

Further Notes on Red-throated Loons Nesting on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.
—Earlier (Condor, 48, 1946:262) I recorded the nesting of the Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*) near Courtenay on Vancouver Island, in the years 1942–1944 and its absence there in 1945 and 1946. As the loons have since nested on the same lake, it seems desirable to bring the record up to date.

In 1947 one visit was made to the lake on May 16, and over an hour was spent there, but no loon was seen.

The first visit in 1948, on July 7, showed a bird loafing at the south end of the lake where it stayed, not going near the old nest site. An examination with 7× binoculars of the shore line of the island revealed distinctly a nest which showed up as a brown patch of dead material contrasting with the surrounding vegetation. A loon could be seen moving about on the nest. On July 31, no bird was visible and the nest was now more or less hidden by the vegetation; one arrived from the direction of the sea, some seven miles away, and after some delay, it approached the nest from the land side and settled down. The other member of the pair was also present. Two weeks later, on August 14, there was one bird floating in front of the nest site, and soon a young bird swam out from the nest to join the parent bird, who swam out some yards. The other young bird could be seen resting near the nest. At 11:20 a.m., the male arrived. The male alighted with quite a splash some yards out; the female called a rather modified *garr* and, accompanied by both young, swam to meet him. The male had in his beak a fish resembling a shiner (bright silver and flat). After considerable knocking of the fish about in the water, it looked as though both young took hold of it and it disappeared, the parents watching the proceedings.

After this the female and young returned to cover, the male swimming out into the lake, splashing vigorously and preening, ducking his head and turning on his side exposing the white underneath, just as one sees the Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) so often do. The female also swam out and preened.

The male called and was answered by the female with a note I have never heard before, *oh-eh*, drawn out and suggesting an animal crying out in pain (not unlike one of the calls of the Common Loon but higher pitched and not so loud). The male called again but the female did not answer and swam to the nest from where she soon appeared with the two young, but this time she seemed careful to keep near cover. A vulture (*Cathartes aura*) flew over and the male *mee-owed*. This is apparently a warning note as the female and young disappeared into cover.

Shortly afterwards the whole family was swimming in the middle of the lake, each youngster attaching itself to one parent; in comparison the young looked from one-quarter to one-third the size of the parents. One young was smaller than the other.

At 1 p.m. both adult birds swam out from near the nest, the female leading. After she had indulged in a little preening, there was a form of display, the female swimming with neck fully extended at an angle with beak pointed upwards, the male following close behind, almost touching her, also with his neck extended at an angle but with the beak pointed downwards. These positions were maintained for only a few seconds. This was the only display seen.

After the male left, the female with one young swam out; she called a low *cuck-cuck* note and the other young followed. For the next hour they loafed. Sometimes one young would swim off by itself some yards, the smaller bird seeming to be the more venturesome. Sometimes they would return to the shelter of the overhanging brush. I did not see the parent dive at all; but on this occasion each of the young did, remaining under water quite an appreciable time. This diving did not seem to result in the capture of food. I never saw the female make any attempt to feed the young during the nearly two hours they were under observation after the male had left. Shortly after leaving the lake I heard the *mee-ou* note which may have indicated the male returning with food. A little fish, only 2-3 oz. seemed meagre rations for the young in over two hours and the female, as far as I saw, had nothing.

In 1949 I paid two visits to the lake, on July 6 and September 2, but no loons were seen.

On July 27, 1950, there were two adults and one young about half grown; one parent had a fish, silvery and 4-5 inches long, which it fed to the youngster. This young bird and a parent were seen also on August 16.

In 1951, no loons were seen on June 18, but on July 7, at the nearest point on the sea, I heard the harsh *garr* note of the Red-throat.

In 1952, no loons were seen on May 25 nor later when the lake was visited by a friend.

In 1953, on July 24, two loons were seen on the lake briefly. None was recorded on September 16.

To compare the results of my observations with those set forth by Bent (Life Histories of North

American Diving Birds, 1919:82), he reports eggs from arctic areas from May 10 to July 25. The nesting period at the much lower latitude of Vancouver Island would appear to be similar, as indicated by the extreme dates May 8–July 31 when loons were observed on nests.—THEED PEARSE, *Comox, British Columbia, February 2, 1954.*

Multiple Use of Cliff Swallows' Nests by Bird Species.—While studying the relationships of birds to equine encephalitis, the senior writer on a number of occasions has found English Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) making use of Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon albifrons*) nests, as recorded by Bent (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 179, 1942:478-479). Occasionally Cliff Swallows and English Sparrows have been noted nesting as close as in adjacent nests. On a few occasions Cliff Swallows, Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*), and English Sparrows have been found nesting fairly close together under the same bridge and with Barn Swallow nests at times attached to points where old Cliff Swallow nests had been in previous years. English Sparrows have been commonly found making use of Cliff Swallow nests in winter in Weld County, Colorado. When one considers the shelter that can be afforded to other small birds in winter by the Cliff Swallow nest structures, it is not surprising that the writers have found three other species using these for night roosting places in the northern part of Larimer County, Colorado. While collecting specimens from Cliff Swallow nests and birds inhabiting these nests, the writers recorded the Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis littoralis* and *L. t. tephrocotis*), the Black Rosy Finch (*L. atrata*), and the Canyon Wren (*Catherpes mexicanus conspersus*) using these nests located on cliffs in canyons about 25 miles north of Fort Collins. Daniels has noted finches on many occasions using Cliff Swallow nests in the mentioned areas over a period of 10 years during the winter months. This interesting use of swallow nests by several species is felt worthy of note also in considering the parasites infesting these structures. The writers have found Cliff Swallow bed bugs, ticks, blood-sucking diptera, and fleas to be very common in these nests. One wonders how much exchange of parasites among the different birds occurs under these conditions.

While this note was in press, an additional record of interest was obtained. On May 25, 1954, Bennington found a Say Phoebe nesting in an old Cliff Swallow nest at the same locality, where in the winter months, Canyon Wrens and Rosy Finches made use of them.—CLARENCE A. SOOTER, E. E. BENNINGTON, and LESLIE B. DANIELS, *Public Health Service, Greeley, Colorado, and Colorado A. and M. College, Fort Collins, Colorado, April 28, 1954.*

Status of the Wood Ibis in San Diego County, California.—During the summer months in 1948, and from 1950 to 1953 (no observations were made in 1949), the Wood Ibis (*Mycteria americana*) was noted in some coastal sloughs and estuaries of San Diego County. The number of individuals frequenting the area in 1953 showed a marked increase over those seen in the previous years listed or indicated by published records. In the San Dieguito River mouth eight were seen on several occasions in July, 1948; a few were present in 1950 and 1951; sixteen occupied the area during the summer of 1952; on July 24, 1953, in contrast, seventy-eight were observed at dusk in flight from San Elijo Lagoon, at Cardiff-by-the-Sea, to an area about two miles east of Del Mar, in the San Dieguito River drainage. What appeared to be the same birds were repeatedly observed during July, August and September feeding by day on the flats and in the shallow waters of San Elijo Lagoon and retiring at night to the San Dieguito River area. While feeding they frequently churned the mud by vigorous stomping. Flights of the Wood Ibis over Solano Beach were seen daily at sundown and were also heard during the early hours of darkness as the birds continued to move to the resting area. Communication between the birds during night flight was often maintained by a continued chorus of hoarse croaks each answered by a high-pitched peep. The progression of flight during darkness was accomplished by circular soaring with gradual movement in the desired direction. Daylight flights were ordinarily more direct, although the soaring was observed on one occasion. In the absence of moonlight, observations of night flights were often possible by city light reflected from low overcast.

A flock of approximately 300 Wood Ibises was noted during July and August, 1953, just south of Oceanside in the Buena Vista Lagoon, which is being vigorously supported as a bird sanctuary. Local observers stated that this was the first occurrence of Wood Ibis on this lagoon since 1948. A few stragglers were also noted in Sorrento Slough and in Mission Bay. Over the Sorrento Slough six birds were observed soaring to a height of approximately 2000 feet only to climax the affair by plummeting to about 200 feet from the ground. The birds did not repeat this but settled down in shallow water.