

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

California Jay Picks Ticks from Mule Deer.—On March 22, 1944, at Potwisha at the junction of the Marble Fork and the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River in Sequoia National Park, California, Dr. C. M. Herman and Donald McLean of the California Division of Fish and Game, Ranger Clarence Fry of the National Park Service and the writer watched a California Jay (*Aphelocoma californica*) alight on the back of a mule deer and hunt for and pick off wood ticks and deer tick flies as the deer fed on green grass under an oak tree. The deer paid not the slightest attention to the bird and seemed to welcome rather than to resent the tick-picking jay, even when it alighted on the deer's neck. A deer is usually quite sensitive about its ears, but not in this instance. According to local people this was a daily occurrence but it was the first time in over 45 years of field experience that I have ever actually seen a California Jay in the act of picking ticks off a deer under natural conditions in the wild. Have other members of the Cooper Club observed this habit in our California Jay? Where? When?—JOSEPH S. DIXON, *United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Berkeley, California, April 25, 1944.*

A New Record of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow in California.—On January 16, 1944, at the Recreation Gun Club near Venice, Los Angeles County, California, my attention was attracted by the bright coloration of a small sparrow which flew from under my feet as I walked along a dike between an old unused duck pond and the salicornia flats. The bird took refuge in an isolated clump of tules (*Scirpus*) at a corner of the dike between the pond, flats, and a weedy field. I "squeaked" and presently the sparrow slid obligingly up a slanting tule stem and remained in my view for some time, while I noted all details of its plumage that I could using 8× binoculars at about 20 feet. Checking in all the books I had available I could make it out to be nothing but a Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammospiza caudocula*).

On January 30, together with Frank G. Watson and Arthur L. Berry, I revisited the locality and found the same or a similar bird near the same spot. Again we noted coloration and markings at close range, including the rich buffy wash over the entire breast, flanks and surrounding the gray cheek, the almost black crown stripes separated by a narrow light gray one, and the short black stripe running horizontally back from above the ear region. On this date also we first obtained a view of the bird's back with its prominent white stripes. We were now quite sure of the bird's identity; but since the only previous records of this species in California, and in fact west of the Rockies, were prior to 1900 (Barlow, Condor, 2, 1900:132), we wanted to check our observation further. Early in February several other amateur ornithologists visited the area and found the bird from our directions; and on February 8, in the same clump of tules as before, Mr. George Willett of the Los Angeles Museum and I found not one, but two birds of this species. Mr. Willett confirmed our identification, saying that the sparrows were one of the prettiest and brightest he had ever seen and that there was no mistaking them.

Both birds were again seen on February 12, 1944, by about ten members of the Los Angeles Audubon Society, who watched them feeding on the salicornia flats at high tide, running mouselike over the tangled stalks and apparently eating the seeds. When the area was revisited on February 24 after several days of rain and wind, the sparrows were not found.—HOWARD L. COGSWELL, *Pasadena, California, May 17, 1944.*

Additional Records of Uncommon Birds in Utah.—Behle's recent "Check-list of the Birds of Utah" (Condor, 46, 1944:67-87) has prompted me to place on record a few instances of occurrence of birds within the state of Utah that have come to my attention in the course of field work in recent years. These are offered by way of supplement to the very useful contribution that Dr. Behle has made to Utah ornithology.

Anser albifrons albifrons. White-fronted Goose. A female was taken by the writer at Lehi, Utah County, April 22, 1933. This individual was alone on a shallow pond with several species of ducks.

Geococcyx californianus. Road-runner. One was shot in the foothills of the Wasatch Mountains east of Provo, Utah County, in July, 1932. It was brought to the Brigham Young University in a bad state of decay but the head was saved as an alcoholic specimen. This is undoubtedly an accidental occurrence since it is the only record known to me from this part of the State.