

line and about 30 from the South Dakota line. I could not tell the sex. I only saw the one bird. When first seen a pair of Kingbirds were chasing it and it flew into a thick willow hedge to escape them. This Pigeon was about the size of a Passenger Pigeon or a trifle smaller, white collar around back part of neck. The end of tail square, that is tail feathers all of equal length. When the tail feathers were held spread out it plainly showed the band of dull or dirty white.

Yours truly,

CHAS. J. CAMPBELL."

There may be some significance in the capture of this bird so far off its range, when taken in connection with the outrageous slaughter of many hundreds of this species, which recently took place in Southern California, as described in the May-June (1912) issue of 'The Condor' (p. 108). R. W. SHUFELDT, *Washington, D. C.*

On the Alleged Egg-carrying Habit of the Band-tailed Pigeon.—

In the July 'Auk' Mr. Wallace Craig protests at some length against the general acceptance of the belief that the Band-tailed Pigeon carries its egg from the nest on occasion, and incubates it on any limb of a tree on which it may happen to alight, as published in Bendire's 'Life Histories of North American Birds.' He remarks, quite rightly, that such an extraordinary act should not be believed except upon the best of evidence, which he asserts is not at hand.

Doubtless other western ornithologists besides myself have read with amusement this tale of the pigeon's actions, but without feeling the need of formally refuting the story. This, however, should have been done years ago, for such stories are sometimes repeatedly and widely quoted, as this one has been, until they are generally accepted as established facts. It is pertinent, in this connection, to refer to Mr. Herbert Brown's interesting account of the Masked Bob-white (*Auk*, XXI, 1904, pp. 209-213), where statements by Major Bendire's informant, referring to the species treated, and also quoted in Bendire's 'Life Histories,' are discussed and rated at about their true value.

Under the circumstances it is most unfortunate that many such statements and records should have been so widely repeated in ornithological literature. As the years go by such erroneous 'records' become increasingly difficult to correct, and while we can still do so, every effort should be made toward their elimination.

In this connection, and as an example of the insistence of an erroneous record, there can be cited the generally accepted statement of the Band-tailed Pigeons' breeding in southern Arizona during the entire year. This is positively asserted as an accepted fact in various books dealing with western ornithology, and is, I believe, traceable back to the same source as the egg-carrying tale. It is also contrary to fact. The Band-tailed

Pigeon is not resident in the parts of Arizona in which it breeds — the Transition zone — and there are no published records of breeding during the winter months. In fact, I do not know of a definite record of the occurrence of the species anywhere in the state in mid-winter, and I have had occasion to make careful search through ornithological literature dealing with Arizona.

Mr. Craig's objection is abundantly justified by the ridiculous nature of the story he cites, which, without a particle of corroborative evidence, has been so generally accepted as sober truth. It induces me to publish this statement regarding the character of other records from the same source.—H. S. SWARTH, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, California.*

Pigeon Hawk in South Carolina in Winter.—On February 26, 1911, I took a specimen of this species (*Falco columbarius columbarius*) in the brown immature plumage in St. Andrews Parish, near Charleston. The skin is at present in the collection of the Charleston Museum. This is the first record for this species taken during the winter months. Mr. A. T. Wayne records (*Auk*, XXVIII, 1911, p. 265) the occurrence of two adults which he observed on Nov. 29, 1910, and Jan. 14 and 16, 1911, but was unable to secure. These records establish the Pigeon Hawk as a rare winter visitant in South Carolina.—JULIAN MITCHELL, JR., *Charleston, S. C.*

Red-headed Woodpecker at Newburyport, Mass.—On July 13, 1912, while engaged in photographing, in a mowing field, the nest and eggs of the Ring-necked Pheasant, my attention was caught by a flash of bold color in a nearby elm, and on the completion of my work with the camera, I went to investigate the owner of the brilliant plumage. Soon locating him on a dead limb near the upper centre of the tree, I readily recognized him as a Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), an uncommon bird in this part of New England. I had a good view of him, covering a period of several minutes, as he explored the points of interest on the dead limbs of the tree. After a little while he took flight, in a northerly direction, but although I walked for some little distance, I was unsuccessful in getting another glimpse of him.

Inquiries in the neighborhood brought out the fact that he had been seen several times, earlier in the season, but I could find no one who knew of his breeding here. Doubtless he was a solitary wanderer who had strayed from his usual range.

Some twenty years ago a pair of these birds were found nesting in an old orchard in the southern end of the town. Just at the time that the four young, were ready to fly, the whole family was taken, and now graces the private collection of a resident of the town.—S. WALDO BAILEY, *Newburyport, Mass.*



Swarth, Harry S. 1912. "On the Alleged Egg-Carrying Habit of the Band-Tailed Pigeon." *The Auk* 29, 540–541. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4071800>.

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