

extreme variability of the purple finches, and recalls specifically a flock of 125 seen in the Medina area last spring, six of which approached the Cassin Finch in coloration (letter of September 17, 1946). Although certain of the above records may be authentic, further evidence is necessary to establish the Cassin Finch in the list of western Washington birds save as a Cascade-Rainier form.—J. W. SLIPP, *Tacoma Regional Museum, Point Defiance Park, Tacoma, Washington, September 30, 1946.*

**Present Status of the Green Heron in Washington.**—In 1940, the writer summarized the status of the Green Heron (*Butorides virescens anthonyi*) in the state of Washington (Larrison, Murrelet, 21:1-3). Since then, a number of additional records of the bird have been obtained which, combined with several recently published notes, afford a more complete picture of the present distribution of the Green Heron in the state.

All records for Green Herons north of the Columbia River since 1940 pertain to the Puget Sound region. Of the eighty such observations and collections in that region, four were listed by Slipp (Condor, 44, 1942:35-36; 46, 1944:35-36) in the Tacoma-Steilacoom-Nisqually area, while the remainder were made in the Seattle district, mostly by H. W. Higman and/or Larrison. Some sixty records were made in the University of Washington marsh at Seattle.

A study of these data reveals several interesting facts. The Green Heron has been observed in western Washington during every month of the year except June. Most individuals were found from early July to late November, with scattered records from March, April, and May, and a small number of occurrences for January and February. Since 1940, Green Herons have been present regularly every year in the University of Washington marsh during the fall and early winter months. Several birds have often been encountered in that place at one time and one observer once reported twelve individuals in different parts of the marsh. A number of those birds seen in the fall were young of the year. Green Herons have also been noted at Green Lake in northern Seattle, at Beaux Arts on the eastern shore of Lake Washington, and on the Snoqualmie River, about twenty-two miles east of Seattle, all these localities being in King County.

An interpretation of the information now available would seem to indicate a northward spring migration through western Washington, a more lingering southward migration in the fall, and a tendency of some individuals to winter wholly or in part in the Puget Sound Basin. This would assume that Green Herons nest to the north of Seattle or, for that matter, some place in the Puget Sound area itself. Considering the large number of suitable nesting areas in western Washington and southwestern British Columbia and the paucity of bird observers, this situation could well exist undetected. Since the species was almost unknown in the state before 1938, it has apparently rapidly penetrated north of the Columbia River in recent years to become fairly well established west of the Cascades as a migrant and winter visitant and possibly as a summer resident.

This sudden northward extension of range becomes all the more remarkable when one recollects that in 1931 it was considered that the Green Heron "breeds or summers from Portland, Oregon, to northern Lower California, southern Arizona, and northern Sonora, Mexico. Winters from southern California to southern Mexico and central Costa Rica" (A. O. U. Check-list, 4th ed., 1931:30).—EARL J. LARRISON, *Laboratory of Vertebrate Biology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, December 18, 1946.*

**Effects of a Hailstorm in the Black Forest, Colorado.**—While conducting field work on breeding-bird populations in the Black Forest, Colorado, in June, 1945, I had an opportunity to make a survey of the effects of a violent hailstorm. The region under study was an open forest of western yellow pine, about fifteen miles northeast of Colorado Springs, with an elevation of between 7200 and 7300 feet. This area included a willow- and aspen-bordered creek.

On the afternoon of June 24, a rain and hailstorm of short duration, with a few stones one-half inch in diameter, occurred at 4:30 p.m. One hour later, a severe wind and electrical storm began and continued for thirty minutes. Hailstones ranging in diameter from one-half inch to one inch were common. The pines swayed violently in the wind, and small branches were broken off by the stones. The creek rose rapidly, and muddy water covered the wide, sandy bed for several hours. The adjacent willow bushes were bent and crushed by the force of the wind and hail.

The bird life on about eighty acres, which had been under regular observation, was surveyed immediately after the storm and on an early morning field trip the following day. A female Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva*) was found dead in her nest among the willows. She had been incubating four eggs. Her mate remained nearby for several days and continued to sing. A Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) nest, built against the trunk of a medium-sized pine, was deserted. The female had been seen incubating the eggs previously, but did not return. A Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*) nest, with one egg, was abandoned after the storm, although the pair remained in the vicinity for about a week. The nest had been constructed at the top of a clump of willows and was still intact. Another Warbling Vireo

nest, in an aspen, was likewise abandoned, but the adult birds were not seen later. A Solitary Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) nest, suspended from a branch of a small pine, was found to be hanging from one side only, and one egg was broken on the ground beneath. Neither male nor female was seen again.—LOUISE HERING, *University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, December 23, 1946.*

**Cause of Death of a Flammulated Owl.**—On September 8, 1946, Walton Brown and I found a dead Flammulated Owl (*Otus flammeolus*) on a slope forested with lodgepole pine (*Pinus murrayana*) at an altitude of 9,500 feet near Jackson Lake in the Sierra Nevada of northeastern Fresno County, California. A bulky lump, which was evident in the throat of the owl, on autopsy proved to be a large long-horned grasshopper (family Tettigoniidae). Apparently the owl had attempted to swallow this insect head first. However, one of the long jumping legs had become twisted in such a manner as to lodge across the thorax of the insect. This increased its bulk to such an extent that it was unable to pass between the two arms of the wish bone. The owl might still have survived by disgorging its recalcitrant meal. However, the grasshopper's other legs with the abdomen formed a tangled mass which prevented this alternative and death resulted. Aside from the complications that arose, it would appear that this insect was rather large for the owl to swallow whole. It measured 3.3 cm. long by 1 cm. in diameter dried and not including the legs. However, it appears that grasshoppers and crickets are routine items in the diet of the Flammulated Owl (Jewett, Condor, 30, 1928:164; Marshall, Condor, 41, 1939:77; 44, 1942:66).

In addition to the long-horned grasshopper the stomach contents, which were saved and later analyzed, consisted of 4 crane flies (Tipulidae), 1 caddis fly (Trichoptera), 7 moths (Lepidoptera), 1 serpent fly (Raphidae), and 11 harvestmen spiders (Phalangida).

The owl was prepared as a study skin. Since it had apparently been dead for several days, minor decomposition prevented the determination of its sex.—KARL W. KENYON, *Mills College, Oakland, California, December 17, 1946.*

**Belted Kingfisher Nesting in Ventura County, California.**—Early in April, 1946, my boys informed me that a pair of Belted Kingfishers (*Megaceryle alcyon*) were digging a hole in a dirt bank along Sespe Creek, Ventura County, California, a short distance from my home. I immediately investigated and found the hole which was in the shade of a large eucalyptus tree; several low hanging branches of the tree were used as perches by the birds. The bank where the hole was found was about two hundred and fifty feet from the stream, and the entrance to the burrow was five feet two inches from the bottom and three feet seven inches from the top and measured four inches across and five inches high. The bottom of the burrow had a decided ridge in the center with a furrow on each side, evidently made by the birds' feet in going into the nest cavity.

On May 3, 1946, we decided that there should be a full set of eggs, so we used a trout rod to determine the depth of the hole, which we found to be about seven feet. The hole curved so that we could not see to the end. Digging to one side of the hole, we broke through to the nest cavity. One of the birds flushed from the entrance and on examining the cavity, which held no nesting material, I found seven fresh eggs lying on the bare ground about eight inches from the rear end of the hole. The eggs are distinctly larger than eggs of eastern Belted Kingfishers and measure in inches,  $1.510 \times 1.135$ ,  $1.545 \times 1.147$ ,  $1.531 \times 1.141$ ,  $1.421 \times 1.132$ ,  $1.460 \times 1.130$ ,  $1.439 \times 1.131$ ,  $1.431 \times 1.149$ . This is, to my knowledge, the first nesting record for the species in Ventura County.—SIDNEY B. PEYTON, *Fillmore, California, December 23, 1946.*

**Orange-crowned Warbler Wintering in Oregon.**—On January 11, 1947, while investigating my bird traps in Eugene, Oregon, I found a dark olive-green warbler in a government sparrow trap. Upon closer examination it proved to be a dark form of the Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata*). It was banded (46-23907), weighed (8.74 gms.), and released.

It is regretted that this bird was not saved as a specimen, since it may have been of the race *V. c. celata*, which is considered a rare bird in Oregon (see Jewett, Condor, 48, 1946:285).—GORDON W. GULLION, *Eugene, Oregon, January 22, 1947.*

**Notes on Mississippi Kites in Hemphill County, Texas.**—Allan and Sime (Condor, 45, 1943:110-112) reported on the distribution of Mississippi Kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) in the Panhandle of Texas. They stated that there might be assumed to be a pair or more of these birds per square mile in optimum habitat. The conservatism of this assumption was shown by a study made August 14-22, 1946. An area of 575 acres of federally-owned land about 14 miles east of Canadian, Hemphill County, Texas, was found to have in residence 34 adult (seemingly 17 pairs) and 15 young kites. The latter were associated with 10 pairs of adults. From a suitable spot on the area late in the afternoon of August 21, 24 of the 49 resident birds were simultaneously in view.