

fish per fifty seconds of skimming time per bird. Most of the fish caught were about three to four inches in length, and the glint of the fish flopping in a skimmer's bill was undoubtedly visible to the gulls on the mud bank from a considerable distance. The skimmers were not able to swallow fish of this size immediately and one or more gulls usually flew up and pursued the skimmer upon observing a catch. On a number of occasions the gulls did not wait on the mud bank, but one or two of them flew a short distance behind a skimming bird, about twelve feet above the water, carefully following each change in direction of the skimmer. A gull sometimes followed a skimming bird for several minutes, losing interest only when the skimmer ceased fishing. However, when the latter made a catch, the gull flew rapidly toward the skimmer, and other gulls joined the chase. Although the skimmers could easily have out-distanced the gulls by flying straight downwind, they were reluctant to leave the feeding area, and they usually gained altitude and flew in ever tightening circles, trying at the same time to swallow the fish. The pursuit sometimes lasted several minutes, but it ended the moment the skimmer swallowed or dropped the fish. The gull which retrieved the falling fish in midair was set upon by its fellows, and, after several exchanges, the fish sometimes fell into the murky water and was lost. The thwarted skimmer ordinarily resumed skimming, usually followed by a gull. Because of this parasitism, the skimmers lost about twenty per cent of the fish they caught.

I have not observed this phenomenon elsewhere, and it was probably the following combination of circumstances which brought it about in this instance: first, the skimmers and gulls were loafing on the same mud bank, and the feeding sorties of the skimmers were thus in plain sight of the nearby gulls; second, most of the fish were large enough to be conspicuous when carried and too large to be swallowed immediately by the skimmer; third, because of the muddiness of the water, the gulls were unable to catch fish by their usual methods.

It is interesting that the Laughing Gulls, given the foregoing circumstances, quickly recognized the connection between skimming and fish-catching in the Black Skimmer.—RICHARD L. ZUST, *University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 9, 1957.*

Sharp-tailed Sparrow and Grasshopper Sparrow in Gunnison County, Colorado.—In 1953 I listed (Condor, 55, 1953:216) a specimen of the Leconte Sparrow (*Passerherbulus caudacutus*) taken near Gunnison, Colorado, on October 24, 1952. Further study of the skins in the college collection has made it evident that this bird is a Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudacuta nelsoni*) in rich fall plumage. To the best of my knowledge this is the first record for Colorado. The other specimen of the Leconte Sparrow, mentioned in the same article, taken in May, 1952, is indeed a Leconte Sparrow.

I wish to record also a specimen of an immature male Grasshopper Sparrow taken about one mile south of Gunnison on October 15, 1953. Presumably it is *Ammodramus savannarum bimaculatus*. So far as I know this is the first record of this sparrow for western Colorado.—A. SIDNEY HYDE, *Western State College, Gunnison, Colorado, June 1, 1957.*

Some Recent Bird Records from the Salt River Valley, Central Arizona.—Since the early part of 1953, rather extensive field work has been in progress in the Salt River Valley and adjacent areas about Phoenix, Maricopa County, Arizona. This has resulted in a number of records which we feel should be reported. The field work, for the most part, has been conducted by the writers with a great deal of aid from Dr. A. S. Margolin of the Phoenix College Biology Department, Phoenix, Arizona, R. Roy Johnson, Peoria, Arizona, and James T. Bialac, Phoenix, Arizona. Collecting was made possible through the cooperation of Dr. Margolin. Several records of other observers are included with citation of their names. The following records unless otherwise noted comprise the first recorded occurrence of the species, or race, for the Salt River Valley. The specimens mentioned are now in the Phoenix College collection unless otherwise indicated.

We wish to express our appreciation to Dr. Allan R. Phillips for racial identifications and suggestions on the preparation of these notes and to the observers acknowledged in the text.

Aechmophorus occidentalis. Western Grebe. A single bird was taken at a pond one mile south and two and one-half miles west of Peoria on December 10, 1956.

Ixobrychus exilis. Least Bittern. On June 25, 1955, a grown juvenile, with both the wings and tail still pinfeathers and with down adhering to the nape and posterior parts, was taken at a cattail

marsh on the Salt River one mile east of its confluence with the Gila. To date this constitutes the only breeding record for Arizona according to Phillips.

Dendrocygna autumnalis. Black-bellied Tree Duck. A female was taken on June 3, 1956, at a pond four miles southwest of Phoenix, and a second bird was seen there two days later. It should be noted that Bernard Roer, who operates an aviary in northwest Phoenix, reports that a pair of this species escaped from him in 1952. However, the specimen showed no indications of having been a captive, and the length of time between the two occasions is considerable. Then, on June 17 and 18, 1957, four Black-bellied Tree Ducks were seen at a marsh one and one-half miles south and six miles west of Peoria by Bialac and the writers. The birds whistled frequently, and the white patch on the upper surface of the wing and the reddish bill were observed at close range. To date these are the northernmost records of this species in the United States.

Dendrocygna bicolor. Fulvous Tree Duck. On April 28, 1956, a male was taken from an extremely wary flock of six at a pond one mile south and two and one-half miles west of Peoria.

Pluvialis dominica dominica. Golden Plover. On May 15, 1953, a single male was taken at a pond one mile south and two and one-half miles west of Peoria. This is the first record of the Golden Plover in Arizona.

Micropalama himantopus. Stilt Sandpiper. A lone female was taken at a marsh one mile south of Palo Verde on June 12, 1955. This is the fifth specimen from Arizona (all from this region), and the first occurrence this late in spring.

Sterna hirundo. Common Tern. A female was taken at a pond one mile south and two and one-half miles west of Peoria on October 5, 1956. This is the first record for central Arizona.

Columba fasciata. Band-tailed Pigeon. On November 8, 1953, one was taken on the Johnson farm two miles north of Peoria (Phillips collection). To date this is the only record of occurrence of this species in the desert lowlands of central Arizona.

Otus flammeolus. Flammulated Owl. A Flammulated Owl was found dead in northeast Phoenix on February 16, 1949, by Carlos Stannard, who gave the bird to Dr. Margolin. It was, in turn, given to Phillips, who retained the specimen. To date this is the only winter record of this species for Arizona, and it is the second such record for the United States.

Tyrannus melancholicus occidentalis. Tropical Kingbird. On May 19, 1956, a female was taken from a pair at a cottonwood grove on the Salt River two miles east of its confluence with the Verde. This is the first evidence of possible breeding of this species north of Tucson.

Riparia riparia. Bank Swallow. A single Bank Swallow was taken from a large flock of Tree Swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) and Rough-winged Swallows (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) one mile south and two and one-half miles west of Peoria on April 20, 1957. The specimen is in the Bialac collection.

Telmatodytes palustris aestuarinus. Long-billed Marsh Wren. On June 9, 1954, several nests containing young were found at a marsh grown to *Scirpus olneyi* one mile south of Palo Verde, and on April 28, 1956, a set of three well-incubated eggs was collected. To date this is the only known breeding locality in Arizona away from the lower Colorado River. Specimens were secured (Phillips collection).

Regulus satrapa satrapa. Golden-crowned Kinglet. A single female was taken in a willow-cottonwood stand just above Granite Reef Dam on the Salt River on December 30, 1954.

Sturnus vulgaris. Starling. On January 9, 1953, a male was taken near Peoria, the first specimen from the Salt River Valley, and a second male was collected on September 24, 1953, at Tempe. In the summer of 1953, Roer recorded the first nest found in the area in a chinaberry tree at his home in northwest Phoenix, but he believes that this nesting attempt was unsuccessful. By the spring of 1955, at least, a breeding population had become established, and Johnson recorded a nest found in a cottonwood on his farm two miles north of Peoria on April 1, and another there on May 3, 1955. Since that time Starlings have been recorded nesting in suitable areas throughout the valley. Apparently nesting sites are restricted to woodpecker holes, and almost invariably the trees chosen are cottonwoods. To show the unbelievable increase in the three to four years of recorded breeding in the Salt River Valley, we cite the following record: On the evening of June 5, 1956, at a cattail marsh one and one-half miles south and six miles west of Peoria, a single bird was taken from a flock estimated to contain 1000 birds, most of which were in juvenal plumage (specimen in Phillips collection).

Starlings are now seen throughout the urban areas of the valley, and they commonly associate with Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) over irrigated lawns and fields. It will be interesting to see if they extend their nesting sites to locations other than cottonwoods, as they have in the eastern cities, and to determine what effect, if any, their nesting habits will have on the breeding population of the Gila Woodpecker (*Centurus uropygialis*).

Sturnella magna liliana. Eastern Meadowlark. This bird was first recorded in the Salt River Valley on December 26, 1955. At this time Phillips saw a flock of approximately 15 with about five Western Meadowlarks (*Sturnella neglecta*) at a marsh one and one-half miles south and six miles west of Peoria. On December 29 one was taken here along with one *neglecta*. Efforts were then made to determine the western extension of this bird and on February 4, 1956, one was taken from a flock of seven in a field near Arlington. Repeated visits to suitable areas farther west gave no indication of the bird's presence, and it was not again recorded in the area after February 4. Additional specimens were secured at Palo Verde. In the following winter (1956-57), no Eastern Meadowlarks were found in the valley.

Cassidix mexicanus nelsoni. Boat-tailed Grackle. On June 15, 1955, a first-year male was taken from a eucalyptus tree at a pond one mile south and two and one-half miles west of Peoria. Then on June 3, 1956, a female was taken from a group of five males and five females at a willow-cottonwood stand on a ranch four miles southwest of Phoenix. The latter specimen is in the Phillips collection. This group was watched and by June 17 was seen at nests in a single pecan tree where it fledged at least 15 juveniles which were seen on July 30. The following year the birds were back in the same area by April 14, where they again nested in the same tree. On May 19, 1957, a set of two fresh eggs was collected and four other occupied nests were examined. The closest previous occurrence of this species is of a straggling male of the race *C. m. monsoni* taken at Apache Lake (Dickerman, Condor, 57, 1955:120-121).

Hesperiphona vespertina. Evening Grosbeak. A male was taken from a flock of 17 on December 26, 1955, four and one-half miles north of Litchfield Park by Phillips. The following day two females were taken at the same location. These three birds represent the Rocky Mountain race, currently listed as *H. v. brooksi* by the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list. The specimens are in the Phillips collection.

Carpodacus purpureus. Purple Finch. A female was taken by Phillips four and one-half miles north of Litchfield Park on December 26, 1955, and is in his collection. At least one other was heard.—JAMES M. SIMPSON, *Phoenix, Arizona*, and JAMES R. WERNER, *Goodyear, Arizona, June 17, 1957*.

A New Bird Record for Arizona.—On April 23, 1957, my brother Jim and I located a flock of about twenty-five Western Sandpipers (*Ereunetes mauri*) and six Least Sandpipers (*Erolia minutilla*) at Mormon Lake, Pima County, Arizona. Among this flock were two "peeps" with heavier, shorter and darker bills and dark legs. We were fortunate in getting a shot at one of them. As we had already guessed, it was a Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Ereunetes pusillus*).

Mormon Lake is located about three miles north of Sasabe, Arizona, near the Sonoran border. As far as I can determine no specimen or sight identification of this species has ever been recorded for Arizona or Sonora.—SEYMOUR H. LEVY, *Tucson, Arizona, July 12, 1957*.

Notes on the Nesting of Egrets Near San Rafael, California.—On June 16, 1957, a trip was made by boat to Little Marin Island, off San Rafael, California, for the purpose of banding in the heronry that covers this small privately-owned island. We also wished to investigate the possibility of Snowy Egrets nesting there. The heron colony was conservatively estimated at 2000 birds, of which approximately 50 per cent were Common Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*), 20 per cent Snowy Egrets (*Leucophoyx thula*), and 30 per cent Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*).

This island is now the most northern known nesting station of the Snowy Egret on the coast of California (see Grinnell and Miller, *Pac. Coast Avif. No. 27, 1944:59*). According to a local resident, Raymond Rue of Bayside Acres, who has watched the colony grow for many years, this species has been in the colony for at least five years.