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## A Northern Phalarope

By FRANK G. WATSON

Recently while looking through my earliest notes, I found among mere lists of birds the story of a Northern Phalarope, an injured waif who spent his last three days with me.

It was on August 24, 1930, that two of my schoolmates and I made an all day walk from Sausalito over the ridge to the ocean. We stopped at a small abandoned reservoir at the head of Rodeo Lagoon where we found about twenty-five phalaropes swimming, twirling, and picking food at the water's surface from the algal and other plant growth floating there. This tangled mass, so thick that swimming ducks and coots left trails through it, no doubt harbored droves of small organisms attractive to phalaropes. Unalarmed by our presence they fed and cavorted, while we watched them at leisure.

When finally we had progressed some distance down the shore of the lagoon, we looked back with dismay on men throwing rocks at the birds in the pool. Then seeing white flashes darting away, we were reassured and continued on our way. After spending some time at the beach, we returned to the reservoir. Our flock had fared far worse than we could have imagined. About half the birds were dead, dirty white puffs of feathers floating belly up in the murky water. Of the others, two birds were swimming about, the rest apparently having escaped. As we approached, one of the live pair hastily departed, calling an excited "kip-kip" as he flew. The other, wing dragging, swam to the opposite shore, where we picked him up.

Ropey, as he (of unknown sex) was called, had a broken wing, a compound fracture of his right radius and ulna. It was decided to take him home for treatment. That evening a match stick splint was applied, and the wing was bound in its normal folded position by thread wrapped loosely around his body. He was put to bed in a peach basket padded with shredded newspaper.

The next morning Ropey was found running about his room seeking a way out. As we knew he must be hungry, we took him outside to see what could be found. Turning over large rocks which lined our pathways produced a rolling, scurrying crop of sow bugs. Ropey's enthusiasm for the meal we provided was more than expected. He did not have to be coaxed to follow down the path as rock after rock was overturned, but indeed seemed impatient at the waste of time involved in replacing the path boundary behind us. He waited expectantly as each stone was overturned, then went down into the hollow while the rock was still being rolled away. Many of the bugs escaped into crevices, but Ropey usually got one or two which he swallowed immediately, seemingly without first killing them. Black

beetles also were found, but Roney paid no attention to these. After about half an hour, and two or three dozen sow bugs, Roney was no longer hungry. He lost interest in following the Sow Bug Trail and wandered off into the garden.

During all this time Roney showed no fear of his captors. Though he was quite active, he made no attempt to escape, nor did he attempt to use his free wing. At any time he could be picked up without sign of resistance. Later in the day — after school — Roney was fed again. He enjoyed it as much as before, though seemingly was sooner satiated than in the morning.

Put to sleep again in his peach basket bed Roney spent his last night. The next morning, sitting with bill straight forward on his chest, he was found stiff and cold. We had done what we could for Roney, little though it was. On the other hand he had done much for me. His behavior, his personality if you wish, established him and his species as a bird I knew, not just a species I recognized. His short visit greatly stimulated my interest in birds for their nature rather than just for their form and fashion.

### Leucosticte and Red Crossbills at Camp Hale

The following are excerpts from letters to Miss Ivander MacIver from two members of the Audubon Association of the Pacific who are with the Mountain Troops at Camp Hale, Colorado. From Mr. Gerald Sedgewick, November, 1943:

"Leucosticte is mine! Two hundred strong in fact. The Brown-capped Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte australis*) is a charming aristocrat who flocks through our mountains, jewel-like in flight but quite somber while supping on a snowy slope or dunking into an icy streamlet. Imagine my thrill yesterday when a flock of these finches settled on a rocky slope a few yards from the spot where I was engaged in building a mule trail *a la* pick and shovel. I had ceased my toil to determine whether my aching back would straighten when a bird noise, working upon my subconscious, wheeled me around and sharpened my senses. A straggling flock of finches came bounding over the ridge and into my valley. Their wings were silvery, their flight undulating. My wonderment turned to joy as they settled near me and proceeded to feed and bathe in the tiny stream at my side. Instinctively I had guessed their identity and was delighted as my birds went about their occupations unconcernedly. Friendly, peaceful, and industrious, they seemed completely contented with nature, though the lot of a Leucosticte to me seems a bit harsh and tough."

From Mr. Don Heyneman under date of November 28, 1943:

"I had a wonderful experience with a small flock of Red Crossbills (*Loxia curvirostra*). Birds are so scarce now that it is a thrill to see or even hear one. I was standing below a stand of lodgepoles and bare aspens when the group circled over the trees, landing on one of the aspens. They chattered and called to each other, sounding much like argumentative linnets or peace-loving English sparrows. A few feet from where I stood was a bare patch in the snow, two feet across. One by one the birds flew down to this spot and fed on seeds or frozen insects they found there. Their crossed bills, usually difficult to see, came into sharp focus as they turned their heads sideways in order to pick up the seeds. There were two beautiful brick-red males, two immature orange-males, and three yellow-headed females. The males were generally colored over head, breast, and back. The others had their red or yellow confined to specific areas: top of head, lower back, throat, and spots on sides. It was grand to observe them from such close range. I've heard them calling since August; but this was my first opportunity to watch them closely.

## February Field Trip

The time: Sunday, the thirteenth.

The place: The Chain of Lakes at the west end of Golden Gate Park and the ocean beach near Seal Rocks.

The company: Twenty-five members and guests of the Audubon Association of the Pacific.

It was a beautiful day with unclouded sky, no breeze, and the sight and sound of many birds.

Meeting at Forty-third Avenue and Fulton Street, San Francisco, the party was divided by our president, Mr. Arthur H. Myer, into two groups led by Mr. Charles A. Bryant and Mr. C. A. Harwell. These groups alternately covered the east and west banks of the lakes.

As the noon hour approached, most of the party made their way out of the park to the beach where a spot for lunch was selected near the water's edge, within view of the Seal Rocks. After lunch several of the group went to look for birds below the Cliff House. Others walked on to Sutro Heights. By these groups working together and separately a total of forty-four species was seen during the day:

Pied-bill Grebe	California Gull	Hutton's Vireo
California Brown Pelican	Ring-billed Gull	Orange-crowned Warbler
Cormorant	Bonaparte's Gull	Myrtle Warbler
Mallard	Anna's Hummingbird	Audubon's Warbler
Balpate	Allen's Hummingbird	Yellow-throat
Pintail	Belted Kingfisher	Brewer's Blackbird
Lesser Scaup	Red-shafted Flicker	California Purple Finch
Scoter	Black Phoebe	Pine Siskin
Ruddy Duck	Chickadee	Spotted Towhee
California Quail	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Junco
Florida Gallinule	Bewick's Wren	Nuttall's Sparrow
Coot	Robin	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Glaucous-winged Gull	Varied Thrush	Fox Sparrow
Western Gull	Hermit Thrush	Song Sparrow
Herring Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	

Fifteen members were in attendance: Misses Cohen, Curtis, Fay, Paroni, Sterne, and Young; Mesdames Curtis, Dickman, Kilham, and Zinke; Messrs. Bryant, Harwell, Kilham, Myer, and Wolff. Among the guests were Miss Nellie Johnson of Detroit, Michigan; Miss Osie Nelson of Wichita, Kansas; and Lieut. and Mrs. Barrett of White Plains, New York.

—Gertrude K. Dickman, Historian

Birds seen on the way from or to the East Bay cannot be included in the list of birds of Golden Gate Park and adjoining ocean beach unless they are either listed separately or definite locations are given.—Editor *pro tem*.

## Observations

Edited by Junea W. Kelly

Two White-tailed Kites, Jan. 22, at the Naval Base approximately two miles north of Cotati and five miles south of Santa Rosa. Mrs. Mary L. Courtright.

Eleven Black-crowned Night Herons, Jan. 14, Palace of Fine Arts, in cypress trees on west side of lake. Mr. Joseph J. Webb.

Green-winged Teal (male), Feb. 8, 9, 10, 13, Lake Merritt. Forty-eight Black-crowned Night Herons, Feb. 10, Lake Merritt, one or two birds at a time leaving Island at dusk. Three Pintails and 325 Baldpates, Feb. 17, Women's Athletic Club, Oakland, feeding on lawn. Mr. Herman V. Leffler.

Seventeen Semipalmated Plovers, Jan. 30, Alameda. Mrs. Junea W. Kelly.

**Audubon Notes**

*March Meeting:* The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the ninth, at 7:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets, San Francisco. The speaker will be Mr. Malcolm Jollie of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, who will talk on "Golden Eagles in California".

*March Field Trip* will be on Sunday, the twelfth, to Tilden Regional Park (east of Berkeley). Meet at Summit Reservoir at the top of Spruce Street at 10:00 a.m. From San Francisco take the 8:51 F train at the Terminal and ask for a transfer. At University and Shattuck Avenues in Berkeley transfer to the No. 67 (Spruce Street) bus. Bring field glasses and lunch. Leaders will be Mr. William D. Landels, of the San Jose Ornithological Club, and Mr. Herman V. Leffler.

Visitors are welcome to attend the meeting and join the field trip.

*February Meeting:* The 317th meeting of the Audubon Association of the

Pacific was held on Thursday evening, February 10, in the Assembly Room of the San Francisco Public Library. President Arthur H. Myer presided. The program of the evening "The Study of Field Differences of California Warblers" was presented by Mr. Charles A. Bryant. The lecture was illustrated with mounted specimens of the warblers most often seen in the Bay Area. Assisting with the program were Mr. Joseph J. Webb and Mr. C. A. Harwell. Mr. Webb explained the identifying characteristics of the warblers and the habitats where these birds are most likely to be found. Mr. Harwell whistled the songs of these birds and illustrated on the blackboard the distinctive patterns and rhythms of the songs.

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The following have been elected to membership: Mrs. Blanche Clear and Miss Dorothy Chandler of San Francisco; Mrs. David L. Bruce, Mrs. D. M. Curtis and daughter, Miss Martha Curtis, and Master Henry McGuchin of Oakland; Master Bill Needham of Berkeley.

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**Audubon Association of the Pacific**

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**For the Study and the Protection of Birds**

President.....	Mr. Arthur H. Myer.....	25 El Camino Real, Berkeley 5
Corresponding Secretary.....	Mr. Joseph J. Webb.....	519 California St., San Francisco 4
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Monthly meetings second Thursday, 7:30 p.m.

Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets, San Francisco.

Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year.

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year.

Life memberships, \$50.00

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.