

County, Nevada. This locality is part of an arid, intermontane valley in the Lower Sonoran Zone. I watched the bird through 8-power binoculars at a range of 20 to 30 feet for nearly half an hour as it fed on insects in a fifteen-foot flowering mesquite. The color of the plumage was that of a female or immature male. This was the only redstart I observed while stationed at the army airfield near Las Vegas in the two-year period from October, 1941, to October, 1943.

To my knowledge there are only two other records of the American Redstart in Nevada: a skin collected May 30, 1928, at Fish Lake, Esmeralda County (Linsdale, Pac. Coast Avif. No. 23, 1936:111), and a sight record of one at Boulder City, Clark County, on August 25 and 29, 1939 (Grater, Prelim. Bird Check-list of the Boulder Dam Recreational Area, U. S. Dept. Interior, Nat. Park Serv., 1939: supplemental list). The species apparently occurs in Nevada only as a migrant. The nearest locality at which it is known to breed and remain as a summer resident (early June to late September) is northern Utah (Ross, Condor, 46, 1944:129).—HAROLD E. BROADBOOKS, *Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, March 21, 1946.*

People in Glass Houses Should Draw Their Shades.—In a recent issue of the Condor (1945:216) there is a posthumous field note by George Willett, wherein he comments on the large number of Russet-backed Thrushes (*Hylocichla ustulata ustulata*) killed by flying against windows. He titles the article with a query—"Does the Russet-backed Thrush Have Defective Eyesight?" The explanation of fatality incidence, it seems to me, lies not in defective eyesight but rather in habits of tunnel flight and inexperience with passages to light that are blocked to flight by window glass.

It is well known that this species migrates in the lowlands, frequenting en route its typical association—the woodlands of moist ground and streamside. Its use of environments of human culture, the heavy verdure of gardens and yards, is less well known and is here indicated by the fatalities. In my twenty-five years of residence in Pasadena, California, the spring influx of Russet-backs has been clearly but briefly noted. The overwintering Hermits leave the dooryards in April; suddenly, of a later morning, thrushes possess the shaded thickets again; the migrating Russet-backs abound for a few days and are gone.

This spring, when the Russet-backs stopped by, well-rotted compost-like wood-soil was being dug from a pit and spread as a dressing beneath shrubbery. Each barrow load dumped was promptly searched over by one or more thrushes that stayed about. The birds alternated between the pit and the dumpings as I drove them from first one and the other. Some of the time they flitted low into the neighbor's yard and back. Never in all this driving about did the migrants go up in the trees as do the wintering Hermits when disturbed, never except when cornered by buildings.

This low flight through the understorey of plantings is characteristic within the native habitat which locally consists of riparian woodland and farther north of other moist sylvan growths. This shadowy humid world of rich soil and rapidly decaying ground litter has climate, flora and fauna unique to itself. The Russet-backed Thrush has here its niche. Even in migration underplanted trees, moist soil, dense humid shade, and compost are irresistible. It is in this gallery habit rather than in defective eyesight that I readily see the cause of the high fatality. Willett recorded during the migrating season. Shooting through the underforest the newly arrived traveler follows an aisleway leading out to light. When too late the aisle is recognized as a *direct view* through a house and not a direct flight path, there remains but a slight clatter and a small limp body to record an error of ecology.

The Chat and the Yellow-billed Cuckoo affect the same natural habitat as the Russet-backed Thrush and fly through the same galleries and tunnelways. All three migrate, yet only the thrush becomes a significant casualty about human dwellings. This seems to be explained by the thrush's acceptance of sylvan bosky haunts besides the riparian. The other two stick to the willows and brambles.—ROLAND CASE ROSS, *Los Angeles City Schools, California, December 17, 1945.*

A Summer Tanager near San Diego, California.—On the morning of April 1, 1943, Dr. James E. Crouch, eight students in his zoology class, and I saw an adult male Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) at Lindo Lake, about 17 miles northeast of San Diego, California. This bird, while under observation for a half-hour period, was foraging in the peripheral foliage of the willows bordering the lake. Frequent single call notes were uttered as it moved about ten to fifteen feet above ground.—HENRY G. WESTON, JR., *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, March 20, 1946.*

The Starling in Idaho.—I believe there is no printed record of the observation of the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) in Idaho. An unpublished master's thesis at the University of Idaho, Moscow, "A Preliminary Check-list of the Birds of Northern Idaho," by Clarence Olsen, Jr., lists a single observation of this species. This individual was seen one mile east of Moscow, Latah County, Idaho, on December 13, 1941.

On January 15, 1946, Leonard Webster, Pocatello, Idaho, reported the observation of a flock of

about fifty Starlings near Aberdeen, Bingham County, Idaho. Later in the month the same number of birds was seen ten miles north of Pocatello, Bannock County.

By the end of February, this flock had increased to several hundred, according to the observation of several individuals. On February 17, 1946, these men (Harold Webster, John R. Nichols, Carl McIntosh, and the writer) collected a female and a male from this flock. These are now a part of the collection at the Southern Branch of the University of Idaho, Pocatello (numbers 543 and 544).—VICTOR E. JONES, *University of Idaho, Pocatello, Idaho, February 27, 1946.*

"Tumbling" of Brant.—From 1892 until about 1900, I was a frequent visitor to the Coronado Strand at San Diego. At that time it was a common sight to see strings of Brant flying north and rising at a very slight angle. Suddenly the leader would tumble vertically about 20 to 30 feet, followed at the same spot individually by each succeeding member of the string which would then again begin the almost imperceptible climb for another tumble. The tumbles were made at intervals of about a mile. In those days there were many strings visible at the same time. There were no V-shaped flock formations. Was this a "game," courting, or a regular migrational phenomenon?—CHAPMAN GRANT, *San Diego, California, March 11, 1946.*

The Starling Taken in the State of Washington.—Several sight records and unconfirmed occurrences of the Starling have been reported in the state of Washington in the past few years. At least one such report was based on misidentification; the alleged Starling when shot proved to be a female red-winged blackbird! However, Joe Drolet, District Game Supervisor of Colfax, Washington, shot two Starlings about three miles northwest of Colton, Whitman County, Washington, on March 3, 1946. These two birds, both males, were examined by me two days after they were shot. There is no question as to their identity, both being adult *Sturnus vulgaris* in full spring plumage. So far as I am aware, this is the first time this species has actually been collected in the state of Washington.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, March 6, 1946.*

Eye-witness Account of Golden Eagle Killing Calf.—Fred Houk is a cattleman of many years experience in the Lompoc area, California. I describe the following experience as he told it to me.

On November 23, 1945, Mr. Houk was riding across some hilly, grassy range land about two miles east of Lompoc, Santa Barbara County, California. He noticed the excitement of some crows whose point of interest was just over a rise. Riding to the crest he expected to see a wildcat or a coyote. Instead a Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) was the focus of attention. It was perched on something in the tall grass about 150 yards from him. He presumed it to have a rabbit or squirrel. Upon approaching the eagle it started to fly, attempting to carry its prey in its talons. Mr. Houk saw that the eagle's prey was a calf and found it to be near death and bleeding considerably about the back and head.

The calf was new-born, probably premature, and was estimated by Mr. Houk to weigh about twenty-five pounds. The parent cow was standing off some distance and appeared to be considerably disturbed; Mr. Houk believed it had been driven from the calf by the attacking eagle. From his observation of the eagle's attempt to carry off the calf he firmly believes that the eagle would have made away with the calf had it weighed five pounds less. This occurred on ground only slightly sloping.

On November 25, an eagle (presumed to be the same bird) was shot by a quail hunter near the same place. It weighed 11½ pounds, and its wing spread was measured as 6½ feet.—DALE T. WOOD, *Lompoc, California, March 12, 1946.*

Black-billed Magpie on Humboldt Coast.—While Warden Walter Gray and I were patrolling the north spit of Humboldt Bay on the morning of December 18, 1945, we noted a bird of peculiar appearance flying toward us. As it flew closer, we both recognized it to be a Black-billed Magpie (*Pica pica*), a bird entirely strange in the vicinity. It soon alighted on a pine snag, and we began a stalk in an endeavor to collect it. For forty-five minutes we trailed it, both on foot and by car, but the bird was quite wary and managed to keep out of range. One time we approached it with the car within twenty-five yards, close enough to note definitely that the bill was black, but it flew before we could stop for a shot. This time it really meant to leave, and the last glimpse we had was over the village of Samoa where it was heading north in a high steady flight.

The weather in the preceding three days had been characterized by steady winds, approaching gale velocity, from the east and southeast. This may have accounted for the magpie's appearance on the coast, 150 miles from its normal range, which lies east of the Cascade-Sierra system.

Both Warden Gray and myself are well acquainted with Black-billed and Yellow-billed magpies, having been stationed in the range of each at some time during our State service.—WILLIAM H. SHOLES, JR., *Arcata, California, January 24, 1946.*