

NOTES

THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE NORTHWESTERN RACE OF THE ROBIN IN CALIFORNIA

The 5th edition (1957) of the A.O.U. Check-List of North American Birds states that the northwestern race of the Robin (*Turdus migratorius caurinus*) breeds from southeastern Alaska to northwestern Oregon and winters south to central western California (Point Reyes, San Geronimo). As far as California is concerned, essentially the same information appears in *The Distribution of the Birds of California* (Grinnell and Miller, 1944), although the additional statement is made that *caurinus* is a "rare winter visitant to the northern coastal section of state." Ned K. Johnson (personal correspondence) advises me that the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at Berkeley contains two specimens of *caurinus* taken farther south in California: a male from Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County, collected 20 December 1939, and a female from Cottonwood Spring, Riverside County, collected 23 October 1945. There appear to be no other records for this well-marked race, which has been considered largely resident within its breeding range.

My first winter at Monterey, Monterey County, 1969-70, I found Robins present in what was probably normal numbers. Occasional small flocks were encountered, but they were by no means abundant, and the few specimens taken were all typical of *propinquus*. The following winter was quite different. In late November small flocks began to appear in the open fields and pastures, and within a few weeks they were everywhere. At the height of their abundance flocks totalling fully 2000 birds were noted in the course of a morning, and it was not until early February that there was a noticeable decrease in their numbers. These flocks were not difficult to approach, and I was at once impressed by the dark coloration, both above and below, of the birds I studied with binoculars. An occasional individual was collected, and left me in no doubt that I was witnessing what was possibly an unusual invasion of the supposedly largely resident Robins of the Pacific Northwest. These specimens, taken between the dates of 26 November 1970 and 21 March 1971, were sent to the National Museum, Washington, D. C., and their identification as *caurinus* was confirmed by Mrs. Roxie C. Laybourne, Zoologist with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

It is not improbable that invasions such as this have occurred in past years, and will occur again. The average collector would have little or no interest in flocks of Robins present during the winter months, so *caurinus* could easily go undetected even though relatively abundant. I feel, however, that it should no longer be considered "a rare winter visitant" in California. *Thomas D. Burleigh, 1242 Sylvan Road, Monterey, California.*