

Does the Black Petrel Winter Off the California Coast?—In an effort to find concrete data in support of the current belief that *Loomelania melania*, the Black Petrel, is common at sea off the coast of southern California during the entire year, I have made an extended search for definite winter records. This search has not been successful.

There is the initial observation of Anthony (Auk, 11, 1894:321) over fifty years ago, when he said "I *think* [italics mine] I have seen them occasionally nearly all the year." Grinnell (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 3, 1902:16) seemingly accepted Anthony's remark at face value since there are no published statements of winter occurrence for the intervening period. The next record, that of Linton (Condor, 10, 1908:82), is equally unsatisfactory, that of "a dark Petrel, probably this species," seen near San Clemente on unspecified dates and near Anacapa Island on November 20, 1907. Willett (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 21, 1933:16) states that the Black Petrel "during the winter season feeds commonly on garbage off San Pedro." But I wonder if perhaps the date of September 30 might not have provided the basis for the assumption of winter occurrence, for it was on this date in 1928 that Willett and Loye Miller found the species in abundance off San Pedro and collected a number of specimens.

The latest definite dates for California waters which I can find in collections, literature, notes, or by correspondence, are September 18 for Monterey Bay (Museum of Vertebrate Zoology coll.) and September 30 for southern California (Los Angeles Museum and Loye Miller colls.). Further, Laurence Huey, Loye Miller, and the writer, all of whom are fairly familiar with the ocean off southern California, have never seen the species there at any time in the winter months. The earliest spring records are April 21, on which date in 1896 on Los Coronados Islands, Anthony (Auk, 15, 1898:141) found Black Petrels. Huey collected a specimen on the same islands and date in 1929. Anthony reported incubating birds on Los Coronados as "late as September 8," but there is no certainty that the young of such late nestings are brought to maturity.

Present evidence points to the winter range of this petrel as being in tropical and semitropical seas from the head of the Gulf of California, where its occurrence is possibly sporadic or irregular (van Rossem, Occ. Papers Louisiana State Univ. No. 21, 1945:30), south to about 8° south latitude, with perhaps the most concentrated populations occurring between Panama and Peru (Murphy, Oceanic Birds South Amer., 1936:743). Intermediate stations, dates, and specific comment on the distribution of the Black Petrel in Baja California and the Gulf of California will be offered later. The present note is designed to solicit definite information as to whether the Black Petrel winters anywhere along the Pacific coast of California and Baja California.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Dickey Collections, University of California, Los Angeles, November 9, 1946.*

Emperor Geese Again on Humboldt Bay, California.—Numerous occurrences of the Emperor Goose (*Phalacrocorax californicus*) have been recorded from Humboldt Bay, California. However, little has been mentioned about numbers, condition of the birds, and general activity. The writer, with the cooperation of some local fishermen, has recorded the following data concerning a small flock of these geese that was under observation in February, 1947.

Six individuals were noted on February 1 on the tip of the sandspit that juts out into the southern arm of Humboldt Bay from Buhne's Point. The birds were resting apart from a flock of Black Brant. These birds were tame and allowed the observer to come within ten yards. They were taking sand and small gravel from the spit. Upon closer approach, they walked slowly away, keeping apart from the Brant. At this time the bay was calm and the tide was high.

At low tide on February 12, three of these geese were located on an exposed sand bar in the south arm of the bay. Eel grass was growing in the sand. The birds were feeding on this eel grass and taking small amounts of sand. A short time later a fourth goose was noted on a near-by bar with a large flock of Brant. The three Emperors were rather wild and would take to flight if a person came within about one hundred yards of them. They would circle and alight on the opposite end of the bar, but would remain alert. The single individual would allow a closer approach, moving off with the Brant, when the observer reached a point about thirty yards from the flock. This bird was also noted feeding on the eel grass.

On February 17 four geese were located on the edge of a brackish slough that passed through a diked pasture adjacent to Buhne's Point. At this date the birds were wild and kept at least one hundred yards away from the observer. When a closer approach was attempted, the birds took flight and passed out of sight over the bay. The four were feeding from the water on the edge of the slough. At this time the bay was calm and the tide high.

It was reported to the writer that the Emperors fed in this slough daily, during high tide or when the bay was rough. Black Brant have been noted in this same field several times, and it seems to be a feeding area when the eel grass becomes exhausted.

Three Emperor Geese were reported from the north arm of Humboldt Bay on February 20, where they were observed feeding on the eel grass exposed by low tide. This group was also wild and