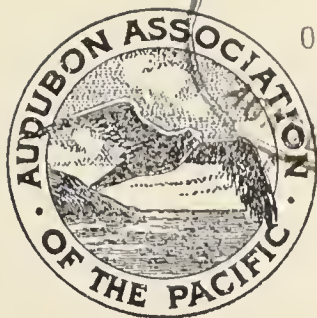


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NUMBER 10

LONG-TAILED CHATS IN MARIN COUNTY

Warblers are birds loved by all of us. Perhaps it is because they are, as Dr. Allen says, "An avian police force dressed in handsome uniforms and singing merrily on their beats, keeping in check the insect malefactors." Certain it is that each time I spy a Long-tailed Chat (*Icteria virens longicauda*) in our little garden I feel compelled to pass along the word.

The Chat is the largest of our warblers. He is so different in actions from most of them, we are surprised when first we learn he really is a warbler. My own close observations of a pair of Long-tailed Chats early in the morning of June 11, 1937, in the Curtis gardens, Del Mesa, Ross, proved the birds as impudent and as furtive as claimed. This pair spent much time in a lot then vacant along Poplar avenue and in the gardens along the other side of the street opposite the vacant lots. The year 1937 was exciting to members of the Audubon Association of the Pacific, as many were able to at least see these Chats in the Curtis gardens (The Gull, July, 1937).

"Live" water in a little garden will often bring interesting results. It is by this means that we have attracted Long-tailed Chats to our own garden in San Anselmo. The visits they have made have been purely utilitarian. Deliberately and thoroughly they bathe. I find notations to this effect in my records for the three years we have observed them here. In 1939 we were honored with daily visits from a Chat from September 24 to 28. No Chat visited us in 1940. In 1941 a Chat made two calls, one on September 17 and again on September 18. I am glad to report that a Long-tailed Chat visited us this year on August 23 and September 3.

—Anna Margaret Smith, San Anselmo, California.

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THE CALL NOTE OF THE ROAD-RUNNER

The writer has a piece of property about six miles east of Napa City, California. It, as well as the surrounding country, is of volcanic origin, with many cliffs and quite rocky. The elevation varies from 750 to 1500 feet. It is quite warm from early spring to late fall, the thermometer ranging from 70 to 95 degrees fahrenheit. Several small meadows, many oak trees, some fairly large, but most of them small, a few laurels, maples, and toyons are here, also many acres of chaparral. Lizards, grasshoppers and snakes are to be found here — altogether a natural habitat for our interesting friend, the Road-runner, (*Geococcyx californianus*), sometimes called the "Chaparral Cock". On several occasions during the past two years this bird has been seen on the ranch, but only a glimpse of him was had as he hurriedly disappeared into the brushy hillside. On only one occasion has the calling note been heard, which consisted of but two notes, "Coo-Coo".

On Saturday, March 7, 1942, a warm day, an unfamiliar sound, taken at first to be that of some animal, was heard, apparently coming from the dir-

ection of the chaparral not far distant from the house. Listening intently an effort was made to locate the supposed animal, but the call kept coming from different points, with its tone and notes changing until it was recognized as that of the Road-runner's mating call. Notwithstanding a knowledge of its habits and where it would likely be seen, the bird could not be located. Finally the notes ceased.

Believing that the bird had crossed the nearby country road and had disappeared upon a hillside some distance away, the writer re-traced his steps, crossed a canyon, and while looking over the nearby green hills, the call notes were again distinctly heard. Looking across the canyon at a small dead tree, probably 15 feet high and at least 300 yards distant, an object interfered with a clear view through the dead branches. Here was the Road-runner and here he remained in practically the same position for half an hour, intermittently giving his mating call.

With the aid of binoculars practically every motion was readily observed as the bird prepared to give his call note. He stretched his head forward, slightly lowered his bill, inflated his throat, and then followed the notes, "Coo-coo-coo", each with a slightly lower pitch, until the sound gradually became inaudible. One call consisted of nine different "coos". If unfamiliar with the mating call, one might believe it to be the four-syllabled note of the dove, as there is a similarity of tone, but the Road Runner's pitch changes noticeably and more notes are uttered.

Referring to the first sound or call note heard, which the writer described as a wailing or plaintive tone, Dawson, in "The Birds of California", Volume 2, page 1142, states: "Its usual day time call note is most like the whine of a dog which has been several times refused admittance to the house, ooh ooh (4) ooh ooooo, trailing off into despair. The despair of the bird is manifestly the mock heroic of the pleading lover; this pathetic sound, ventriloquistic and unplaceable, is one of the surest marks of spring time, at least along the brush-clad hills of Southern California".

The description by Dawson "of this pathetic sound, **ventriloquistic** and **unplaceable**," is confirmed by a previous experience of the writer, which occurred in the chaparral-covered hills west of King City, Monterey County, California. It resulted, after considerable effort and time spent, in the identification of the bird while calling.

—Joseph J. Webb, San Francisco, California.

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FROM OUR FAR-FLUNG BATTLE LINE

Dr. T. E. Reynolds, who is now serving as a lieutenant-commander in the hospital unit of the Naval Reserve, has written of his experiences in the Solomon Islands. Between moments of bomb-dodging and medical duties, he has added several birds to his life list, among them White-tailed Tropic Bird, Sooty Tern, White Tern, Green-winged Pigeon, Rainbow Lorikeet, Red-headed Honey-eater, Mangrove Kingfisher, and White Cockatoo. He writes,

"This is a queer land. Everything is topsy-turvy. There is actually a kind of fish which climbs up on logs and mangrove roots and runs as fast as a lizard. The crabs climb around the hillsides miles from the sea and eat coconuts. The kingfishers are land-based and don't eat fish. And there is a squealing member of the bat family called a flying-fox which is about the size of a pekinese dog — and looks like one with wings."

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SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP

The September Field Trip was taken to Alameda on Sunday, the 20th. On account of defense activity we were unable to go to Bay Farm Island. High tide at Ft. Point was 4.8 feet at 8:41 a.m. PST. Low water was 2.2 feet at 1:53 p.m. PST. The party met at Liberty and Fernside at 11:45 PWT and proceeded to the foot of Liberty where lunch was eaten while the first shore

birds began coming in looking for a place to feed as the tide receded. The day was perfect, no wind and good visibility. After lunch the party walked along Fernside to the Municipal Nursery, where a few land birds were added to the list, then to the end of the street, enjoying excellent close-ups of birds, and lastly went by automobile to Otis Drive. It is always interesting to observe how the birds move along from one feeding spot to another as more ground is being uncovered and feeding conditions are at their best. Although the number of species was not impressive, the number of individuals was large. On two occasions clapper rails fed close at hand, so that they could be well observed without the aid of field glasses.

Twenty-nine species were observed as follows:

Eared Grebe	Dowitcher	Anna Hummingbird
Farallon Cormorant	Western Sandpiper	Barn Swallow
Pintail Duck	Marbled Godwit	California Jay
Sparrow Hawk	Sanderling	Shrike
California Clapper Rail	Western Gull	English Sparrow
Killdeer	California Gull	Brewer Blackbird
Black-bellied Plover	Ring-billed Gull	House Finch
Willet	Bonaparte Gull	Savannah Sparrow
Greater Yellow-legs	Forster Tern	Nuttall Sparrow
Least Sandpiper	Kingfisher	Song Sparrow

Members attending were: Mr. and Mrs. Myer; Mesdames Enid Austin, Dickman, Kelly, Nichols, Reynolds, Richardson, Sheldon, Smith; Misses Berg, Blake, Kirk, MacIver, Papina, Rinehart, Roscoe, Willoughby; Messrs. Fischer, Greenwood, Leffler, Power, Scott. There were fifteen guests present.

—Junea W. Kelly, Leader and Historian.

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CORRECTION — AUGUST FIELD TRIP

The Leader and Historian of the August Field Trip, Mr. A. H. Myer and Miss Mary L. Roscoe, have decided that their group was in error in reporting the observation of a Hairy Woodpecker in Golden Gate Park on August 16. The matter was called to their attention by Mrs. A. B. Stephens, who stated that to date there has been no record of this species in Golden Gate Park. The group has concluded that the bird seen must have been a Downy Woodpecker.

The Association appreciates the kindness of Mrs. Stephens in pointing out this error. She has kept accurate records for many years of the birds seen in different localities of the Bay Region, and is quick to recognize a bird out of place.

We aspire to be accurate, but since most of us are not trained ornithologists we will occasionally make an error.

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OBSERVATIONS

The following observations have been reported:

American Egrets (50), marsh east of Alto off Tiburon Road, Sept. 11, Glenn Ensign.

American Pintail, lagoon this side of Richardson Bay, Sept. 1, 2, 10, and every day since; count of 200 in lagoon and 100 across railroad tracks on Sept. 2; Bonaparte Gulls, tide streams east of Greenbrae, Sept. 2; Red-breasted Nuthatches, Sept. 6, Lutescent Warbler, Sept. 13, Yellow Warbler Sept. 9, Long-tailed Chat Aug. 23 and Sept. 3, Pileolated Warbler, Aug. 30, Western Tanager, Sept. 14, San Anselmo. All by Mrs. Otis H. Smith.

Say Phoebe, Napa, Sept. 8, Joseph J. Webb.

Red-breasted Nuthatch, Piedmont, Aug. 30, Mrs. T. Eric Reynolds.

Great Blue Herons (5), Sixteenth and Broadway, Oakland, Aug. 25; one American Golden Eye, one Ruddy Duck, one American Egret, Lake Merritt, Aug. 16; White-tailed Kite, several miles from Manteca, Aug. 1; 500 Pintails

and 5 Baldpates, Lake Merritt, Sept. 5. All by Warren Fischer.

Gambel Sparrows (2), Berkeley, Sept. 18, Bert Harwell.

Correction of report of September observations: 3 Cliff Swallow nests were observed by Mrs. Stephens on Bay near Van Ness Ave., June 27.

AUDUBON NOTES

October 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. Robert T. Orr, Assistant Curator of Birds and Mammals of the Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, will lecture on "Birds of the Santa Cruz Mountains". His talk will be illustrated with slides. Dr. Orr's report of his study of this area was reviewed in the September issue of *The Gull*; members are looking forward to meeting the author.

Guests are welcome to attend.

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October Field Trip will be taken on Sunday, the 12th, to the Mills College Campus and vicinity, Oakland. Members and friends will meet at Seminary Ave. and MacArthur Blvd. at 10 a.m. Those coming from San Francisco should take the "N" bus at the Santa Fe terminal, on Fourth St. between Mission and Market, leaving there at 9:17 a.m. Those coming from East Bay points should take the Excelsior (MacArthur) bus and ride to Seminary. Bring binoculars and luncheon. Leader, Mr. Donald Brock.

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September Meeting: The 300th regular meeting was held on the 10th in

the Assembly Room of the San Francisco Public Library, President Mrs. Harold C. Austin presiding.

Mr. Andrew Gibb of Berkeley showed his colored motion pictures, "Bird Shots by an Amateur Photographer", which convinced the audience that one can learn much about birds without going far afield. It also proved how much fun it is to hunt and enjoy birds with a camera and what pleasure a person like Mr. Gibb can bring to others by thus visually sharing his experiences with them.

Mr. Fred Packard gave a brief account of the effort now being made to save the South Calaveras Sequoia Grove from the lumberman and to make it a part of the present Calaveras State Park. It is hoped that Congress will enact legislation necessary to exchange this forest for standing timber owned by the Federal Government.

Contributions were made to a small fund to provide suitable literature for institutions where the Educational Committee takes Audubon to shut-ins.

The following have been elected to membership: Mrs. Kate Dickman, San Francisco, Miss Margaret Jewell and Mrs. H. F. Nichols, Berkeley, and Miss Phila Willoughby, Oakland.

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.