

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

A Winter Wren Roost.—A roost of the Winter Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) was discovered near my home at Carmel Highlands, four miles south of Carmel, California, on December 12, 1946. It was situated on the limb of a Monterey pine over a little-used road in what is known locally as "Fern Canyon." The canyon is a small ravine on the pine-covered coastal slope and is drained by a perennial stream.

The possibility of a roost at this place was brought to my attention by my daughter Alice who pointed out the excreta dropped by the birds on the pavement. That evening three or four birds were noted perched in a posture of sleep, with feathers ruffed out and tails partly spread, on a side branch of the pine limb, 12 feet directly above the center of the road. So closely were they huddled together that their feathers intermingled in the manner of roosting Wren-tits (*Chamaea fasciata*) (see Erickson, Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., 42, 1938:pl. 13). They presented a rather nondescript appearance and certain identification was not possible until they were seen coming and going at the roost on subsequent days.



Fig. 21. Five Winter Wrens on roost near Carmel, California, January 8, 1947.
Bird in center has tail somewhat horizontal and is facing away from camera.

Close above the roosting birds, with scarcely any space between, was a protecting canopy of accumulated dead pine needles. This covering resembled the sort of shelter which I had observed a Bewick Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) utilize for a roost (Condor, 43, 1941:279; roost no. 3x).

Four or five birds were noted on the roost each night it was inspected (except on December 26, 1946, and January 9, 1947, when only one and two were noted) until a county road crew trimmed off the branch with the roost on January 10.

The communal roosting of a bird which is known as a solitary species in winter (at least to western North American observers) might seem noteworthy. However, the "Handbook of British Birds" (vol. 2, 1938:214) states that the English race of *T. troglodytes* "roosts . . . usually singly, but sometimes . . . a number together; as many as ten recorded roosting regularly in coconut shell and thirty or more in one group of Martins' nests. Not otherwise gregarious." Skutch (Auk, 57, 1940:293-312) describes social roosting of wrens of various genera in Central America. Many of these species build special dormitory nests in which one or many may roost at one time. Some species maintain relationship between adults and offspring and may all roost together in the post-breeding period. Skutch goes so far as to say that he is "not certain that any is quite solitary during the season when it does not breed" (p. 294).—LAIDLAW WILLIAMS, *Carmel, California, February 11, 1947.*

Size of Bird Populations at Guam, Mariana Islands.—After the return of American forces to Guam in 1944, military highways were constructed and old roads were improved, making it an easy matter to visit most parts of the island. While engaged in biological survey work for the United States Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2, the writer recorded by kind and number the birds observed during

125 field trips in the period from May 22 to October 5, 1945. The roadway mileage on these trips totaled 1960 miles, an average of 15.7 miles per trip. Guam is approximately 27 miles from north to south and 8 miles from east to west.

Birds were recorded along paved military highways, where heavy traffic often prevailed, and along less used rural roads. All birds that were seen either near or flying across the roads were noted. No attempt was made to diagnose the bird populations according to the type of roadside habitat, but at least 80 per cent of the travel was through jungle and open woodland areas. The forested regions of the island are the preferred habitats of most of the resident land birds. The extent of clearing along the roadways appeared to influence the density and the variety of birdlife more than the type of road or the amount of traffic.

During the 125 trips, 2428 birds of 18 species were counted, an average of 1.25 birds per mile. This number included 11 of the 15 species of land birds known to be resident on Guam and 7 species of fresh-water, sea and shore birds (for a discussion of the birds of Guam, see: Mayr, *Birds of the Southwest Pacific*, 1945:283-302; and Stophlet, *Auk*, 63, 1946:534-540). The table presents a summary of the data and shows that the majority of the birds recorded belong to nine species: seven resident land birds, one fresh-water bird, and one sea bird.

Birds Observed on 125 Counts along 1960 Miles of Roadway on the Island of Guam

Species	Per cent of frequency in counts	Per cent of the total birds seen
Micronesian Starling (<i>Aplonis opacus</i>)	100.0	57.3
Philippine Turtle Dove (<i>Streptopelia bitorquata</i>)	68.0	15.5
Edible Nest Swiftlet (<i>Collocalia inexpectata</i>)	56.0	9.1
Cardinal Honey-eater (<i>Myzomela cardinalis</i>)	37.6	3.9
Chinese Least Bittern (<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>)	36.8	3.0
White-throated Ground Dove (<i>Gallicolumba xanthomura</i>)	31.2	2.5
Guam Crow (<i>Corvus kubaryi</i>)	21.6	2.4
Fairy Tern (<i>Gygis alba</i>)	16.8	1.6
Micronesian Kingfisher (<i>Halcyon cinnamomina</i>)	11.2	1.2
Other species	3.5

The Micronesian Starling and the Philippine Turtle Dove were the birds most often observed; evidently they were well adapted to live in the extensive clearings made by the occupation forces. Of interest, also, was the frequent occurrence of the Micronesian Ground Dove along the roads. About 80 per cent of the birds seen were males; the females were less conspicuous, but neither sex appeared to have the secretive, terrestrial habits of some other members of the genus. Of the species recorded only a few times, perhaps the bird most disturbed by the military operations was the Micronesian Fruit Dove (*Ptilinopus roseicapillus*). According to native reports, this colorful species is decreasing on Guam.

These observations do not show the actual differences among the total populations of all the resident species of Guam. They do, however, indicate, the relative abundance of some of the birds which inhabit edges of the jungle and open woodlands. This environment is preferred by most of the species listed; this is especially true of the Micronesian Starling, the Philippine Turtle Dove and the Fairy Tern. The Chinese Least Bittern and the Edible Nest Swiftlet are less typical of the roadside habitat and therefore relatively (to the total population) fewer were seen.—ROLLIN H. BAKER, *Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, March 17, 1947.*

Least Grebe Breeding in California.—The writers were engaged in making a bird count on a seepage pond of several acres' extent not far southwest of the west end of Imperial Dam, on the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge, Imperial County, California, on the morning of October 18, 1946, when their attention was drawn to a pair of small grebes swimming near the shore. It was at once apparent that these were two adult Least Grebes (*Colymbus dominicus*). McMurry collected two of these grebes at the same locality on October 23, 1946, an adult male and a flightless, still downy young (female?) about three-fourths grown. A second downy young was accompanying the male, but was not collected. On this same date, a rough census of the seepage pond revealed four more adults and two more immature young. The birds were observed in open water or working along the fringes of the cattails and flooded brushland adjacent to the shore. Their characteristic call at once indicated their presence, especially when disturbed. The specimens taken have been identified by Dr. John W. Aldrich as belonging to the race *bangsi*.

Considerable interest attaches to these records, for not only do they form the first occurrence of the species in California, but also the first evidence of the species' breeding in the United States on the Pacific drainage.