

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

into a dive, then veered off just as the falcon would have sped into its intended prey. The Killdeer had ample time to dive toward the island for cover but it remained flying about in the same small area.

The falcon continued to climb and dive on the Killdeer, but after eight thrusts the Killdeer hugged the water and shore so closely that it eluded the falcon, which soon left the area. This event was the first witnessed by the observer in which a prey species appeared to decoy from its young an avian predator of such superior flying power.—WAYNE H. BOHL, *Tucumcari, New Mexico, April 11, 1955.*

Gambel Quail and Water Supply on Tiburón Island, Sonora, México.—As there remains a question in the minds of some as to the water requirements of the Desert or Gambel Quail (*Lophortyx gambelii*), notwithstanding the work of Vorhies (Am. Nat., 62, 1928:446-452) and of Gorsuch (Univ. Ariz. Biol. Sci. Bull., 2, 1934:41-42), the following field observations are presented as further evidence that populations of this species do not require the proximity of free surface water.

From April 22 to 24, 1954, large numbers of quail were observed by E. Tad Nichols of Tucson and myself in the desert brush along and near the beaches on the east side of Tiburón Island, Sonora, México, and several males were heard calling. Fresh spring water is scarce on the island; very small amounts can be obtained only at a few well-known points, and the Seri Indians carry it from inland to their occasional beach camps. Our field headquarters was at such a Seri camp. The nearest fresh water to the position where the quail were observed was approximately 8 miles inland by trail, or a distance of approximately 6 miles airline.

This distance is at least 10 to 11 times greater than the daily cruising range (= home range) of species of quail for which data are available (Gorsuch, *op. cit.*: 48-49). For example, the daily cruising range of the Bob-white (*Colinus virginianus*) is known to be approximately one-fourth of a mile. Even if the daily cruising range of the Gambel Quail is as much as 2 miles, which is probably as much as 3 to 4 times the actual magnitude, the distance to fresh water was still 3 times as great.

The observations were made in April during the particularly dry period which precedes the summer rainfall season. (On Tiburón Island and the adjacent mainland of Sonora, the precipitation pattern is reversed from that in California and Nevada; the wet season is the period from June to September.) There can be little question but that the Gambel Quail on Tiburón Island obtain water required for metabolic processes from the abundant succulent vegetation on the island, as this species does, for example, in southern Arizona, where and when free surface water is not available during the drier periods of the year. If the Gambel Quail on the east coast of this arid island drink water other than that which occasionally falls during the summer rainfall season, it must be sea water. It is beyond reasonable doubt that the Gambel Quail occurring on Tiburón Island do not require free surface water of any kind for their successful maintenance during the dry periods of the year.—CHARLES H. LOWE, JR., *Department of Zoology, University of Arizona, Tucson, November 29, 1954.*

Taxonomic Comments on the Western Wood Pewee.—In volume 9 of the "Reports of Explorations and Surveys . . . for a Railroad . . . to the Pacific Ocean . . .," (1858:189-190) Baird hes'tantly applied the name *Tyrannula richardsonii* Swainson (Fauna Bor.-Am., 1831:146) to a series of wood pewees from the western United States and México. But he noted that Swainson's type, from Cumberland House, Saskatchewan, "differs in the proportions of the wings, etc., . . . in some other points appearing more nearly allied to *S. fuscus* [= *Sayornis phoebe*]." Baird thought, however, that "The discrepancies in the proportions of the quills [= primaries] may have been caused by their incomplete growth during the moulting season."

The matter was again discussed by Coues (Birds Northwest, 1874:247), who first noted that Swainson's plate of *Tyrannula richardsonii* is "very wrongly colored" for a wood pewee; but he then followed Baird, stating that "the different wing formula may be reconciled upon the supposition that the type of Swainson's species was a young bird . . ." He also noted that "The plate . . . [is] not so far out of the way for the very young bird, which is rusty-tinged . . ." His conclusion was that "In view of the facts that Swainson's bird was a *Contopus*, and that the present [Western Wood Pewee] is the only one ever known to inhabit the ascribed locality, the identification may be safely made."

No one since Baird and Coues seems to have questioned the matter. Phillips, however, became