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Inquisitiveness of California Condor, Pacific Horned Owl and Golden Eagle

The writer on different occasions has noticed some of our largest birds showing an inquisitiveness similar to that so often observed in many of our smaller species.

It was first noted in the California Condor on September 6, 1934, when one of those magnificent birds crossing from the eastern to the western rim of Sespe Canyon at a fairly high altitude flew downward, closely watching the writer, who was standing on the trail not far distant from the western fork of the Sespe River. Apparently satisfied with its investigation, it gradually soared upward and continued on its course to the western rim.

Quoting from an article entitled "California Condors and Other Birds of Sespe Canyon," which appeared in the August, 1937, issue of THE GULL, the following is found:

"Being fully satisfied for the day, we started toward the camp, when about ten minutes to twelve, while resting on the trail along the western cliff, we again saw two Condors, no doubt the first two seen. One, apparently seeing us, became a bit curious and flew toward our resting place until almost overhead, giving an excellent view as it approached. It looked downward, seemed satisfied with its observation, and then turned in a southerly direction down the canyon."

The Pacific Horned Owl several times has displayed the same characteristics. In the December, 1935, issue of THE GULL, referring to this owl, it was stated:

"Though a large bird, its flight is noiseless. Its ear tufts are conspicuous. It is bold, courageous, wary but yet curious. On two occasions when it saw me in the field it left the tree, circling around me twice, watching closely all the time; then, its curiosity satisfied, it proceeded on its way."

On other occasions it has deliberately changed its course of flight to alight in a nearby tree. There it would utter, more than once, its call, "who-who-who-who,"—whether intended as an evening salutation, a querulous inquiry, or "I am watching you" warning, it cannot be determined. However, it was evidently done with deliberation and to convey some idea. It remained but a few moments then proceeded to its usual feeding ground.

On May 8, 1938, while the writer was driving with Mr. Charles H. Feltes, along a not much used dirt roadway about ten miles east of Modesto, a large Golden Eagle, at first thought to be a Turkey Vulture, was perched on a roadside fence some distance ahead. As we gradually came to a stop, the Eagle flew to a nearby cliff. Our view being unobstructed, we watched it for several minutes, it in turn watching us. The writer left the car and had walked but a few steps in the direction of the cliff when the bird took wing. However, much to our surprise, it flew toward the car and passed directly overhead not more than 100 feet above us. It looked downward as it approached, then altered its course to a southeasterly direction and leisurely proceeded on its way.

Joseph J. Webb, San Francisco, California. October 5, 1938.

Waterfowl near Cordelia, California, in 1913 and 1914

M. Hall McAllister, now of Redlands, California, was probably more familiar with waterfowl conditions on the Suisun marshes in the early days than any other person alive today. He began to shoot on these marshes in 1875 and continued as a wild-fowl hunter there regularly each year until 1918.

During the hunting season of 1913-1914 he was one of the six members of the Cordelia Shooting Club, Solano County. The record for that season of the club, which he has sent me, supplies evidence that the sprig was the most abundant duck on these marshes, and shows to some extent the relative abundance of these species at that period:

Sprig (Pintail)	728	Widgeon (Baldpate)	92
Canvas-back	198	Mallard	82
Teal	109	Redhead	3
Spoonbill and Bluebill.....	117	Total.....	1329

Emerson A. Stoner, Benicia, California. October 13, 1938.



Brown Thrasher

The following is taken from *The Western Tanager*, February, 1939, published by the Los Angeles Audubon Society.

A Brown Thrasher, *Toxostoma rufum*, was trapped and banded in the Hollywood hills on January 13, 1939, with band No. 37-24172, by Mr. C. V. Duff. According to Mr. George Willets of the Los Angeles Museum, the Brown Thrasher has only been reported once before in California, when it was observed in Pasadena from January, 1932, to March, 1933.

This Thrasher is a large, reddish brown bird with a long, sweeping tail. It is reddish above, creamy white below, sharply streaked on breast and along flanks. With its red-brown back and streaked breast, it has the general appearance of a thrush, but its large size, ruddiness of brown, straw-colored eyes and long tail are distinctive. The bill is straight and is used in typical thrasher manner. This beautiful bird would be a fine addition to our bird life if it should take up permanent residence here. It has been observed daily since it was banded, and is apparently here alone.



Townsend Solitaire in San Francisco

The writer resides at 2736 Lyon Street, San Francisco. On Sunday, March 26, 1939, at about 5:30 p. m., he was looking from a window toward Sausalito watching the ever-changing cloud effects, when there alighted on a wire leading into his home, a long, rather slender, gray bird. It was about fifty feet distant, but as binoculars were convenient, an excellent view was afforded. The rather narrow white ring around the eye was distinctly noted, also the outer tail feathers broadly tipped with white.

Observation lasted about five minutes, when the bird dropped into a plum tree now in full bloom. Here it remained for a few minutes, then flew into a neighboring yard. The visitor was the Townsend Solitaire.

Joseph J. Webb, San Francisco, California. March 27, 1939.

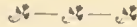


Townsend Solitaire in Marin County

Mrs. Otis H. Smith of San Anselmo writes that there does not seem to be any doubt that there have been two of these birds in central Marin this month from reports given her. One observer, Mrs. C. J. Flack, observed one eating "myrtle" berries in a garden February 17, 18 and 22. She was sure he would be there for days as there were so many berries, but on the 23rd Cedar Waxwings and Robins arrived and in a short time had eaten every berry.

On the 25th she again saw one (perhaps the same one) in a garden across the street, and, of all places for a Townsend Solitaire, in the spray of a bird bath! This one was also seen by Mrs. J. Van Meurs.

On February 22nd, Harold Sawyer, a student at Marin Junior College, reported to Dr. Paul T. Wilson that he had seen a Townsend Solitaire in Miremonte Park, Kentfield. Dr. Wilson found it there on the 23rd, and on the 24th it was seen by Glenn Ensign and on the 25th by Mrs. Smith, when it was feeding on English ivy berries.



March Field Trip

On March 12, 1939, the monthly field trip took place at Regional Park, Berkeley, under the leadership of Misses Frances Blake and Ivander MacIver.

Though the skies were overcast, the day was a pleasant one with now and then an intermittent spell of sunshine and patches of bright blue sky. There was a small but very interested group out.

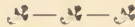
Two Rufous Hummingbirds were seen, and a most exciting view was had of one of them. It bathed in a small stream, hopped up on the bank, shaking its little self free of water drops. It flitted from stream to bush and back again, and poised upon the tops of bushes, displayed its vivid coloring against the dull background; threw back its head and twisted itself about, affording a fine view of its coppery red throat with its band of white below.

The following thirty-nine species were noted:

Scaup Duck	California Jay	Audubon Warbler
American Golden-eye	Bush-tit	Townsend Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Wren-tit	Purple Finch
Cooper Hawk	Vigors Wren	House Finch
Red-tailed Hawk	Thrasher	Pine Siskin
Coot	Robin	Willow Goldfinch
Anna Hummingbird	Varied Thrush	Green-backed Goldfinch
Rufous Hummingbird	Hermit Thrush	Spotted Towhee
Allen Hummingbird	Western Bluebird	Brown Towhee
Red-shafted Flicker	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Junco
Willow Woodpecker	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Nuttall Sparrow
Black Phoebe	Hutton Vireo	Fox Sparrow
Coat Jay	Lutescent Warbler	Song Sparrow

Eleven members attended: Mrs. Kibbe; Misses Blake, Giddings, Hunt, MacIver, Papina; Messrs. Davis, Greenhood, Holmes, Kirker and Myer; with six guests: Mr. and Mrs. Tillotson; Mesdames Anabel Bigelow, Davis, and Jack Stewart.

Emily Giddings, Historian.



California Gull Captures a Sandpiper

On August 29, 1937, while birding on the southeast shore of Great Salt Lake where the Jordan River empties into it, I saw a California Gull swoop into a flock of sandpipers as they were about to alight and capture one. I was not close enough to be positive that it was captured while on the wing, but I saw the bird in the gull's bill. At the time there were a few sick birds in the area and it is possible that a sick bird may have been picked up where the flock was alighting. The gull lit for a few minutes to kill its prey by beating it on the ground and then took flight.

The same day I also saw a Duck Hawk swoop down three times at a sick sandpiper that was only able to flutter over the ground and water but was not able to rise above either. The hawk did not strike it, and after the third attempt to raise the sandpiper, the hawk flew away.

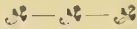
Duck sickness affects other birds as well as ducks, but in smaller numbers. C. W. Lockerbie, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Audubon Notes

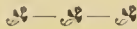
April Meeting: The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 13th, in room 19, Ferry Building, at 8 p. m.

The speaker, our President, Junea W. Kelly, will take as her subject "Nesting Grounds of the Shore Birds." The lecture will be illustrated.

Members may bring guests.



Directors' Meeting: There will be a meeting of the Directors at 7:30 before the regular meeting.



April Field Trip will be taken on Sunday, the 16th, to Lake Merced. Take Municipal "K" car (which reaches First and Market Streets approximately 8:25), transfer at St. Francis "Circle" to the "M" car and get off at Estero Station, where party will meet at 9:30 a. m. Bring luncheon.

Note: On Sundays very few cars go to the Bridge Terminal. Walk over to Market Street for the "K" car.

Leader: Gordon Bolander.

Dr. Egerton F. Card, 86 years, died February 1, 1939; a member since 1927.

March Meeting: The 259th regular meeting was held on the 9th, in room 19, Ferry Building, with fifty-six members and guests present. President Junea W. Kelly presiding.

Arthur Holmes of San Francisco was proposed for membership by Harold Kirker.

Mr. Webb, Chairman of the Conservation Committee, reported that the Public Utilities Commission, had authorized, at our suggestion, the placing

of a boom across the southerly end of Lake Merced.

The following observations were reported:

Gordon Bolander: Lake Merced, Cross-bills, March 5th, Slate-colored Junco, 8th (a record for San Francisco); many Cinnamon Teal, a pair of Wood Ducks, several Florida Gallinules in beautiful plumage, Allen Hummingbird, several nests, one with eggs; Willow Woodpecker; Kingfisher inspecting holes in bank; Cliff, Violet-green, Tree and Rough-winged Swallows; Russet-backed Thrush (early), Shrike, Townsend Warbler in full song, and American Egret (first seen February 22nd), March 16th.

Harold Kirker: Lake Merced, Red-bellied Hawk, February 4th; Gadwall, 22nd; Golden Gate Park, White-winged Scoter, Lutescent Warbler, March 1st.

Commander Parmenter: Tomales and Bodega Bays since November 28th in large numbers, as many as 5000±, Black Brant; Sears Point Cut-off, one Snowy Egret, 2000± Avocets, March 7th.

Glenn T. Ensign: San Rafael, White-throated Sparrow, March 9th. Mrs. Kenneth Saunders: a White-throated Sparrow which she had banded November 26, 1937, returned November 15, 1938, and was taken in trap, February 5, 1939.

Mr. James E. Cole, Junior Park Naturalist, was the speaker of the evening. His subject, "Yosemite National Park in Color," was illustrated by Kodachrome slides. He prefaced his talk with a few remarks on Conservation and presented the thought that when people are taught to appreciate nature they become conservationists.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

- President..... Mrs. G. Earle Kelly..... 1311 Grand St., Alameda, Calif.
 Corresponding Secretary..... C. B. Lastreto..... 260 California St., San Francisco
 Treasurer..... Mrs. A. B. Stephens..... 1695 Filbert St., San Francisco

Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., Room 19, Ferry Building.

Address Bulletin correspondence to Mrs. A. B. Stephens, Editor, 1695 Filbert St., San Francisco.

Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year. Life memberships, \$50.00.

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year. Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.