

THE WREN-TIT

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LATE NESTING AND PUZZLING BEHAVIOR OF THE CALIFORNIA WOODPECKER

Squealy, young-bird notes, as late as October 3, was a matter for investigation. They led us to a large willow beside a little creek just behind the Grammar School in Los Gatos. There, although the summer was well gone, we found California Woodpeckers still busy feeding nestlings.

Last May the school children had discovered two families of these Woodpeckers occupying holes in separate branches of an old, battered willow; and before school closed, early in June, at the entrance of each hole a lusty, fully-feathered young bird had been seen sticking its head out.

It was from one of these holes that the notes of October 3 were coming. A nestling was at the entrance, its shoulders big enough to fill the round opening when it thrust its head forth. That the young bird represented a third brood, we could only guess, for no observations of this nesting site had been made during the vacation months.

The behavior of half a dozen adult birds in the vicinity of this nest gave us much more to guess about. All of these seemed interested in the one nest, coming and going in a group. When they returned from a foraging trip they made the willow and neighboring oaks noisy with their concern, each bird repeatedly screeching *kraa-ka*, with a sidewise and downward sweep of its head. We watched three returns of this puzzling group of parents and seemingly would-be-parents. Each time there was flying about and harsh calling in the trees, before an adult bird would go to the nest. Our presence near the home willow was not the whole cause for the loudly expressed concern, for when we were back in the school house we heard at intervals a racket of *kraa-ka*'s. Nor was animosity toward each other on part of the birds an evident cause, for we saw no chasing nor fighting.

We observed six feedings in all, each very brief, a squealing, straining nestling at the entrance getting the tidbit. On the first observed return of the birds there were two feedings; but because of the difficulty of keeping account of six or more nervous birds at once, we could not be sure that two different birds did the feeding. The second time there was only one feeding, although two other birds followed the feeding bird to the dead stub where the nest was. The third time there were three feedings, and that time, by dividing between us the task of watching the birds, we managed to be sure that three birds were involved.

October 6 the young birds were out of the hole. We located two of them, in different trees, still exciting the solicitude of several adult birds. But as to how many such birds there were, or how many were feeding young, we could not tell for the young birds were too scattered.

That three adults were feeding these young there is no doubt, and from this evidence we can not refrain from doing some guessing as to the reasons. Were some of the apparently solicitous birds young of the year still following their parents and imitating to the extent of feeding young? Or was the third feeding bird the neighbor of last May still feeling the urge to feed? Or is communism possible among California Woodpeckers?

HELEN WRIGHT and EMILY SMITH.

LAST DATES FOR SUMMER RESIDENTS AND MIGRANTS

Species	Date and Place	Observer
Anthony Green Heron, 1	Oct. 1, Willow Glen	Emily Smith
Turkey Vulture, 5	Sept. 27, Hall's Valley	Audubon Society
Western Mourning Dove, many	Aug. 30, near Alviso	Audubon Society
Texas Nighthawk, 1	Sept. 17, near Los Gatos	Yvonne Champreux
Allen Hummingbird, 1	Aug. 30, Alum Rock Canyon	Audubon Society
Western Flycatcher	Aug. 28, Hall's Valley	Gayle Pickwell
Western Flycatcher, 1	Sept. 19, Los Gatos	Gladys Record
Western Flycatcher, 1	Oct. 4, San Jose	Emily Smith
Western Wood Pewee, 1	Sept. 23, Los Gatos	Emily Smith
Violet-green Swallow, 24	Sept. 28, Los Gatos	Emily Smith
Barn Swallow and Cliff Swallow, mixed flock	Sept. 17, Dumbarton Bridge	Emily Smith
Russet-backed Thrush, 1	Sept. 19, Los Gatos	Gladys Record
Western Warbling Vireo, 1	Aug. 30, Coyote Creek	Audubon Society
Yellow Warbler, 3	Oct. 4, San Jose	Emily Smith
Black-throated Gray Warbler, 1	Oct. 4, San Jose	Emily Smith
Pileolated Warbler, 1	Sept. 19, Los Gatos	Gladys Record
Pileolated Warbler, 1	Oct. 15, Los Gatos	Emily Smith
Western Tanager, 1	Sept. 13, Los Gatos	Emily Smith
Western Tanager, 1	Oct. 3, Alum Rock Canyon	Gayle Pickwell
Bullock Oriole, 1	Aug. 1, San Jose	Gayle Pickwell
Black-headed Grosbeak	Aug. 24, San Jose	Gayle Pickwell

FIRST DATES FOR WINTER VISITORS AND MIGRANTS

Species	Date and Place	Observer
Semi-palmated Plover	July 19, Alviso	Gayle Pickwell
Black-bellied Plover	July 19, Alviso	Gayle Pickwell
Hudsonian Curlew	July 19, Alviso	Gayle Pickwell
Western Willet	July 19, Alviso	Gayle Pickwell
Least Sandpiper	July 19, Alviso	Gayle Pickwell
Long-billed Dowitcher	July 19, Alviso	Gayle Pickwell
Western Sandpiper	July 19, Alviso	Gayle Pickwell
Say Phoebe, 2	Sept. 14, Alum Rock Canyon	William Landels
Pipit, many	Sept. 17, Dumbarton Bridge	Emily Smith
White-crowned Sparrow, flock	Sept. 19, Alum Rock Canyon	William Landels
Western Robin, 7	Sept. 21, Los Gatos	Gladys Record
White-crowned Sparrow, flock	Sept. 24, Los Gatos	Emily Smith
Golden-crowned Sparrow, flock	Sept. 25, Los Gatos	Emily Smith
Red-breasted Sapsucker, 1	Sept. 27, Mt. Hamilton Rd	Audubon Society
Audubon Warbler, 7	Sept. 27, Mt. Hamilton Rd	Audubon Society
Savannah Sparrow, several	Sept. 27, Mt. Hamilton Rd	Audubon Society
Gambel White-crowned Sparrow, flock	Sept. 27, Hall's Valley	Audubon Society
Audubon Warbler	Sept. 28, Alum Rock Canyon	William Landels
Ruby-crowned Kinglet, 2	Oct. 2, Los Gatos	Emily Smith
Audubon Warbler, several	Oct. 3, San Jose	Emily Smith
Golden-crowned Sparrow	Oct. 3, San Jose	Gayle Pickwell
Cedar Waxwing, flock of 14	Oct. 4, Los Gatos	Emily Smith
Red-breasted Sapsucker, 1	Oct. 6, Los Gatos	Emily Smith
Say Phoebe, 1	Oct. 6, San Jose	J. S. Hensill
Western Robin, 1	Oct. 7, Saratoga	Audubon Society
Hermit Thrush, 1	Oct. 7, Saratoga	Audubon Society
Varied Thrush, 1	Oct. 15, Los Gatos	Audubon Society
Cedar Waxwing, flock	Oct. 15, San Jose	Yvonne Champreux
Fox Sparrow, 1	Oct. 15, Los Gatos	Caroline Clement

Victoria Gillmeister, Gladys Record, Emily Smith, Gayle Pickwell, and others report seeing the Western Mockingbird in San Jose, Los Gatos, and Warm Springs during October. It would seem as if Mockingbirds were becoming regular winter visitors to Santa Clara Valley.

Emily Smith reports that in the vicinity of Los Gatos the Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows have been common since the first day they were observed; Ruby-crowned Kinglets rather common since Oct. 7; Audubon Warblers quite numerous since Oct. 10; and Hermit Thrushes in usual numbers since Oct. 16. Only a few Robins have been noted here and there in the valley, although small flocks have been reported from the Santa Cruz Mts.

REPORTS OF REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society met September 22, after a three months recess, again in Room 17 in the San Jose State College, Dr. Pickwell presiding. The evening was given over to an exchange by members of their experiences with bird during the summer months. Of special interest was Dr. Pickwell's report of seeing Dwarf Cowbirds near Coyote Creek between Alviso and Milpitas on July 8 and 19; an Arizona Hooded Oriole near his home on South 9th St. in San Jose, July 21, the latter record probably being the first for this valley. Dr. Charles Piper Smith traced the route he followed through Europe this last summer, and related a few of the high spots in his bird experiences.

The regular October meeting was held on the 20th, Dr. Pickwell presid-

ing. The meeting was devoted in part to annual reports and the election of officers for the new year. After the business meeting a short round-table discussion of shore-birds was held in anticipation of a field trip to study shore-birds the following Saturday. Miss Emily Smith described the behavior of Sanderlings she observed near Santa Cruz, and of a Wandering Tattler at Dumbarton Bridge. Dr. Pickwell brought up the question of the possible partial or complete reversal of parental instincts in shore-birds, and related his experiences with Killdeers that proved two incubating birds to be males and the females probably not very solicitous parents. Other interesting observations rounded out a full evening.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Three field trips have been taken this fall, each under the leadership of Dr. Gayle Pickwell and Miss Emily Smith. **August 30** the Alviso salt marshes and Alum Rock Canyon were visited, both rather briefly. The day was clear, very warm, and almost windless. A party of six went by automobile first to the marshes, stopping several times along the way; then to the Canyon, with a short stop at the Coyote Cr. bridge between Alviso and Milpitas. 56 species and subspecies of birds were listed, 7 of them summer residents or migrants. In our lists this month an attempt has been made to indicate in some measure the numbers of individuals seen. When exact numbers could not be given, the terms "numerous," "many," and "several" have been used to show comparative numbers. To save space the three terms have been abbreviated as follows: num., m., sev.

Birds observed along the San Jose-Alviso Rd. (weedy roadside ditches, orchards, truck gardens, open fields): Turkey Vulture, at least 25; White-tailed Kite, 2; Desert Sparrow Hawk, 1; Western Mourning Dove, m.; California Shrike, sev.; Western Meadowlark, sev.; Brewer Blackbird, sev.; Linnet, sev.; Willow Goldfinch, small flock; Green-backed Goldfinch, sev.; Song Sparrow, m.

Short way into salt marches at Alviso (wide stretches of marshland, with sloughs and mudflats): California Blue Heron, 1; Marsh Hawk, 2; California Quail, sev.; California Clapper Rail, 1; Killdeer, sev.; Black-bellied Plover, 5; Hudsonian Curlew, 8; Least Sandpiper, num.; Long-billed Dowitcher, 5; Western Sandpiper, m.; Western Belted Kingfisher, 1; Violet-green Swallow, 25; Western Meadowlark, 1; Savannah Sparrow, sev.

At Coyote Cr. bridge on Alviso-Milpitas Rd. (stagnant pools, copses, and tall cottonwoods): Turkey Vulture, 1; Black Phoebe, 1; Western Flycatcher, 1; Violet-green Swallow, sev.; Russet-backed Thrush, 1; Western Warbling Vireo, 1; Yellow Warbler, 2; Yellow-throat, sev.; Pileolated Warbler, 1; Linnet, sev.; Willow Goldfinch, 3; Song Sparrow, 2.

In Alum Rock Canyon (picnic grounds beside permanent stream, fringed with sycamores, alders, and maples; a mile or so up road on south-facing slope, into brushy country): Turkey Vulture, 8; Western Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Swainson Hawk, 1; Golden Eagle, 1; Desert Sparrow Hawk, 1; California Quail, sev.; White-throated Swift, 1; Anna Hummingbird, 1; Allen Hummingbird, 1; Willow Woodpecker, 1; Nuttall Woodpecker, 1; California Woodpecker, sev.; Red-shafted Flicker, 3; Black Phoebe, 1; Western Flycatcher, 1; Stellar Jay, m.; California Jay, sev.; Plain Titmouse, 2; Chestnut-backed Chickadee, small flock; Bush-tit, 2 flocks; Slender-billed Nuthatch, 2; Wren-tit, sev.; Water Ouzel, 1; Bewick Wren, sev.; California Thrasher, 2; Western Bluebird, small flock; Linnet, sev.; Green-backed Goldfinch, sev.; Spotted Towhee, 2; Brown Towhee, 2; Rufous-crowned Sparrow, 2; Oregon Junco, small flock.

September 27 eleven members took an all-day auto trip up the Mt. Hamilton Rd. to Hall's Valley and Smith Creek. Many stops were made along the way. The day was again clear and warm, with almost no wind. The bird list totaled 41 species and subspecies. Of especial interest was a Mockingbird singing persistently near Hall's Valley; and in the valley itself a flock of at least fifty Magpies on the ground, the handsome fellows constantly rising and gliding over their companions to more advantageous points.

Birds observed on the southwest slope of the foothills bordering Santa Clara Valley (steep, grassy, all dry and brown, with some sagebrush and occasional oaks): Western Red-tailed Hawk, at least 4; Desert Sparrow Hawk, 2; Anna Hummingbird, 1; Red-shafted Flicker, sev.; Red-breasted

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Sapsucker, 1; California Horned Lark, sev.; California Jay, sev.; Plain Titmouse, sev.; Western Bluebird, flock of 10; California Shrike, 1; Audubon Warbler, 1; Western Meadowlark, sev.; Brewer Blackbird, flock of 20; Linnet, sev.; Green-backed Goldfinch, sev.; Brown Towhee, 2; Savannah Sparrow, sev.; Rufous-crowned Sparrow, 1; White-crowned Sparrow, small flock.

In Hall's Valley and on bordering hillsides (valley flat and half a mile wide, given over to orchards and meadow-land; hills to west belted with black oak, turning golden-brown; those to east brown with dry grasses, seamed with oaks, laurel, and maple in gullies): Turkey Vulture, 5; Western Red-tailed Hawk, 14; Desert Sparrow Hawk, 1; California Quail, 3 coveys; Anna Hummingbird, 4; Red-shafted Flicker, sev.; California Woodpecker, 2 small flocks; Nuttall Woodpecker, 2; Stellar Jay, sev.; California Jay, sev.; Yellow-billed Magpie, flock of at least 50; Western Crow, flock of at least 20; Plain Titmouse, sev.; Bush-tit, 3 flocks; Slender-billed Nuthatch, 3; Wren-tit, sev.; Bewick Wren, 2; Western Mockingbird, 1; California Thrasher, 2; Western Bluebird, small flock; Hutton Vireo, 2; Audubon Warbler, 6; Western Meadowlark, sev.; Linnet and Green-backed Goldfinch, mixed flock, and sev. scattered; Spotted Towhee, sev.; Brown Towhee, at least 5 pairs; Western Lark Sparrow, small flock; Oregon Junco, 3 small flocks; Golden-crowned Sparrow, 3; Gambel White-crowned Sparrow, 2 flocks; White-crowned Sparrow (Puget Sound?), small flock.

At Smith Creek bridge (permanent stream fringed with alder, willow, and black cottonwood): Western Belted Kingfisher, 1; California Woodpecker, sev.; Black Phoebe, 1; Steller Jay, 3; Plain Titmouse, 1; Slender-billed Nuthatch, 1; Western Bluebird, sev.; Linnet and Green-backed Goldfinch, mixed flock; Spotted Towhee, 1; Song Sparrow, 1.

October 25 a short morning was spent by 7 members on the levees to the south and east of Dumbarton Bridge. On the way to the bridge a short detour was made from the highway at Warm Springs into the dry fields back of the town. The day was mild and very clear, with a steady wind down the bay. 37 species and subspecies were listed. The thrill of the morning was the sight of countless shore-birds in the air at once, started up by a lone Pigeon Hawk.

Birds observed at Warm Springs (roadside brush and cottonwoods, dry fields, small orchard, small truck garden): Desert Sparrow Hawk, 1; Red-shafted Flicker, 1; Say Phoebe, 1; California Horned Lark, sev.; Western Mockingbird, 1; California Shrike, 3; Audubon Warbler, 2; Western Meadowlark, flock of probably 100; Brewer Blackbird, sev.; Linnet, small flock; Willow Goldfinch, flock of about 50; Green-backed Goldfinch, 2; Gambel White-crowned Sparrow, large flock.

At Dumbarton Bridge (dirt levees bordering sloughs and open squares of shallow water; myriads of small flies on bridge road, muddy sides of levees, even on surface of shallower water): Eared Grebe, 30; California Blue Heron, 3; Black-crowned Night Heron, 8; Lesser Scaup, 24; Western Red-tailed Hawk, 3; Pigeon Hawk, 1; California Clapper Rail, 2; Killdeer, sev.; Black-bellied Plover, m.; Hudsonian Curlew, 3; Western Willet, flock of 10; Greater Yellow-legs, 6, scattered; Least Sandpiper, num.; Red-backed Sandpiper, m.; Western Sandpiper, m.; Marbled Godwit, flock of 24; Avocet, 1 dead; Ring-billed Gull, sev.; Bonaparte Gull, sev.; Forster Tern, 2; Caspian Tern, 1; Black Tern, m.; Pipit, m.; Brewer Blackbird, small flock; Savannah Sparrow, 2; Song Sparrow, sev.

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