

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

A Deplumed Pileated Woodpecker.—In front of my residence on the shore of Okanagan Lake is a grove of cottonwoods which are infested with the large larvae of the goat moth (*Cossus*). These attract many woodpeckers, occasionally the big Pileated (*Ceophloeus pileatus*).

On February 5, 1944, I heard the extra loud strokes which indicated that one of these was at work. When I saw him, his appearance was astonishing as he had been denuded of feathers on his back and breast; a few tufts of scanty down remained together with one feather of the dorsal tract. The damage had been done some time before, as the scapulars were commencing to grow again and showed as a long line of black points. Although the temperature was down to 20° F. he did not seem to be suffering.

I have no doubt that he had been in the clutches of a hawk, most likely a Goshawk, and had escaped after being partially plucked. Usually these big, tough woodpeckers are not attacked by hawks; the only record I have of one being killed by a hawk was a bird taken by a Red-tail.

It would be hard to believe that a bird could survive such an ordeal for the length of time it would take a hawk to deplume it if I had not once seen a Bald Eagle on the topmost branches of an enormous dead fir completely deplume an adult male Golden-eye; only the feathers of the head and wings were unplucked. The duck was in the clutches of the eagle for at least twenty minutes, yet when I fired at the eagle with a .22 rifle the duck flew off and made for the nearest water, an extraordinary sight. The snow beneath the tree was littered not only with feathers but also with many strips and fragments of bloody skin with the feathers attached.

For the next two weeks I frequently saw the luckless victim sitting beside small fresh-water pools some distance from the seashore, but I do not think it survived.

I could recount many other instances which disprove the general conception that predators always kill their prey as soon as captured.—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, February 11, 1944.*

The Louisiana Heron in Oregon.—In the latter part of October, George M. Benson of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Harney County, Oregon, reported a small heron of a species unknown to him that had been seen several times on the swamp along the Blitzen River near the Witzel Patrol Station. As Mr. Benson has been familiar with the birds of this region for over twenty-five years, he was instructed to collect the bird so that it might be properly identified. This he did on October 31, 1943. It proved to be a male Louisiana Heron (*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*) in first-fall plumage. This species has never before been recorded in Oregon. Its occurrence so far north of the breeding range of the species is just one more example of the wandering habits of herons after the nesting season.—JOHN C. SCHARFF, *Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Burns, Oregon, February 2, 1944.*

Brown Pelicans and Breaking Waves.—On December 12, 1943, at Dillon Beach, Marin County, California, my attention was drawn to four Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) which were moving back and forth along the beach in the usual single file. Several times prior to 10:30 a.m. I had noticed four pelicans soaring along the crest of a wave and about ten feet above it. Finally it occurred to me that the four were always the same birds; the second and third birds in the line were in immature plumage. By watching them make a round trip, which measured about three miles, I found that they were the same individuals. Between 10:30 and 11:02 a.m. they made six round trips, or a distance of approximately 18 miles at an average speed of 35 miles per hour.

The wind was offshore and from the northeast, but was not strong. The pelicans soared just inside the mounting wave no matter whether they were going north or south. On the southward trip the speed was apparently greater, but in the 32 minutes I timed them I did not see any individual flap its wings. The altitude varied little, if at all. No fishing was observed, and the birds never pointed the bill downward as is customary when actively fishing.—HARVEY I. FISHER, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, March 4, 1944.*

Occurrences of the Blue Goose in New Mexico.—Through regional officials of the National Park Service we have learned of a recent occurrence of the Blue Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) in New Mexico. Last autumn, a single bird came into a small pond on the Lucero Ranch near White Sands National Monument, west of Las Cruces. There it remained for a time with some domestic ducks. On November 17, 1943, the bird was studied at close range by Messrs. Arthur F. Halloran

and Harry Reed. Mr. Reed submitted two good photographs and a description as follows: "Head white with dark mark over left eye only. Neck white grading into slate black as it joins the body. (Photographs show the dorsal lower half of neck to be dark, not white.—V.H.C.) Beak greenish yellow heavily blocked with black; legs and feet orange. Body: lower breast whitish buff, major part of body and tail slate; tail dark brown to black; upper and lower tail coverts white. Wing feathers slightly edged with whitish (not pure white). The 'honk' is that of a wild goose."

This description and the photographs lead to the conclusion that the bird was a Blue Goose in rather dark plumage. The species is variable in color. Certain specimens of Blue Goose in the collections of the Chicago Museum of Natural History match closely the principal features of the description of the bird at White Sands. Several of the specimens show various black or dark gray markings on the neck, although none has the heavy black mark noted on the bird in question. The information supplied by Mr. Reed does not suggest any of the Old World geese. The closest approach, the barred-head goose (*Eulabeia indica*) of Asia, is distinctly different.

This observation led to a review of reports rendered by Fish and Wildlife field personnel in New Mexico. Gale W. Monson, biologist formerly assigned to the Bosque National Wildlife Refuge, about 90 miles south of Albuquerque, reported seeing an adult Blue Goose there on December 15, 1940, and four adults on December 16. On both occasions the Blue Geese were with a flock of Canada Geese. The birds were studied at a distance of 200 feet with 6x glasses while they were feeding on a bar in the Rio Grande River, and they were positively identified.

In December, 1941, Monson identified three Blue Geese on the Bosque Refuge. Three adults, presumably the same birds, were again noted by refuge personnel on January 31, 1942. A. E. Borell writes that he also saw several Blue Geese in the same area on January 14, 1942.

Mr. Monson's observations of the bird on the Bosque Refuge appear to constitute the first record for the Blue Goose in New Mexico. He suggests that the species is extending its wintering range westward.—VICTOR H. CAHALANE, *National Park Service*, and RICHARD E. GRIFFITH, *Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago, Illinois*.

The Nesting Season of the Ashy Petrel.—When we consider the relatively large number of Ashy Petrels (*Oceanodroma homochroa*) that nest on the Farallon Islands and the proximity of these islands to the metropolitan area of central California, it seems strange that so little information is available regarding certain phases in the life history of this species. This is especially true with respect to the period of incubation and the time required by the young from hatching until the nest is left. Perhaps even more puzzling is the winter range of the Ashy Petrel. No data are available, as yet, to cast any light upon the latter problem. The writer has, however, attempted in the present paper to reach some conclusions about certain phases of the nesting cycle from facts scattered throughout the literature, from oological data and from museum study skins of downy and juvenal young. From the facts here presented, meager as they are, we may reasonably infer that the incubation and nestling period in *Oceanodroma homochroa* does not differ greatly from that of *Oceanodroma leucorhoa leucorhoa* as determined by Gross (Auk, 52, 1935:382-399).

Dawson (Birds Calif., 4, 1924:2026), in reference to the nesting activities of the Ashy Petrel, states that "the bird is occupied with its [the egg's] care and that of the young for fully two months." This would appear to be a considerable understatement of fact. In *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* the time required from hatching until the nest is left was estimated by Gross (*op. cit.*) to be about seventy days, with the incubation period occupying an additional forty-two to fifty days, making a maximum total of around one hundred and twenty days or roughly four months.

The period of egg laying for the Ashy Petrel would appear to extend over several months. Bent (U. S. Nat. Mus., Bull. 121, 1922:162) lists egg dates for this species on the Farallon Islands as from May 15 to July 13. The dates for thirty-nine sets of eggs in the collection of the California Academy of Sciences and records of fifteen additional sets used for exchange extend from June 19 to July 11. Smith (Condor, 36, 1934:171) records several fresh eggs noted in burrows on the Farallon Islands on August 16 and 17. These latter would seem to be exceptionally late dates. The extreme dates for egg laying therefore extend from the middle of May to the middle of August or over a three month period. It is likely that the period of egg laying normally is no longer than two months or from about the latter part of May to the latter part of July with the peak occurring in the latter part of June. In view of the relatively long incubation and nestling period, young hatched from eggs laid any later in the year would not be ready to leave the nest until midwinter at which time all Ashy Petrels have left the Farallons.

The youngest downy of this species in the Academy collection (C.A.S. no. 22171), recorded on the label as being two days of age, was collected on August 15. On August 16 and 17, Smith (*op. cit.*) observed many downy young varying from newly hatched individuals to those which may be esti-