

THE WREN-TIT

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THE LENGTH AND WIDTH OF THE HOME OF THE SNOWY PLOVER

Sandy beaches occur, interruptedly, along much of the Pacific coastline of North America, and from northern Lower California regularly to the center of our state such a beach may provide a home for Snowy Plovers. Conservatively speaking, the sum total of such sandy beaches should present a length of several hundred miles. This represents the length of the beach line inhabitable by Snowy Plovers—quite an attenuated home!

Now to understand the width of the home, one must understand the configuration of a sandy beach. Beginning at the ocean side there is, first, a hard, smooth, gently sloping table that is covered regularly by the usual tides; landward from this there is an upper beach bench, usually sharply marked off from the first by a shelf a few inches or a few feet in height. This bench, because it becomes dry, is pock-marked by the winds and has the drift left by the storms and the seasonal high tides. Beyond this a row of dunes of varying height and width rear themselves. Only the upper beach bench will do for the home of the Snowy Plover and, though it may vary in



NEST OF THE SNOWY PLOVER

width, depending upon the precipitousness of the shore, apparently only a portion of it is suitable.

At Moss Landing the upper beach bench is thirty to forty yards wide. On it some five nests of the Snowy Plover have been found (April 26, 1930, three nests; July 26, 1930, two nests). Of these, three were nineteen, one was seventeen, and one was sixteen yards from the high tide shelf.

If we consider this region alone, then here is a possible home for nests several miles long but, through the exigencies of habitat restrictions, it cannot be, in any place, over a few feet wide.

GAYLE PICKWELL.

LASTS

These last observations of winter visitors and transients are supplied from the observations of Gladys Record, Emily Smith, and Gayle Pickwell. These lingerers are always of more than passing interest since they are remaining on a wintering or transient ground often long after permanent residents or even summer residents have established breeding territories and nests there.

Species	Date and Place Last Seen	Authority
Band-tailed Pigeon	April 19, No. 1st St., San Jose	Smith
Band-tailed Pigeon	April 26, Uvas Valley	Pickwell
Band-tailed Pigeon	April 28, Hecker Road	Pickwell
Varied Thrush	April 10, Los Gatos	Smith
Hermit Thrush	March 12, Los Gatos	Record
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	March 22, Cupertino (Monta Vista Road)	Pickwell
American Pipit	April 19, Alviso; Los Buellis Hills ...	Smith, Pickwell
Cedar Waxwing	May 22, San Jose	Smith
Audubon Warbler	April 12, Los Gatos	Smith
Western Tanager	May 27, San Jose	Pickwell
Purple Finch	April 15, San Jose	Pickwell
Purple Finch	April 26, Almaden Road	Pickwell
Fox Sparrow	March 6, Los Gatos	Record
Golden-crowned Sparrow	April 23, San Jose	Smith
Gambel White-crowned Sparrow	April 23, San Jose	Smith
Nuttall or Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow	April 15, Silver Creek Hills	Pickwell

SOME NESTING RECORDS

The following are nesting records supplied by Miss Gladys Record of Los Gatos. February 17, Anna Hummingbird building nest; February 23, incubating. April 6, House Wren building in a salt box nest fastened to the side of a house, twigs, feathers, and a snake skin in the nest material; April 20, nest with two eggs. April 8, Western Flycatcher renovating old nest, the third year for this nest; April 14, two eggs; April 16, three eggs; April 18, four eggs; April 19, incubating. April 16, Brown Towhee using old nest of Linnet and incubating four eggs. April 17, Black-headed Grosbeak using last year's nest. April 21, Bullock Oriole feeding young in nest in eucalyptus. April 22, Orange-crowned Warbler feeding young in the nest. Gayle Pickwell reported a California Shrike nest with two eggs in a tamarisk tree at Warm Springs, March 23. The ornithology class of the State College at San Jose, under Dr. Pickwell, found a Nuttall White-crowned Sparrow's nest with half-grown nestlings in a bush lupine, and three nests of the Snowy Plover (two with three eggs and one with two eggs), at Moss Landing on April 26. The Nature Study Class under Mr. Hazeltine found a Water Ouzel feeding well-feathered young in a nest under a bridge on the Uvas Creek, April 26. A Western Flycatcher was nearby, incubating.

REPORT OF THE MAY MEETING

No speaker was scheduled for the meeting of May 19; instead the evening was spent in a symposium of bird observations to which many members contributed. Since many of these short presentations were record-worthy they have been incorporated in tables of "Firsts," "Lasts," and nesting records both in this number and in the April number.

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society does not schedule meetings regularly in June, July or August.

PINE SISKIN AND WESTERN ROBIN NESTING IN SAN JOSE

In the Wren-tit for July, 1929 (Vol. 1, No. 3) a record was made of Robins and Siskins nesting on the Campus of the State College at San Jose. This year, 1930, Siskins remained on the Campus again, and were noted throughout the spring and early summer (May 9, June 14, July 9). Miss Emily Smith reported a recent Siskin nestling in early May. The groups of redwoods are responsible, no doubt, in deluding this bird into a man-made island of Transition conditions when all about is Upper Sonoran. Though Robins did not remain on the Campus this year, Mr. Homer Lowe reported them to be on North Second Street, San Jose, on May 4, and for two or three weeks previously. A few days later he reported the discovery of a nest in this vicinity.

FIELD TRIPS

The May trip was of necessity cancelled, but as substitute the Society joined the ornithology class of the State College at San Jose and visited the Los Banos Marshes on June 7, with Gayle Pickwell as leader. The route to the Marshes involved the Monterey Highway to Gilroy, from Gilroy east through the Pacheco Pass to Los Banos, and north of Los Banos about six miles. Though it was clear at San Jose, a low, chilly fog was encountered north of Gilroy and not quitted until the beginning of the Pass. The weather in the San Joaquin Valley was clear but not excessively warm, with the usual strong wind from the northwest throughout the day. The thrills of the day: the Yellow-billed Magpies of Pacheco Pass, the screaming Black-necked Stilts, and the stately and magnificent Egrets of the Los Banos marches. The birds of Santa Clara Valley (urban conditions, orchards, some open fields with oaks): Bonaparte Gull (one on Soap Lake), Western Flycatcher, Western Wood Pewee, Barn Swallow, Marsh Wren (Soap Lake), Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-throat (Soap Lake), Western Meadowlark, Brewer Blackbird, Black-headed Grosbeak, Linnet, Green-backed Goldfinch, Song Sparrow (Soap Lake). The birds of Pacheco Pass (through hills of the Mount Hamilton Range, grassy and oak-dotted, creek bed with sycamores, extensive brush on south slope; buckeyes in bloom; easternmost portion barren except for grass; maximum elevation of road 1300 feet): Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Sparrow Hawk, Mourning Dove, Anna Hummingbird, Red-shafted Flicker, California Woodpecker, Nuttall Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, California Jay, Yellow-billed Magpie, Western Crow, Western Bluebird, Long-tailed Chat, Western Meadowlark, Linnet, Spotted Towhee. The birds at Los Banos (extraordinary combination of irrigated, marsh, and barren lands; cattail and tule filled ditches, poplar-lined roads, desert-like adobe mounds): Great Blue Heron, American Egret (ten or more), Black-crowned Night Heron, American Bittern, White-faced Glossy Ibis, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Marsh Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt (numerous, two nests with eggs), Forster Tern, Black Tern (numerous, two nests with eggs), Mourning Dove, Burrowing Owl, Red-shafted Flicker, Western Kingbird, Black Phoebe, Horned Lark, Barn Swallow (nesting in large numbers under bridges), Cliff Swallow (nesting in large numbers under bridges), Marsh Wren, California Shrike, Mockingbird, Western Meadowlark, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Tri-colored Blackbird, Brewer Blackbird, Song Sparrow; 51 species.

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society does not schedule regular field trips during the months of July and August but much field work is done nevertheless by small groups and especially by the bird students of the State College at San Jose. One especially interesting trip, taken by the ornithology class of the College on July 26, under the leadership of Gayle Pickwell, had as its destination the brackish sloughs and open beach at Moss Landing, Monterey County. In order to observe the maximum number of birds, the trip was routed over the Almaden and McKeen Roads through the Arroyo

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Calero, the upper end of Paradise Valley, the full length of Uvas Valley; Hecker Road to Watsonville; Watsonville via Castroville to Moss Landing. The day was clear and cool throughout. Tragedies: dozens of marine birds, such as White-winged and American Scoters, Murres, Shearwaters, Guillemots and Grebes, oil-soaked and dead or dying on the open beach. Thrills: A Black Turnstone flipping mud particles; Long-billed and Hudsonian Curlews standing side by side; two nests of the Snowy Plover, one with three eggs, one with two; a young Least Tern, fully fledged, but as yet unable to fly. The birds of San Jose and Almaden Road (urban conditions, orchards, and the dry creek beds of Guadalupe and Alamitos Creeks with their attendant sycamores, cottonwoods, elders, tree tobacco, and poison oak): Anna Hummingbird, Western Wood Pewee, Western Flycatcher, Cliff Swallow, Western Robin (adults and young with spotted breasts), Russet-backed Thrush, California Shrike, Yellow Warbler, Western Meadowlark, Brewer Blackbird, Black-headed Grosbeak, Linnet, Pine Siskin, Brown Towhee. The birds of Arroyo Calero and of Llagas and Uvas Valleys (these regions, all in Santa Clara County, are areas of grass-covered, rolling hills with occasional oaks, permanent streams lined with cottonwoods, alders, willows, and sycamores; and gulleys with laurel, buckeyes, madrone, manzanita and various brush; along the Uvas Creek are some coast redwoods and Douglas firs and the ridges above have Digger pines and blue oaks): Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Sparrow Hawk, California Quail, Mourning Dove, Allen Hummingbird, Downy Woodpecker, Nuttall Woodpecker, California Woodpecker, Red-shafted Flicker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Western Wood Pewee, Cliff Swallow, Yellow-billed Magpie, California Jay, Western Crow, Plain Titmouse, Slender-billed Nuthatch, Wren-tit, Western Bluebird, California Shrike, Warbling Vireo, Western Meadowlark, Brewer Blackbird, Linnet, Green-backed Goldfinch, Brown Towhee, Lark Sparrow. Hecker Highway and Hecker Pass (Highway through orchards and oak-covered hills; Pass through Bodfish Canyon, heavily wooded with coast redwoods, tan oaks, alders, laurel and big-leaf maple; Summit a transition area with forest on the north slope and chaparral on the south): Turkey Vulture, Anna Hummingbird (Summit), Downy Woodpecker, Western Wood Pewee, California Jay, Plain Titmouse, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Wren-tit, Western Bluebird, Western Meadowlark, Willow Goldfinch, Pine Siskin. Road to Castroville and Moss Landing (the road passes through grass-covered fields chiefly, but occasional heavy stands of live oaks; Moss Landing provides two distinctive conditions, viz., the brackish water and mud flats that attend the ramifications of the Elkhorn Slough and the open sandy beach with its two beach benches and dune strip): Eared Grebe (oil-soaked and dead), Dark-bodied Shearwater (at least three, all oil-soaked and dead), Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Brown Pelican, Redhead Duck, White-winged Scoter (several dead and dying, oil-soaked), American Scoter (one, dead, oil-soaked), Turkey Vulture, Marsh Hawk, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Snowy Plover (two nests with eggs), Black Turnstone, Long-billed Curlew, Hudsonian Curlew, Willet, Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Marbled Godwit, Sanderling, Western Gull, California Gull, Least Tern (several adults, one recent nestling), Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Burrowing Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Barn Swallow, Western Crow, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, Linnet, Green-backed Goldfinch; 67 species.

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