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Ash-Throated Flycatcher

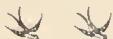
It is very interesting to watch the shy and rather silent Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) in its deliberate efforts to conceal its nesting place.

At our ranch near Napa we have a nesting-box in a large, spreading oak, about a hundred yards distant from the house, the box being plainly visible from all directions. In 1941 the Flycatcher arrived April 27th, and in 1942 he was first seen on April 26th. When the bird arrives in the spring, he does not come to the area in and about the house or the oak tree mentioned, but frequents territory a half mile distant. Knowing that he is due to arrive and listening intently, we hear occasionally his call, a faint one, and if we go into the distant area, we may see him, but apparently at this time he is exceedingly shy and endeavors to keep his presence unknown. Within two or three weeks we see him at intervals in the house area, and we hear him more frequently than at first, but seldom do we notice him approaching the oak tree. He deliberately attempts to prevent our knowing his nesting site. Last year he nested in the box, but this year, notwithstanding alertness to ascertain whether he was going back to his old home, and also alertness as to his calls, there was no definite indication that he would nest there.

Partially convinced by his apparent absence from the oak that the Flycatcher would not use the box this year, but not certain, I looked into it on June 13th, and to my surprise found three eggs. Later, on July 3rd, only one young bird was in the nest. It left the box on July 18th.

The nest was a crude affair, consisting of a few small twigs and little lining. This is at variance with the description of the nests of Ash-throated Flycatchers by Dawson in "Birds of California"; its crudity might possibly have been due to the lack of material. Contrary to expectations, the birds were not seen in or near the oak very often, and the female was never observed flying toward the box with any nesting material, yet during all this time the nest was being built and the family raised.

—Joseph J. Webb, San Francisco, Calif.



Banding An American Golden-Eye in Marin

Answering the telephone in our home has often led to the unusual, but last March 22nd brought a greater surprise than most. It was Bill asking, did I want a duck? Bill is a young giant of fourteen years who in the past had brought me three different wounded birds, all of them beyond saving. He is a lad with a compassionate heart, but with time-consuming tendencies.

Bill brought the bird to me. It was an American Golden-eye or Whistler

(*Glaucionette clangula americana*), a beautiful male and no mistake. A quick examination disclosed nothing in the way of an injury. Questioning brought out the fact that Bill's seven-year old brother had had no trouble catching the bird on a dry lot in San Anselmo, at least two hundred feet from any water and miles from salt water.

The first thing I did, of course, was to clamp B-646971 on this beauty, all the time wondering what one could possibly feed a sea-duck. I did not have "mussels or other shellfish", and surely it was food he must have and soon. He was obviously hungry; he just stuck his head in a corner and tried to hide, but made no attempt to struggle or escape.

Dawson always comes to my rescue in times like this one. "They dive with extraordinary ease and wrest most of their living from the depths." Yes, I know, but I was in a California kitchen with a Golden-eye under my arm. "On salt water the birds venture upon shore as often as they dare, and it is to be feared that they are not fastidious in the matter of their food." This seemed encouraging. "Mussels, crabs, and marine worms are commonly eaten, and that bugaboo of northern beaches, the decayed salmon, is also greedily devoured, so that the birds are usually unfit for culinary consideration."

War or no war, high-priced salmon or no, we forcibly fed that bird on canned red salmon and soon he was literally eating out of my hand! Water? No, Bill didn't know that he had really had any, even though he gave it to him. The second I guided his bill into a plastic measuring cup (just the color of his feet) he was drinking greedily. How I wished for a kodachrome of that!

Driving about three miles to San Pablo Bay, Bill turned the duck loose near the edge of the water, but he had been dodging about for some time and had the habit. He started back towards the road, but under my direction Bill tried again, taking him close to the water's edge. Out he went, one happy bird, and he couldn't bathe and dive enough.

We have no answer as to how this American Golden-eye happened to be on that dry lot, in town, and so nearly starved to death. Here's hoping his band is not turned in by some gunner. It is to William Masten Merritt that the credit for the banding of this bird is due.

—Anna Margaret Smith, San Anselmo, Calif.



Rufous Wins the War But Loses the Peace

Outside my window in La Vina I have a humming-bird feeder, which has many patrons, both permanent and transient. Last week the Rufous hummingbirds appeared, stayed about four days, and during their sojourn threw our resident Annas into a turmoil. Of all the varieties of hummers we get through here, the Rufous is the only group unable to fathom the feeders. When a Rufous spots an Anna imbibing at the feeder, he promptly attacks him and usurps his place on the perch, but from that point on he is baffled, and never learns to push his bill through the feeder top.

March 22, 1943

—W. L. Miles, La Vina, Calif.

An Additional Field Trip

Five members of the Audubon Association of the Pacific, who missed the regular monthly trip on March 14th, made a few observations on a trip taken March 21st over the Martinez Road, which branches off north of the highway between Lafayette and Walnut Creek. Those participating were Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Kilham, Miss M. Young, Miss M. Sterne, and Miss C. Paroni.

A hundred or so Brewer Blackbirds were on the wires over the Martinez Road near the nut-shelling plant between the main highway and the Union High School. In the orchard and on the wires from the shelling plant to the power post, and bathing in the small stream at the northern boundary of the plant, were hundreds of Willow and Green-backed Goldfinches, with a few Linnets and Purple Finches; all in full song. There was a constant movement of flocks flying out and back again to the trees and wires. Some alighted on the mounds of shelled nuts outside the plant, no doubt picking up bits of almond kernels.

On the way to the school grounds and in the old oaks, eucalyptus and black walnuts in the rear of the school, were heard and seen Killdeer, Mourning Dove, and Sparrow Hawk. A Red-tailed Hawk was carrying materials to a nest on top of a fifty-foot eucalyptus, which was broken off at the top where a thicket of young shoots had grown out, making a secure foundation for the nest. Other birds seen here were California Woodpeckers, Red-shafted Flickers, Anna Hummingbirds, Western Meadowlarks, California Jays, Red-winged and bi-colored blackbirds, Oregon Juncos, California and Spotted Towhees. Cedar Waxwings were feeding in bunches of mistletoe in the black walnuts. They made a beautiful mosaic pattern in silhouette among the graceful walnut catkins, where some of them rested. Pipits fed among the blackbirds on the green patches south of the school. A Western House Wren scolded among bunches of pruned branches in the orchard. A Slender-billed Nuthatch found insects and their eggs in the walnut tree.

—Clelia A. Paroni



March Field Trip

Weather, Telephone Company and Navy conspired against our field trip on Sunday, March 14th. In spite of all these forces several members arrived at Lafayette on time and under the able and enthusiastic leadership of Mrs. Zinke spent a pleasant and profitable morning. At noon several more members and guests arrived and Mrs. Zinke went over much of the same territory with the late comers. The day turned out clear and cold. Two swallows had been seen in the morning but there seemed to be some uncertainty as to species. After close study it is thought that they were Northern Violet-green. The swallows are not listed below. The following is the list of thirty-two species observed:

Turkey Vulture	California Jay	Meadow Lark
Cooper Hawk	Plain Titmouse	Red-winged Blackbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Bush-tit	Brewer Blackbird
Sparrow Hawk	Slender-billed Nuthatch	House Finch
Quail	Bewick Wren	Green-backed Goldfinch
Killdeer	Western Bluebird	Spotted Towhee
Burrowing Owl	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Brown Towhee
Anna Hummingbird	Shrike	Junco
Allen Hummingbird	Hutton Vireo	White-crowned Sparrow
Red-shafted Flicker	Lutescent Warbler	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Black Phoebe	Audubon Warbler	

Eight members and two guests were present: Mesdames Austin, Bozant, Kelly and Zinke; Misses Bary, Fay and MacIver; Mr. Leffler.

—Junea W. Kelly, Historian

Audubon Notes

April Meeting: The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 8th, at 8 p.m. in the Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets, San Francisco.

Dr. Alden H. Miller, Director, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, will be the speaker; his subject will be, "Social Parasitism Among Birds".

Guests will be welcome.

April Field Trip will be taken on Sunday, April 11th, to the East Bay Regional Park. San Francisco members will take the 8:51 F train from the Terminal, arriving at University and Shattuck, Berkeley, at 9:21. This train should connect with the Spruce Street bus which leaves University and Shattuck at 9:24. We expect to meet at the reservoir at the top of Spruce Street. Bring field glasses and luncheon. Donald Brock will be the leader.

Special Shore Bird Trip: On Sunday, April 18th, Mrs. Junea W. Kelly will conduct a special trip for the purpose of observing the shore birds in their spring plumage.

We will eat luncheon on the beach at the foot of Liberty Street. Those coming from San Francisco take the "O" Santa Clara Avenue bus from the terminal at 11:05 and ride to the end

of the line, High and Santa Clara and walk around Lincoln Park to the meeting place at Liberty and Fernside Blvd. Those coming from Eastbay points should take Alameda bus No. 58, 16th and Broadway at 11:22 and ride to High and Santa Clara. Bring binoculars.

March Meeting: The 306th meeting was held on the 11th in the Assembly Room of the San Francisco Public Library, Corresponding Secretary, Mr. Joseph J. Webb, presiding.

Mrs. Dorothy Dean Sheldon showed several reels of beautiful colored motion pictures of California birds under the caption, "Wings to You". In her introductory remarks Mrs. Sheldon referred to the talk given by Madame Chiang Kai-shek at Wellesley, when the latter used the word 'indehiscent'. Mrs. Sheldon said we should be dehiscent and spread the seeds of interest in bird life so that more people could find stimulation and relief in the study of birds during these trying times. She also stressed the necessity of focusing attention on those things of life that have continuity. Her pictures revealed that we can all find much of interest in our immediate surroundings.



Observations

Edited by Junea W. Kelly

The following observations have been reported:

White-tailed Kite, 4 miles west of Santa Rosa, Feb. 24; 100 more or less Western Evening Grosbeaks, Kentfield, early part of February; Lutescent Warbler, Larkspur, Feb. 26; Mrs. Mary Courtright. Mrs. Courtright also reported that a Black-headed Grosbeak caught in 1918 had died in February of this year, having lived 25 years in captivity.

2 Short-billed Gulls, Lake Merritt, Feb. 26, H. Leffler.

1 male Ring-necked Pheasant, Bridge Approach, Oakland, Feb. 20, Gordon Bolander.

Lutescent Warbler, Garber Park, Berkeley, Mar. 6, Junea W. Kelly.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President.....	Mrs. Harold C. Austin.....	541 Boulevard Way, Piedmont
Corresponding Secretary.....	Mr. Joseph J. Webb.....	519 California St., San Francisco
Treasurer.....	Miss Ivander MacIver.....	2414 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley
Editor.....	Mrs. T. Eric Reynolds.....	140 Estates Drive, Piedmont

Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 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.