

mated to be two weeks of age, judging from his description of the budding remiges. Three specimens in the Academy collection, all taken on September 15, 1911, exhibit marked age differences. The youngest of these (C.A.S. no. 18686) is probably about twelve days of age, being densely covered with down and showing no sign of juvenal plumage. The next older one (C.A.S. no. 18685) has progressed to a stage equivalent to slightly less than forty days for *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* (see Gross, *op. cit.*). The remiges are protruding through the down and the rectrices and rump feathers are present but hidden for the most part by the dense covering of down. The most advanced individual (C.A.S. no. 18684) has the juvenal head, neck, back, wing and tail feathers well developed with only a few traces of natal down adhering to the tips of these contour feathers. The breast and abdomen, however, are still covered with dense down which completely obscures the short juvenal feathers which are present on these parts. It is likely that this individual was at least sixty days old at this time. Complete descriptions of these specimens have been given by Loomis (Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., ser. 4, 2, 1918:171-172). If we accept these approximate ages, based on the rate of development of a closely related species, these young Ashy Petrels would have hatched about September 3, August 6, and July 17, respectively. Another downy in the Academy collection (C.A.S. no. 22127), taken on November 6, is estimated to be about fifty-five days old which would place the hatching date around September 12. The juvenal feathers of the wings, tail, rump and head are partly grown, with down adhering only the feathers of the back. The ventral part of the body is heavily covered with down and the short juvenal feathers which are present are completely obscured from view.

It is of interest here to record two immature specimens in the collection of the California Academy of Sciences, both of which were taken in the city of San Francisco. To the best of the writer's knowledge there is to date no published record, based upon an actual specimen, for this species from San Francisco. Although the Ashy Petrel is a common breeding bird on the Farallon Islands it has been noted at but three localities on or along the mainland of central California. These are listed by Grinnell and Wythe (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 18, 1927:46) as follows: Point Reyes, Marin County; near Redwood City, San Mateo County (November 9, 1909, and November 16, 1911); Pigeon Point Light House, San Mateo County (April 26, 1897). One of the two above mentioned specimens from San Francisco, an immature female (C.A.S. no. 33549), was found on the corner of Page and Market streets on October 13, 1930. The other, an immature male (C.A.S. no. 57879), was taken while still alive from the mouth of a house cat near one of the amusement stands just east of the Great Highway bordering the Pacific Ocean, a distance of several city blocks south of the Cliff House, on November 14, 1941. Significant perhaps is the fact that both of these birds were young of the year not long out of the nest. Both have a small amount of natal down still adhering to the tips of some of the feathers. The specimen secured on October 13 shows only a trace of down on several of the lateral abdominal feathers and probably had been out of the nest several weeks. The November-taken individual, however, possesses a considerably more extensive patch of down adhering to the tips of the feathers covering the posterior abdominal regions and is believed not to have been out of the nest more than a few days. From these data we may surmise that the period of hatching extends from about the middle of July to the middle of September with the peak occurring about the middle of August which is roughly about fifty days after the peak in egg laying. This would indicate an average incubation period of fifty days for *Oceanodroma homochroa* or essentially the same as in *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*.

We may conclude, therefore, that the nesting period of the Ashy Petrel is exceedingly long, a character which it shares with other storm petrels of the family Hydrobatidae. Judging from data available it may extend over a period of six months on the Farallon Islands or from about the middle of May to the middle of November in extreme instances. As the period of egg laying for the species extends over several months, we may presume that about four months is required for the development of any one individual from the time of egg deposition until the nest is left. Approximately fifty of these days are involved in incubation.—ROBERT T. ORR, *California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California, March 1, 1944.*

American Golden-eyes Feeding on Salmon Eggs.—Munro (Canadian Field Nat., 37, 1923: 107-116, and Trans. Roy. Canadian Inst., 22, 1939:259-318) has recorded salmon spawn as an item of diet of both American and Barrow golden-eyes. In the first study he found one American Golden-eye which had eaten these eggs, but in the second he reports that twenty individuals had fed extensively on salmon eggs. Most of these birds were taken on Cowichan River in British Columbia. Cottam (U.S.D.A., Tech. Bull., 643, 1939:1-140) studied the food habits of the American Golden-eye from 385 stomachs and he found no salmon eggs. In view of the scarcity of records, it is thought important to record the fact that American Golden-eyes were found to be feeding on the eggs of the sockeye salmon (*Onchorhynchus nerka*) at Flathead Lake, Montana.

Sockeye salmon spawn in considerable numbers along the shores of Flathead Lake during October, November, and December. When I noticed that flocks of golden-eyes were feeding over the spawning beds in the fall of 1941, I took several specimens in order to investigate their food habits. Of six birds taken between December 19 and 21 at Yellow Bay and Boulder Creek on the east shore of the lake, the stomachs of two contained large numbers (78 and 93) of undigested eggs and the other four had eggs which were partly digested and recognizable from the ruptured egg membranes. No other food was found in any of the stomachs. To what extent the golden-eyes are destroying eggs that would hatch if undisturbed is impossible to state. Since the water level in the lake is reduced continuously during the winter months by control of a dam at the foot of the lake, many of the spawning beds are exposed before the eggs hatch in the spring. This manipulation of the water level is undoubtedly much more destructive to the salmon than several hundred golden-eyes which winter on the lake. The sockeye salmon in Flathead Lake is land-locked and reaches a size of about one and one-half pounds before spawning. It is not used commercially but is taken in large numbers by fishermen throughout the year and especially during the spawning season.—PHILIP L. WRIGHT, *Montana State University, Missoula, Montana, January 11, 1944.*

Avocet on Humboldt Bay, California.—What may well be the northernmost coastal record for the Avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) was the sight of a beautiful example of this species standing full leg-depth at the very edge of an almost submerged, pickle weed-covered knoll on Humboldt Bay, California, on January 26, 1944. William Anderson of Samoa, California, and the writer, with binoculars in hand, observed this bird; it was separated by ten feet of glassy water from an immense flock of Marbled Godwits, in which there was a sprinkling of Western Willets.

A Sharp-shinned Hawk approached the long line of Godwits, sailing at a two-foot level, and caused the entire flock to rise. The Avocet took a place in the middle of the flock. The entire line flew ahead of the hawk, gradually rising to a height of sixty feet above the water. At this point the hawk, which had maintained a steady pace, passed in under, seemingly oblivious to the undulating movement of the brown horde above. The godwits circled and returned to the jutting knolls which they formerly occupied. The Avocet, separating from the godwits, alighted in the water at exactly the same spot from which it left when the hawk approached.—C. I. CLAY, *Eureka, California, February 12, 1944.*

Gulls as Vegetarians.—Gulls of most species are well known for their scavenging proclivities, so that it should not be surprising to discover that some of the refuse they consume is of vegetable origin. Birds of this family are commonly seen feeding at garbage dumps or outfall sewers. Organic refuse, small fish, large insects, and other animal life constitute their normal food. This adaptability and omnivorousness may be encountered from the arctic regions to the tropics, apparently occurring in most, if not all, species of gulls.

Obviously, an occasional seed or leaf blade might be accidentally or incidentally consumed in the course of feeding, be it in a marsh or water area, for fish or other animal life, or in the upland for insects. Though such traces of plant items have been taken with regularity, it was somewhat contrary to expectation to find certain individuals (at times many) feeding almost exclusively upon plant foods.

Overcrowding and competition for a limited food supply encourage marked deviation from the typical diet and perhaps cause some individuals to acquire the habit of feeding extensively upon plant foods not present in an orthodox gull diet. Such an example comes from the Sacramento Valley of California, where careful investigation showed that a flock of California Gulls (*Larus californicus*) was causing considerable damage to a patch of sprouting barley late in the winter of 1942 and early in the spring of 1943. Two birds from the flock were collected and found to have gorged themselves with the sprouting kernels. This type of feeding has been observed on a number of occasions; it occurs when sufficient rain has fallen to uncover the newly sown barley kernels, temporary puddles making such fields attractive feeding areas.

Presumably because of overabundance, the California Gull in the Salt Lake Valley of Utah is becoming a problem of some concern to cherry growers, as the bird eats and destroys no insignificant amount of the tempting ripe fruit (see Cottam, Condor, 37, 1935:170).

Franklin Gulls (*Larus pipixcan*) in the Prairie States sometimes feed extensively upon wheat, oats, and other grains.

The Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) of the Maine coast causes appreciable damage each year to the blueberry crop. Though many exaggerated complaints are received, field investigations have disclosed that depredations of this nature are of annual occurrence and at times the damage is severe. A farmer from Millbridge, Maine, writes that these birds destroyed more than 500 bushels of blue-