



THE  
MONTHLY



GULL  
BULLETIN

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### Pied-billed Grebe Feeding Its Young

On Sunday, April 28, 1940, on the North Lake of the Chain of Lakes, Golden Gate Park, the writer witnessed a very interesting family dinner.

An immature Pied-billed Grebe, both sides of its head distinctly marked with brown stripes, and the bill reddish at the base, was being fed by its mother. The latter would dive, the chick watching intently would suddenly swim rapidly fifteen or twenty feet where from beneath the surface the parent would emerge with a small minnow. This she fed to the young bird by thrusting the fish into its bill. The youngster made several unsuccessful attempts to swallow its victim, but in trying to get it into the proper position, it would lose its grip, and into the water the minnow, if not stunned, would dart. It was closely followed by the adult bird, which recaptured its prey and again appeared upon the surface, when the feeding operation would be repeated until the youngster succeeded in swallowing the fish.

Several minnows were caught, and on each occasion a performance similar to that described was noted, until finally the mother, no doubt feeling that she had fully performed her parental duties, dived, and the young bird followed, realizing that the evening meal was completed.

Joseph J. Webb, San Francisco, California. May 3, 1940.



### A Visit to Palm Springs

The privilege of spending a few weeks during March, 1940, on the desert in Coachella Valley, four miles outside Palm Springs, in what is called the Araby Tract, proved fruitful to me in adding some new birds to my life-list.

The days were balmy and warm, the breezes at times were a little cool and the nights still cooler. I visited Painted Canyon, Hidden Springs Canyon, Magnesia and Eagle Canyons, but I saw no other birds there than those seen near the house or up a canyon back of the house, with the exception of White-throated Swifts, which were seen in Painted Canyon.

Gambel Sparrows, adults and immatures, were everywhere in good sized flocks. Besides the regular song of the adults, the immatures had an entirely different one, and because of the two contrasting songs going on constantly I was bewildered. I placed a tin can under a hydrant close to the house and before long these birds came freely to drink.

Next in song, to the gentle continuous song of the Gambel Sparrows, were the notes of the Western Wood Pewees (nesting), the Gambel Quail, Green-backed Goldfinches, and those of a solitary Cactus Wren.

We saw very often a Roadrunner near the house and once a Cactus Woodpecker. Western Bluebirds and House Finches were present and English Sparrows were nesting. Overhead we saw a Red-tailed Hawk and Violet-green Swallows. Desert Bewick Wrens were in our neighbor's garden. Up a canyon

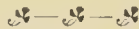
back of the house were Phainopeplas (nesting in mistletoe in Palo Verde trees); Desert Sparrows, Costa Hummingbirds, Verdins, Mourning Doves, Plumbeous Gnatcatchers and Rock Wrens. Rock Wrens were seen most any place on the rocky slopes of the mountains.

An interesting incident was observed with regard to Verdins building a nest. Nearby on a mound contractors were building a house, and in a wash below, the Verdins had already finished the shape of the nest, built in a shrub of catclaw, which had not as yet leaved out, the nest being completely exposed. I observed this nest the first day after arrival and the following evening it was not there, but lay near the house, the branch broken off some three feet below the nest, as though some child had reached up and pulled it down, snapping it off. I wired the nest back on the shrub, and the next day I saw the Verdins carrying in feathers, but this was not the case for the rest of the two weeks. The shrub did not show any signs of a healthy growth of leaves, and the Verdins abandoned the nest. Farther up the canyon another Verdin's nest was almost completely hidden by leaves.

The Desert Sparrows were seen in among the flocks of Gambel Sparrows feeding on the sandy washes under greasewood and other shrubs, or on the hillsides among the rocks in company with Rock Wrens. My first thought when I saw these birds was that they were Black-throated Gray Warblers, but the plain back and breast of the bird, feeding on the ground under bushes, soon identified them.

An exposed Costa Hummingbird's nest was so near the color of the shrub, a pale gray-green, that it was hard to find. It contained two eggs. At Salton Sea we saw only Pied-billed Grebes, a few gulls too high up to identify, and we heard Killdeer. The floor of the valley was profusely covered with sand-verbenas, white primroses, and encilias, a sight never to be forgotten.

Christine Danz, San Francisco, California. April 11, 1940.



### "The Gull"

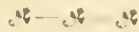
Our Association is now in its twenty-third year. THE GULL has been issued without interruption for twenty-one years. A great many bird clubs have had to discontinue publication of their bulletins during recent years on account of lack of funds. This is not the case with us; we have ample income, but on account of an apparent lack of interest on the part of members who might supply the editor with suitable material for publication, but neglect to do so, THE GULL is in imminent danger of having nothing to print.

A few members have done their part and will, no doubt, do more when they can. Their assistance is greatly appreciated, but it is unfair to expect the same ones to do all this work. Approximately 70% of our members are unable to take part in our activities and their only contact with and benefit from the Association is THE GULL. We should therefore strive to make THE GULL as interesting as possible.

What is the value of bird study to the individual? Especially in these days, it is an escape from a muddled world—it supplies relaxation, peace and even inspiration. How we enjoy seeing the birds returning in the spring and hearing their songs. There is pleasure and satisfaction in keeping lists of birds, noting in particular early arrivals and late departures. There is a thrill in adding a new name to one's list, especially when it is an odd species far beyond its range; I refer to the Anhinga, which we saw at Lake Merced last summer. Then there is bird banding and what it may reveal about migrations. Census taking is another activity which becomes more and more interesting year by year in showing an increase or decrease of the various species.

Of course, many members do not have the advantage of frequent trips afield and therefore cannot furnish material. However, there must be some who can render help but just do not realize how badly THE GULL needs help. Others probably have bird experiences or hear of them but do not think them of sufficient

value to pass along to the editor. Assistance must be forthcoming if our bulletin in its present form is to continue. Think the matter over. L. A. S.



### May Field Trip

On Sunday, May 12th, a small but enthusiastic group met at Saint Mary's, Contra Costa County, under the leadership of Mr. Arthur Myer, to enjoy a day of birding in one of the best habitats in the Bay Region. This is always a charming spot in the spring, but the heavy rains during the past months have made it exceptionally lovely.

En route to our main objective we were given a hearty welcome by Mr. Emile A. Pierre, who pointed out a tiny aperture in the side of his home where a House Wren has chosen to build her nest. As usual, the Black-headed Grosbeaks poured forth their glorious song of joy and the Lazuli Bunting displayed his exquisite coloring. We were disappointed, however, not to catch a glimpse at least of Long-tailed Chats and Western Tanagers. They had evidently selected other feeding-grounds for the day.

After lunch, most of the group followed the winding road along the canyon, noting with especial pleasure the fine stands of calochortus and columbine. It was good to be there and escape for a few hours from the catastrophic events of the past few weeks.

Our list of fifty-one species is given below:

Turkey Vulture	Wood Pewee	Macgillivary Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Violet-green Swallow	Pileolated Warbler
Cooper Hawk	Cliff Swallow	English Sparrow
Swainson Hawk	Coast Jay	Meadowlark
Red-tailed Hawk	California Jay	Red-wing Blackbird
Sparrow Hawk	Plain Titmouse	Bullock Oriole
Quail	Bush-tit	Brewer Blackbird
Killdeer	Slender-billed Nuthatch	Black-headed Grosbeak
Mourning Dove	Wren-tit	Lazuli Bunting
Horned Owl	House Wren	House Finch
Anna Hummingbird	Vigors Wren	Willow Goldfinch
Allen Hummingbird	Russet-backed Thrush	Green-backed Goldfinch
Red-shafted Flicker	Western Bluebird	Spotted Towhee
California Woodpecker	Shrike	Junco
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Cassin Vireo	Chipping Sparrow
Black Phoebe	Warbling Vireo	Nuttall Sparrow
Western Flycatcher	Lutescent Warbler	Song Sparrow

Fourteen members attending were: Mr. and Mrs. Dunshee; Misses Blake, Cave, Cohen, Kennedy, MacIver, Papina, Paroni, Roscoe, Sterne; Messrs. Heyne-mann, Myer, Pike, and three guests.

Ivander MacIver, Historian.



### Ill-fated Hummers

On March 17th Mrs. Oliver J. Millard observed from her window an Allen Hummingbird's nest about 15 or 20 feet below in a cypress tree in her garden. From her position she could look directly into the nest, when it was unoccupied, which made it a simple matter to keep a rather close and constant watch on developments. On March 30th she saw the eggs, and shortly thereafter, on April 4th, she saw the mother bird feeding the young ones. For the next ten days there was considerable wind and rain, but in spite of the downpour and the wind which whipped the branches back and forth, the mother sat faithfully upon her brood. On April 15th the mother was seen again feeding the young, but on the 16th she was mysteriously missing. All morning the young with bills wide apart were calling for food and moving about in the nest, but their distress was unheeded by the mother! What could be the matter? Had she been the victim of some



boy's airgun or had she flown into an open window somewhere and was unable to find a way out immediately? That afternoon there was no stirring in the nest—all was quiet! The mother was not seen on the 17th, but on the 18th an adult bird was seen at the nest, but whether it was the mother or not, there was no response from the young. The following morning Mr. Millard climbed up to the nest and, as expected, the little ones were dead. As they were pretty well feathered out, he took them to the California Academy of Sciences, where they were made into specimens.

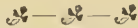
The nest was left untouched in the hope that it might be used again, but at the present moment it remains untenanted. A. B. S.



### Audubon Notes

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

The speaker of the evening will be Mr. David G. Nichols, whose subject will be "Suggestions for the Study of Bird Behavior."



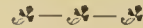
**June Field Trip** will be taken on the 16th to Ross, Marin County. Take the 8:15 a. m. Sausalito Ferry, buying round-trip ticket. In case the ferries are taken off, members will have to come by Pacific Greyhound bus and meet at the same place. Bring luncheon and dinner if you care to remain in the evening. There are fireplaces where food can be cooked. Those coming by cars meet the others at Ross station about 9:10 a. m.



**May Meeting:** The 237th regular meeting was held on the 16th in the Auditorium of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Building, with 175 members and guests present.

The speaker of the evening was Mr. Roger Tory Peterson of the National Association of Audubon Societies. He spoke of the work being done by the wardens of the National Association at

the different sanctuaries, and also of the progress made among the junior Audubon members. He showed both slides and motion pictures of interesting birding places visited during the trip across the continent.



**Observations:** Harold Kirker: Tomales Point, two Harlequin Ducks, male and female, four Oystercatchers; Point Reyes, Tufted Puffins, April 28th.

Don Heyneman: Golden Gate Park, Warbling Vireo on nest, April 13th; Turkey Vulture, Black-headed Grosbeak, California Woodpecker, May 3rd.

Mrs. Otis H. Smith: A Golden-crowned Sparrow banded 39-139,716 on January 31st, was retaken for the thirtieth time on May 4th. It was seen again on the 5th with two others, one banded and one unbanded, and an immature one was seen on the 7th; a female Black-headed Grosbeak which had been banded A 285411 on May 14th, 1939, was retaken on May 14, 1940; another female was banded A 285533 on the morning of the 16th and a Russet-backed Thrush banded 40-135722 on the 15th.

Miss Werner: Golden Gate Park, one pair of Cowbirds, May 16th.

## Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

### For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President.....Mr. B. K. Dunshee.....Room 714, 245 Market St., San Francisco  
 Corresponding Secretary.....Mr. Joseph J. Webb.....519 California St., San Francisco  
 Treasurer.....Mrs. A. B. Stephens.....1695 Filbert St., San Francisco

Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., 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.

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year.

Life memberships, \$50.00.

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