

A Hawk Owl Bathing With Snow.—As the daylight begins to lengthen in late winter and early spring, one or two Hawk Owls (*Surnia ulula*) are occasionally seen, usually for several days at a time, perched about the campus of the University of Alaska on telephone poles and in the tops of the taller spruce trees (*Picea glauca* and *P. mariana*). During one such occurrence, in March of 1950, the following observation was made.

On a clear, relatively warm morning subsequent to a light snow-fall the previous night, one of a pair of Hawk Owls, which had been about the campus for several days, alighted on the flattened top of a pole that it had been seen to frequent a great deal. About two inches of fresh, dry snow capped the top of the pole. The owl perched on the edge of the pole for several seconds, and then very much in the manner of a bird about to incubate eggs, it settled itself down into the snow-covering, with wings partially spread, the tail somewhat elevated, and the body feathers ruffed out, whereupon it commenced a vigorous bathing.

With its face partially buried in the snow, the whole head and body were shaken, thus scattering the snow generally all about, much of it falling into the air. But certain specific movements of the head were directed to throwing bits of the snow over its back and wings. After going through this exercise for several seconds, the owl would stand very erect for a few more moments and then repeat the bathing, which it did several times during the course of two or three minutes. This observation was made from a second-story window, approximately at a level with the owl and about thirty yards distant.—TOM J. CADE, *Alaska Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, College, Alaska, May 15, 1952.*

Black-crowned Night Heron Breeds in Heart of Mexico City.—Herbert Friedmann, Ludlow Griscom and Robert T. Moore (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 29, 1950:32, Distributional Check-list of the Birds of Mexico) have listed the Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax hoactli*) as a breeder and resident of several states in Mexico but no record is given for the Distrito Federal.

At this writing I have a heronry of this species under observation in Chapultepec Park in the very heart of Mexico City. There are approximately 82 herons in the colony. As a whole, the heronry is not very prolific; there are eleven productive pairs, each pair attending one nest, while all the rest of the birds appear to be unmated. The eleven nests of the heronry are all in one ahuehuete tree about fifty feet high. It is an interesting fact that four of the eleven mated females are young birds in their first or second year, which is easily determined by the difference in plumages of the young and the adults, the young bittern-like birds being predominantly brown in sharp contrast with the beautiful coloring of the older birds. This observation indicates that these birds mature sexually prior to the molt which produces a fully adult plumage.

The proportion of young "water dogs," as this heron is called in Mexico, to adults is about one to three; approximately thirty per cent of the colony are immature birds.

The heronry is at a small artificial lake in the park, and the herons are not even slightly disturbed by the multitude of canoes and row boats that are about all during the day, nor are they disturbed by automobile traffic on a street less than 300 feet away.—GUILLERMO JOSÉ TAPIA, *México, D. F., July 21, 1952.*

Winter Status of Swallows in California.—During the past three winters, 1948-49 through 1951-52, notes taken on winter occurrences of several species of swallows in California add to the published knowledge of their winter status.

Tachycineta thalassina. Violet-green Swallow. Grinnell and Miller (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 27, 1944:272) consider it as "Essentially summer resident, March to September . . . and a few, probably not every year, present in mid-winter months, southerly, and coastwise northwest to San Francisco Bay region." (Emphasis supplied.) However, this swallow has been observed during winter months in the Sierra Nevada foothills. At Hogan Reservoir, Calaveras County, several were seen on January 31, 1950. Farther north along the Sierra Nevada foothills, seven were seen at Mormon Island in Eldorado County on February 2, 1950. In the Central Valley, 20 were present at Tulare Lake, Kings County, on January 24, 1949, and several occurred at Lake Washington, Yolo County, to the west of Sacramento on February 11, 1950. To add a modern record to the one cited by Grinnell and Miller for the year 1885 at Sebastopol, Sonoma County, a few of these swallows were seen at Laguna de

Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, on February 13, 1950. Thus, Violet-green Swallows have been recorded each of three recent winters, and in areas not previously considered a part of the winter range of the species.

Stelgidopteryx ruficollis. Rough-winged Swallow. Its status is listed by Grinnell and Miller (*op. cit.*: 276) as a "Summer resident, April to August or September." Records in Audubon Field Notes include Soquel on March 14, 1950, and Los Gatos on March 20, 1949. All of these early dates are for the coastal region. My only winter record is for an inland area. A few were seen along the Colorado River northeast of Earp, San Bernardino County, on February 18, 1951.

Hirundo rustica. Barn Swallow. Grinnell and Miller (*op. cit.*: 277) give this swallow's status as "Summer resident; early April (or March at south) to September or early October." Records in Audubon Field Notes show other occurrences for mid-March as far north along the coast as Los Gatos and Soquel. My notes include observations coastwise as far north as Petaluma Creek, Sonoma County, and Tomales Bay, Marin County, March 19, 1949, and at Vallejo, Sonoma County, March 22, 1952. In the Sacramento Valley they were seen on November 29, 1950, at Wilton, Sacramento County, and at Gray Lodge Refuge, Butte County, January 4, 1950. Also, on March 19, 1951, they were seen at several places in the Sierra Nevada foothills of Calaveras County. In the observations for March just given, the birds occurred singly or in pairs and were occupying a habitat-niche typical of that occupied in summer, that is, wire-lines and fences adjacent to culverts or bridges. Such occurrences would indicate that these birds were not in migration.—FRED G. EVENDEN, JR., *Sacramento, California, April 22, 1952.*

The Incubation Patch of the Clark Nutcracker.—Robert E. Bailey's recent paper on the incubation patch of passerine birds (*Condor*, 54, 1952:121-136) contributes substantially to a heretofore largely neglected phase of avian biology. The author states (p. 127) that an incubation patch was found in all nesting passerine females that he examined, but that he had never found an incubation patch on a male passerine bird. He presents a list of species of passerine birds in which he examined males and females collected during the breeding season. This list includes the Clark Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*).

It is possible that Bailey's failure to find an incubation patch on male Clark Nutcrackers may have been due to a vagary of sampling. Of 39 male Clark Nutcrackers two years old or older collected from central western Montana during March and April (height of the breeding season) of 1947, 1948, and 1949, ten had well developed incubation patches. Another nine showed light patches or remnants of patches. Nineteen of the 20 without incubation patches were collected in 1948 when only a small portion of the local population nested. During the same months of the same years, of 23 adult females collected, seven had well developed incubation patches, nine had light patches or remnants of patches, and seven showed no trace of an incubation patch. Five of the last mentioned seven were collected during the spring of 1948. In addition, I have not found any evidence that first-year Clark Nutcrackers breed. No first-year males or first-year females collected showed any trace of an incubation patch. Collections included 29 first-year males and 27 first-year females taken during March and April of 1947 and 1949 (no first-year nutcrackers were collected during March and April of 1948).

The incubation patches of the male Clark Nutcrackers were as well developed as those of females of the same species. Histological examination reveals, in the well developed incubation patches of both males and females, the extensive edema and vascularity described by Bailey. A more complete account of reproduction in the Clark Nutcracker is in preparation and will appear subsequently. This investigation was made possible in part by funds and facilities provided by the Department of Zoology and Biological Station, Montana State University, and in part by funds provided for biological and medical research by the State of Washington Initiative Measure No. 171.—L. R. MEWALDT, *Laboratory of Zoophysiology, State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington, May 30, 1952.*

Audible Flight of Great Horned Owls.—Loye Miller's intensely interesting article on auditory recognition of predators (*Condor*, 54, 1952:89-92) brings to mind an experience of mine. On August 29, 1936, I heard two Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) hooting in broad daylight at about 6:30 a.m. while I was standing on the east edge of the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena, California. At the spot in question the arroyo was rather broad and supported but low, open vegetation. The high, steep banks, however, were densely vegetated. The two owls were flying close to the shrubbery of the