

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

The Pied-billed Grebe in Ancient Deposits in Mexico.—The finding of a human skeleton near Tepexpan in the State of Mexico, northeast of the City of Mexico, has attracted much scientific attention as the oldest discovery of the kind yet made in North America. Dr. Helmut de Terra, working with the investigators who made the discovery, took out also bones of other animals, including those of the imperial mammoth. Among the other remains is one specimen of bird which has been placed in my hands for study.

The bone in question is a complete right tarsometatarsus from an individual fully grown but probably only recently so as porosity of the bony structure at the extremities seems to indicate immaturity. It comes from the Pied-billed Grebe, *Podilymbus podiceps* (Linnaeus), known in Mexico as zambullidor pico pinto. The bone has the large size characteristic of the male in this species and resembles modern specimens in detail, the only difference being that the lower support of the hypotarsus is slightly more constricted and somewhat more elevated on the shaft than in part of the comparative material in hand. This, however, is regarded as individual variation.

The Tepexpan man, excavated from beneath a layer of caliche, has been accorded late Pleistocene age with an antiquity of 10,000 to 15,000 years by Dr. de Terra, a belief shared by some of his colleagues among anthropologists. Most geologists, however, attribute the deposit to the early part of the Recent epoch, as in their opinion the Pleistocene terminated at a considerably earlier time.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., January 27, 1949.*

Second Record of Swamp Sparrow for Southern California.—On the morning of November 13, 1948, Bruce E. Cardiff and I observed a Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*) in a marsh along the Santa Ana River, five miles west of Riverside, California. The bird was collected and proved to be an adult female. It is now no. 739 in the Cardiff collection.—EUGENE E. CARDIFF, *Bloomington, California, January 31, 1949.*

Starling in the Sacramento Valley, California.—On January 13, 1949, along the southeast border of Gray Lodge Refuge, Butte County, California, six Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) were observed intermingled with a large flock of Meadowlarks. One of them was collected.—CAROL M. FERREL, *Chico, California, January 14, 1949.*

Virginia Warbler in Idaho.—In the course of field work in Idaho in the months of August and September, 1948, several days were spent in Bannock County along the Portneuf River. This area is reminiscent of parts of the more southern Great Basin. Along the Portneuf River are willow thickets, with permanent sloughs nearby. The country adjacent to the river is rolling, with ravines cutting the hills in which are found willows, sagebrush, and some junipers and piñons. On the slopes, repeated burning has taken place, with consequent erosion, and only sagebrush and rabbitbrush are able to survive. On August 13, 1948, an adult male Virginia Warbler (*Dendroica virginiae*) was taken in a ravine one mile west of Bancroft, Bannock County. This specimen (no. 25083, Univ. Kansas, Mus. Nat. Hist.) is the first of its kind to be taken in Idaho, although, for Utah, immediately to the south, the species is stated by Behle (Condor, 46, 1944:67-87) to be a "common summer resident throughout the State." Probably, the Virginia Warbler will eventually be found to nest in southern Idaho.—M. DALE ARVEY, *Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, January 3, 1949.*

Swimming Pigeons.—On October 28, 1948, a flock of 16 pigeons or Rock Doves (*Columba livia*) was observed bathing and preening in the 12- to 18-inch-deep lily pond or reflecting pool just north of the new Interior Building, Washington, D.C. As the sides of this artificial lily pond have such a steep incline that the birds could not bathe from the shore, they were attempting to alight on and bathe from the large floating leaves of the royal water platter (*Victoria regia*). Singly, or in groups up to six, the birds competed continuously for standing room on the leaves. If three or more birds landed at one time on a lily pad, it sank and the birds could be seen swimming. On a number of occasions during the 15 minutes that I watched the performance, one or more birds alighted on the open

water when there was no room on the lily pads. On the open water, as on the lily pads, the pigeons bathed and preened their feathers with the ease and skill of a water bird. Surprisingly enough, the birds had no difficulty in swimming or in taking off from the water with an upward lunge similar in grace and performance to that of a surface-feeding duck. Twice during this 15-minute period the same bird alighted and flew from the open water. Each bird spent but a few minutes in the water—too short a time to get the feathers unduly wet. The birds obviously needed a bath, for approximately six feet around the pads the water was discolored with dust and grime.—CLARENCE COTTAM, *Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C., December 2, 1948.*

The Blue Grosbeak in Santa Barbara County, California.—On May 30, 1940, I saw a male Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*), nervous and noisy, in the trees and shrubbery of La Purisima Mission State Park, about three miles northeast of Lompoc, Santa Barbara County, California. A few days later the female and three immature birds were seen. In the early part of July, 1944, young Blue Grosbeaks left a nest about 15 miles west of Lompoc. Near the same spot and time three young left their nest in 1945, and about two miles west a nest with three fresh eggs was found on July 2. At various times centering about July 1, males were seen at three other locations north and east of this area, and a pair at one spot several times. In 1946, a male was seen about seven miles southwest of Lompoc late in June. Males were seen in 1947 about mid-May, and in mid-June two were noted five and ten miles, respectively, east of Lompoc. This year a male was seen several times and a pair twice about twelve miles north of Lompoc in the period from early May until early June. On July 16 a nest with three young, with eyes not yet open, was found about fifteen miles east of Lompoc.

Grinnell and Miller (*Pacific Coast Avif. No. 27, 1944:444*) note but one report of Blue Grosbeaks in this area: birds were seen near Los Olivos and were thought to be transients. The above records seem to indicate that this species visits and nests regularly in small numbers in the Santa Rosa section of the Santa Ynez Valley and irregularly in adjacent areas.—DALE T. WOOD, *Lompoc, California, November 4, 1949.*

Birds of Fremont National Forest, South-central Oregon.—In their excellent account of the birds of the Fremont National Forest, in south-central Oregon, McAllister and Marshall (*Auk, 62, 1945:177-189*) reported their observations from the western part of the forest in the summer of 1943. Over a period of 17 years, I have paid eight visits to the Warner Mountains, in the southeastern portion of the Fremont National Forest and in the northwestern portion of the Great Basin. Only from July 2 to 8, 1948, did I study the smaller birds. Then I found several species not recorded by McAllister and Marshall.

Leucophoyx thula. Snowy Egret. One at south end of Hart Lake in Warner Valley on July 5, 1948. I had not found them there in 1931 or 1934.

Anas discors. Blue-winged Teal. Pair at south end of Hart Lake, July 5, 1948. T. R. Conn, of the Oregon Fish and Game Commission, reported them breeding in various places within the boundaries of the forest. This seems to be the only breeding duck not recorded by McAllister and Marshall.

Oreortyx picta. Mountain Quail. Pair in Goose Lake Valley, July 4, 1948.

Myiarchus cinerascens. Ash-throated Flycatcher. Observed in willows at Beaver Dam and also in yellow pines nearby at Camp Creek, July 4, 1948.

Parus atricapillus. Black-capped Chickadee. Adults were seen carrying food into and fecal sacs out of a hole in a three-foot high yellow pine stub on July 6, 1948, east of Goose Lake.

Sialia mexicana. Western Bluebird. One was seen on the Klamath Falls-Lakeview highway near Drews Creek, July 2, 1948. Others were seen in Warner Canyon, July 6.

Spinus tristis. American Goldfinch. Heard and later seen along Camp Creek, July 4, 1948.—FREDERICK V. HEBARD, *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 27, 1948.*