

water with a mouse (probably *Reithrodontomys*) in its bill. A California Gull (*Larus californicus*) dropped down and struck the rail, which released the mouse, whereupon the gull picked it up and flew off.

In one clump of *Spartina* three Virginia Rails were found huddled in contact with one another. A fourth was six feet away on some *Salicornia*. In another clump of *Spartina* we found one Clapper Rail, three Soras, and two Norway rats (*Rattus norvegicus*). Many other Norway rats were seen and several meadow mice (*Microtus californicus*) and harvest mice (*Reithrodontomys megalotis*) were observed. All these mammals swam readily. One Norway rat was picked up as it swam feebly, in obvious distress. When placed in the boat, it lay gasping and died within an hour, apparently from drowning.

The tide on December 8, 1950, reached +7.0 feet at the Golden Gate and +10.3 feet at Alviso. This tide flooded the town of Alviso, causing considerable damage. With David Nelson a rowboat was again used to observe in the marsh. In a period of two hours we saw five Clapper Rails, four Virginia Rails, and four Soras. A Virginia and a Sora were collected.

On December 9 the tide attained the same maximum as on December 8. By walking and wading out the roadway paralleling the sewer outfall the Southern Pacific tracks were reached. The water was over the tracks in some places and over the ties in most portions of the marsh crossing. Many Norway rats taking refuge on the railroad levee had been killed by trains. At least 50 dead rats were noted in a one-half mile section and 30 to 40 living ones were seen in the same distance. More than 30 *Microtus* were seen and 20 shrews (*Sorex vagrans*) were captured alive when found hiding under loose boards and rubble on a small island.

Many gulls, probably mostly California Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*), were seen to drop down into the marsh. One gull was observed with a mouse in its bill. A Marsh Hawk (*Circus cyaneus*) was watched as it made a strike at an area of emergent vegetation, presumably in an attempt to capture a small mammal.

It is decidedly unusual to see either Virginia Rails or Soras in the San Francisco Bay salt marshes during periods of low or average tides when the vegetation is not submerged. From the evidence of these several days of observation during unusually high tides these species seem to be fairly common during the winter.—CHARLES G. SIBLEY, *Department of Conservation, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, March 6, 1955.*

Early Nesting of Golden-crowned Kinglet.—Saunders (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 14, 1921:163) states that the Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*) undoubtedly breeds in Montana, as it is common all summer in the mountains, but that the nest appears not to have been found and recorded. He adds that young were seen out of the nest at Flathead Lake on July 23, 1914. On March 19, 1941, among evergreens two miles north of Libby, Montana, I heard kinglets calling from a Douglas fir, and in the same tree discovered a nest that was new, green, covered with moss, and practically complete. A male Golden-crowned Kinglet flew down from it to a branch. A moment later, a female with material in her bill flew into the semi-pendant nest. This event followed an abnormally warm winter and early spring. For some time Golden-crowns, wintering in these woods, had been trooping by themselves rather than with the chickadees and nuthatches.

On March 20 both kinglets carried material to the nest, and I noted: "It is 7 feet out on a down-sweeping branch near its tip, 25 feet up. Saw Golden-crown enter, test and turn about in it and shape interior for more than a minute, then fly down and gather moss from upper side of Douglas fir limbs. Nest tree stands in Douglas fir border grove of conifer and broadleaf woods. Just to the south are arid yellow pine flats."

On March 21 the pair of kinglets was observed at the nest. After April 8 the spot was visited infrequently. On May 2 the nest was found to have been recently destroyed.

Dawson and Bowles (Birds Wash., 1909:267) mention a nest with half-grown young on April 9 in western Washington. Bent (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 196, 1949:397) quotes Rathbun in regard to the Golden-crowned Kinglet, referring to the vicinity of Seattle, Washington: "We have seen it carrying material for its nest as early as April 4; . . . the bird was gathering bits of green moss from a decayed log, which would indicate the earlier stage of construction; and we have a record of unfledged young in the nest on May 17."

The fact that the nest discovered at Libby, Montana, on March 19 was nearly complete, together with the fact that family bands containing fledglings are seen here in August, further supports the belief of Rathbun (Bent, *op. cit.*, 1949:398), and Jewett, Taylor, Shaw, and Aldrich (Birds Wash. State, 1953:530) that two broods may be raised in our northern states by this species in one season.—JOHN L. BLACKFORD, *Libby, Montana, February 23, 1955.*

Whistling Swan and Snowy Owl in Texas.—The Whistling Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) was a common winter visitant in Texas in the past century but we have found no records of its occurrence in the state in the past fifty years. Some recent events suggest that it may be reclaiming its old winter range. In late November, 1954, three Whistling Swans were shot by hunters near Lubbock, Texas. We are indebted to game warden Morris Stallcup, of Wichita Falls, for this information. On January 3, 1955, two hunters shot a Whistling Swan on a stock tank of the Taylor Ranch in Archer County, Texas, a few miles south of Wichita Falls. The confiscated bird was deposited in the collection of the Biology Department of Midwestern University, at Wichita Falls. Two weeks later, on January 12, one of us (Lewis) saw a swan in the shallows of the Canadian River north of Amarillo, Texas.

Although four of the five Whistling Swans known to have visited Texas in the past two years were killed, it is hoped that future migrants will be treated more kindly. All individuals killing swans have been arrested and newspapers in Lubbock, Amarillo and Wichita Falls have published the occurrences of the birds and emphasized the fact that they are protected by law.

The occurrence of the Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*) as far south as Texas is most unusual. Bent (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 170, 1938:374) mentions only two: one in 1850 and the other in 1876. A recent record may therefore be worthy of note. On February 16, 1955, a biology student at Midwestern University informed us that a large, white owl had been seen that day on the shores of Lake Wichita, three miles south of Wichita Falls. The next day one of us (Dalquest) accompanied the student to the lake. The owl was found on a rocky, wave-swept beach, barren except for a few scrubby mesquite trees. It was observed at a distance of 50 feet and identified as a Snowy Owl. The following day the owl was found on a nearby point. Again it had picked a retreat of barren, wave-swept, rocky beach, which must have most closely resembled its arctic home. It proved to be a male with small testes. Its plumage was in good condition except that the feathers of the tail, save for the outermost, were eroded away until little was left but the midribs. A heavy infestation of birdlice was noted. There was a small, scabby wound on the fleshy part of one wing and another, larger, infected sore on one flank. The wounds did not seem to affect the bird's health; it was moderately fat.

The stomach of the owl was filled with the remains of a female Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). Three regurgitated pellets, which were picked up earlier, contained bird remains only: one a meadowlark (*Sturnella*), one a large finch and a small finch; and the other a Robin (*Turdus migratorius*).—WALTER W. DALQUEST and LEO D. LEWIS, *Texas Game and Fish Commission, Wichita Falls, Texas, March 15, 1955.*

A Recent Record of the Sharp-tailed Grouse in Nevada.—On September 14, 1952, Grover Freeman and I, while in the field as members of the Nevada Fish and Game Commission, observed a flock of twelve Sharp-tailed Grouse (*Pedioecetes phasianellus*). These grouse were found on a spur of the Capitol range in Humboldt County, Nevada, near the Humboldt-Elko County line, approximately 26 miles northeast of Golconda. Upon seeing the flock in the distance, we took them to be Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). By stalking, however, we were able to come within thirty-five yards of the birds and make a certain identification. Linsdale (Condor, 53, 1951:232) quotes a letter from Ira La Rivers who reported seeing a flock of six Sharp-tailed Grouse on July 9, 1939, in north-central Elko County.—WILLIAM Q. WICK, *Washington Department of Game, Mount Vernon, Washington, April 23, 1955.*

Killdeer Decoys Duck Hawk from Young.—On May 7, 1953, a pair of Killdeers (*Charadrius vociferus*), with four young just out of the nest was observed on Eliza Island, Washington. A duck hawk (*Falco peregrinus*) flying toward nearby Lummi Island passed one of the adult Killdeers offshore approximately 300 yards in the air. The falcons returned shortly, leisurely maneuvered until directly above the Killdeer, then broke into a dive. Almost at the same instant the Killdeer went