer and Mrs. Comby on February 12 and 15, and before and after those dates.

A White-throated Sparrow (*Z. albicollis*) was seen and heard both this spring and last spring. Black-and-White Warblers (*Mniotilta varia*) seem to be regular visitors in the fall. They have been observed for the last six years by the writer and others.—J. H. COMBY, *Pico, California, June 19, 1943.*

**Flight-Feeding of the Ring-billed Gull.**—Although no known nesting colony of the Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) is located in the Lahontan Valley, Churchill County, Nevada, the species occurs within this valley at all times of the year. On three occasions, in this area, Ring-billed Gulls have been seen feeding in flight. This behavior, similar on all three occasions, may be described as follows.

Flight was slow and irregular and often birds within a flock were flying in opposite directions. Repeatedly it was noted that an individual would cease flapping its wings and sail upward. Then it appeared to hesitate momentarily, as it probably captured an insect and then dropped downward for a short distance as normal flight was resumed.

A flock of about 50 gulls was seen feeding in this manner 2 miles east of Lahontan Dam on September 12, 1942. They were flying and feeding from 100 to 500 feet from the surface of the ground. The distance between the two outside individuals of the flock did not exceed 600 feet.

Another flock of about 30 gulls was seen feeding in flight  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles west-southwest of Fallon on October 5, 1942. Mr. Vernon L. Mills obtained two of the gulls from this flock. Examination of their stomachs, gullets, and mouths revealed many insects. Those in the mouths were saved and later identified by Herbert T. Dalmat of Cornell University as ants of the species *Lasius* (*Acanthomyops*) *murphyi* and *Lasius* (*A.*) *latipes*, and the host of these two, *Lasius* (*Lasius*) *niger americana*; there also were two stink bugs (Pentatomidae).

The third flock, consisting of about 100 gulls, was seen 4 miles west of Fallon on October 17, 1942. These were feeding about 60 to 300 feet above the ground. Examination of one gull that was