

BIRDS OF THE REGION ABOUT NEEDLES,
CALIFORNIA.

BY N. HOLLISTER.

Plate VIII.

IN THE spring of 1905, while engaged in field work for the United States Biological Survey, I spent some weeks in the vicinity of the Colorado River near the point where California, Nevada, and Arizona meet. The region is interesting from an ornithological point of view as little work has been done there since the days when Fort Mohave was a military post.¹

Arriving in the region from the west I spent from April 10 to 16 at Goffs (Blake postoffice), California, a station on the Santa Fé railroad between Bagdad and Needles and about twenty-five miles west of the Colorado River. The territory surrounding Goffs is extreme desert, a series of bare rocky hills and sandy flats with no trees whatever except a few scrubby tree yuccas about the bases of the hills. The flat districts are partly covered with a growth of the creosote bush (*Covillea tridentata*) and other desert shrubs, which are especially common and of greater size along the numerous dry washes; it was here that most of the birds were found.

On April 16 I moved east to Needles, a small town on the California bank of the Colorado River, where collecting was carried on until May 1. Two days were then spent on the opposite side in Mohave County, Arizona. On May 6, in company with a Mohave Indian, I went into camp in the low bottomlands of the California side ten miles above Needles. May 17 we moved camp to Twin Lakes, half a mile below the California-Nevada line, from which point excursions were made up the west bank of the river into southern Nevada to extend the known ranges of various species into that State. On the 25th I moved across the river to

¹ In the summer of 1902 Mr. F. Stephens collected in the Providence Mountains, about Needles, and at other points along the river, also in the interests of the Biological Survey, and published the results of his bird work, an interesting and valuable list, in 'The Condor,' Vol. V, Nos. 3 and 4, 1903.

Fort Mohave, Arizona, and worked there until May 29, when I returned to Needles.

The land bordering the Colorado River from the Santa Fé railroad bridge north to beyond the Nevada line is chiefly bottomland over which the river rises each spring. This bottomland varies from a narrow strip along the banks to wide areas several miles across. Just at and below the Nevada line are the wide bottoms of the California side, though in a great bend of the river below Needles are extensive flats. At the edge of the bottoms rise low mesas extending back from the river and soon developing into hills of considerable size which stretch back to the mountains bordering the valley. The mesa and hills are desert, covered for the most part with a sparse growth of creosote bushes and rabbit brush. The bottomland is thickly covered with arrow-weed (*Pluchea sericea*), willow, mesquite, and screw-bean with fine groves and forests of cottonwood. Here and there throughout the bottoms are ponds and lakes, some with a growth of tules about their shores.

On May 31 I left the river for Ivanpah Valley, some fifty miles northwest on the California-Nevada line, where I collected until June 6. Ivanpah Valley is a large basin, a flat desert tract nearly surrounded by hills and mountains. The elevation of the floor of the valley at Ivanpah station is about 3500 feet. At the northern end of the valley, some six or eight miles from the station, is a large dry lake bed, and the entire valley is typical desert with little water. From the dry washes in the center of the valley there is a gradual rise in each direction to the bases of the hills and mountains. Creosote bushes, grease-brush, and cactuses form the conspicuous vegetation of the valley proper and on the higher ground bordering the hills are a few tree yuccas. From June 6 to 12 was spent with a pack outfit on what is locally known as New York Mountain at the southern end of the valley. It is the highest point on the eastern end of the Providence Range, just well within the State of California, and was an agreeable change after the extreme heat of the arid desert of Ivanpah Valley. On the hills surrounding the mountain junipers appear and become abundant and larger higher up. About some small springs in the lower foothills are a few willows and over the whole mountain are patches of piñon (*Pinus*

monophylla) and a small species of live oak. In the gulches of the mountain side are several winter springs, still running sparingly at this date. The mountain is extremely rough and rocky and trails for pack animals are few. The formation is chiefly granite and immense boulders lie piled one upon another over most of the surface leaving little chance for the smaller plants. The highest ridge is said to be about 7000 feet in altitude, above which extend several barren rocky peaks some distance higher.

The bulk of the bird list refers to California territory; indeed, only two species — the Vireo and the Verdin — were not taken or seen on California soil, though both doubtless occur as plentifully on the west bank as on the east. Several species found to be common in California and southern Nevada in the immediate vicinity of the Colorado River have not previously been considered as regular summer residents in the vicinity, and I am not aware that the Dwarf Cowbird has been specifically reported from California or Nevada. Thanks are due to Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the Biological Survey, for permission to publish these notes.

Larus delawarensis. RING-BILLED GULL.— I examined the head, wings, and tail of a gull of this species which had been shot at Ivanpah station a few weeks previous to my visit. It was a single bird and when killed was circling over the water tank at the station.

Pelecanus erythrorhynchos. WHITE PELICAN.— Reported as sometimes common on the Colorado River at Needles during migrations. The Mohave Indians call the pelican Yak-wîn-ye-hool'-yah.

Mergus serrator. RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.— The sun-dried remains of a full plumaged male found on the desert near the center of Ivanpah Valley. The bird probably perished from want of water.

Anas platyrhynchos. MALLARD.— Said by the Mohave Indians to be common, with other ducks in the winter, on the Colorado River. Their name for the Mallard is Ah-nah-mō'.

Plegadis guarauna. WHITE-FACED GLOSSY IBIS.— A flock of eight seen flying low over the Colorado River at Needles, May 2.

Ardea herodias treganzai. TREGANZA BLUE HERON.— In the hotel at Goffs is a mounted Blue Heron which was killed some years ago on the dry desert near the station. On the Colorado River several were seen about the little lakes in the bottoms above Needles.

Nycticorax nycticorax nævius. BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.— At our camp above Needles in the Colorado River bottoms we frequently heard the Night Herons as they passed over in the evening.

Himantopus mexicanus. BLACK-NECKED STILT.— I shot a single bird

at a small pond in the Colorado River bottoms just below the Nevada line in California, May 9. My Mohave companion called it Min-sah-patch'-patch.

Actitis macularia. SPOTTED SANDPIPER.—Common about the little ponds in the river bottoms near Needles.

Oxyechus vociferus. KILLDEER.—Fairly common at Needles. The Mohave name for this bird is Nín-tee-rís-tah-rees'-a.


Lophortyx gambeli. GAMBEL QUAIL.—Abundant in the Colorado River bottoms where the calls of the cocks could be heard all through the day. An almost perfect egg was taken from a female shot April 22, and tiny young were seen the middle of May. The favorite retreat of this quail seems to be in the dense thickets of arrow-weed in the low land and comparatively few were found on the neighboring mesa. The Mohave Indians call it Ah'-ha-mah.

Zenaidura carolinensis. MOURNING DOVE.—Becoming more common each day of my stay at Goffs and later found in abundance in the river bottoms near Needles, where many nests were seen the first half of May. Also fairly common in Ivanpah Valley and on New York Mountain. Mohave name, Ōs-kee'-vah.

Cathartes aura septentrionalis. TURKEY BUZZARD.—One seen high over head at Goffs, April 16. Common along the Colorado River and seen daily in Ivanpah Valley. On New York Mountain the buzzards were common, gathering from the surrounding deserts in the evening to roost on the high rocky points. The Mohave Indian name is Ah-say'.

Accipiter cooperi. COOPER HAWK.—One female collected in the Colorado River bottoms above Needles, May 19. The Mohaves called the bird Sū-quíl'-ă-kī-tī.

Buteo borealis calurus. WESTERN RED-TAIL.—Several seen along the Colorado River. Mohave name, Oo'-mah-thay.

 **Falco sparverius phalaena.** DESERT SPARROW HAWK.—A single bird seen along the telegraph line near Goffs, April 14.

Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis. OSPREY.—Frequently seen along the Colorado River. The Mohaves call the fish hawk Ah-spah-a-chee'-cū-thah.

Geococcyx californianus. ROAD-RUNNER.—Common in the timbered bottomland of the Colorado River and the brushy side draws, where several were caught in meat-baited traps set for carnivorous mammals. The stomachs of two examined were filled with large green grasshoppers. One seen in Ivanpah Valley near the base of New York Mountain. Mohave name, Tile'-paw.

Ceryle alcyon. BELTED KINGFISHER.—Several about the ponds in the Colorado River bottoms. Mohave name, Săk-wee-thay'.

Dryobates scalaris bairdi. TEXAS WOODPECKER.—Common in the river bottom about Needles where several specimens were collected. The Mohave name for woodpeckers in general is Iss-own'-ă.

Centurus uropygialis. GILA WOODPECKER.—I found this bird common in the timbered bottomlands of the Colorado River from Needles north

beyond the line some miles into Nevada. Specimens were secured in California ten miles north of Needles, where the loud calls and drummings were heard from morning until night. One nest was in a small blasted stub standing some distance from shore in a large lagoon.

Phalænoptilus nuttalli. POOR-WILL.—At Goffs one was heard calling on the evenings of April 15 and 16, and while camped on the Colorado River near the Nevada-California line we heard one each night on the higher mesa to the westward. Mohave name, Tō-lōwk'.

Chordeiles acutipennis texensis. TEXAS NIGHTHAWK.—Very abundant along the Colorado River. The nighthawks here spend the day in the thickets of arrow-weed from which I frequently flushed them. At night they swarmed about the town of Needles, especially at the station, where the insects were no doubt attracted by the lights. The switching engine seemed not to bother the birds in the least and I often saw them dart in and out of the thick black smoke close to a puffing freight. On the edge of the mesa at Fort Mohave one evening, just before the time for the night-hawk's flight, I saw and heard one give the peculiar chuckling call, which was accompanied by a most curious bobbing of the bird's head and body. Mohave Indian name, Oh-roo'.

Aëronautes melanoleucus. WHITE-THROATED SWIFT.—Several times when I climbed to near the highest rocky point on New York Mountain I saw four of these birds swiftly flying around the peaks.

Calypte costæ. COSTA HUMMINGBIRD.—Hummers were common in the neighborhood of the Colorado River and about the watered gulches on New York Mountain. The only specimen taken was shot high up on the mountain and proved to be of this species. The Mohaves call all the hummingbirds Yīn'-yīn-ă.

Tyrannus verticalis. ARKANSAS KINGBIRD.—Abundant along the Colorado River. A nest which I examined at Needles on May 18 was placed on the platform of a steel windmill tower in town and contained three eggs. Specimens collected. Mohave name, Sah-kahl-cheer'-kah.

Myiarchus cinerascens. ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER.—Common at Needles and several seen on New York Mountain, at both of which places specimens were secured.

Sayornis saya. SAY PHŒBE.—A single bird seen at Goffs on April 16.

Empidonax griseus. GRAY FLYCATCHER.—One taken at Goffs, April 15. It was a single bird and was feeding among the higher creosote bushes along a dry wash.

Pyrocephalus rubineus mexicanus. VERMILLION FLYCATCHER.—Three specimens secured on the California side of the Colorado River ten miles above Needles where the bird was fairly common about the shores of lagoons. Several were seen also in Nevada a short distance above the boundary monument. Unlike most flycatchers this species rarely returned to the old perch after darting out to catch an insect, but usually flew on and on, lighting on a new bush after each dash. A nearly full grown young was taken May 20.

Otocoris alpestris pallida. SONORAN HORNE LARK.— Fairly common at Goffs. A few breeding in Ivanpah Valley where a family of nearly grown young was seen. Specimens collected at both places.

Aphelocoma woodhousei. WOODHOUSE JAY.— Four or five seen well up among the junipers and piñons on New York Mountain.

Molothrus ater obscurus. DWARF COWBIRD.— Abundant in the Colorado River bottoms during my entire stay. Specimens were taken on the California side above Needles, and all the evidence showed the bird to be a common summer resident. Seen above the boundary monument in Nevada. Mohave Indian name, I-thick'-wah.

Agelaius phoeniceus sonoriensis. SONORAN RED-WING.— A few male red-wings were seen flying high over our camp on the Colorado River above Needles and were probably breeding somewhere in the vicinity. Unfortunately no lighting place could be located and no specimens were taken so the subspecific determination is a matter of doubt. Possibly the form is *A. p. neutralis*. Mohave Indian name, Qual-e-täk'-a.

Icterus bullocki. BULLOCK ORIOLE.— A common breeding species in the river bottoms near Needles. Four specimens. Mohave name, Sück-ä-quah'-thah.

Euphagus cyanocephalus. BREWER BLACKBIRD.— During the early part of my stay at Needles a few were seen. Later all seemed to have left the region. Mohave name, Po-cah-bös'-oh.

Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis. HOUSE FINCH.— A few seen at Needles and on New York Mountain.

Astragalinus psaltria hesperophilus. GREEN-BACKED GOLDFINCH.— A few visited the small cottonwoods planted about the station at Goffs, April 14.

Poecetes gramineus confinis. WESTERN VESPER SPARROW.— Two taken and others noted on the desert at Goffs, April 12 and 13.

Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli. INTERMEDIATE SPARROW.— Common in small scattering flocks at Goffs, April 9 to 16. Two specimens secured.

Spizella breweri. BREWER SPARROW.— Very abundant at Goffs. In full song and early in the morning the desert fairly rang with their music. None noted along the Colorado River but later in Ivanpah Valley a few were seen and one was collected June 2.

Spizella atrigularis. BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW.— Fairly common on New York Mountain. Full fledged young were taken June 7.

Junco hyemalis thurberi. THURBER JUNCO.— One taken and others seen along a dry wash far out on the barren desert at Goffs, April 13.

Amphispiza bilineata deserticola. DESERT SPARROW.— Fairly common at Goffs and in Ivanpah Valley.

Melospiza melodia fallax. DESERT SONG SPARROW.— Fairly common about some of the small bottomland ponds on the California side above Needles. On May 20 a specimen in juvenile plumage was secured and several families of young were seen.

Pipilo aberti. ABERT TOWHEE.— Abundant in the mesquite and arrow-

weed thickets of the Colorado River. Breeding on the California side about Needles where many full grown young were seen early in May. The Mohaves call this bird Cüm-tös'-kah.

Guiraca cærulea lazula. WESTERN BLUE GROSBEAK.—Common about openings along the river above Needles where four specimens were collected. Mohave name, Sück-ä-teeth'-a.

Piranga rubra cooperi. COOPER TANAGER.—Common in the large cottonwoods from Needles northward along the California side of the river into Nevada. Four specimens collected ten miles above Needles. Mohave name, Min-sah'-öw.

Tachycineta thalassina lepida. NORTHERN VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW.—A few seen about Needles during the early part of my stay.

Stelgidopteryx serripennis. ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW.—Abundant along the river above Needles. Called by the Mohave Indians Höm-kāy'.

Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides. WHITE-RUMPED SHRIKE.—One pair and a family of young recently from the nest were secured at Goffs, April 11. One seen on the mesa near Needles.

Vireo belli arizonæ. ARIZONA VIREO.—A single female taken at Fort Mohave, Arizona, May 25.

Dendroica auduboni. AUDUBON WARBLER.—Several seen at Goffs, April 10 to 15.

Geothlypis trichas occidentalis. WESTERN YELLOW-THROAT.—One seen in a bottomland thicket near Needles.

Icteria virens longicauda. LONG-TAILED CHAT.—Fairly common along the Colorado River where it was evidently breeding.

Oroscoptes montanus. SAGE THRASHER.—Common and in full song at Goffs, April 10 to 15.

Mimus polyglottos leucopterus. WESTERN MOCKINGBIRD.—Common at Goffs. One seen at Needles. In full song. Mohave name, Sō-kōth-öl'-yah.

Toxostoma lecontei. LECONTE THRASHER.—Two seen among the larger creosote bushes in Ivanpah Valley. I found it exceedingly difficult to shoot one as they ran and flew low over the ground ahead of me at a greater speed than I could travel, and it was only by persistent stalking that a specimen was secured.

Salpinctes obsoletus. ROCK WREN.—Common on New York Mountain.

Catherpes mexicanus conspersus. CAÑON WREN.—Common high up on New York Mountain.

Bæolophus inornatus griseus. GRAY TITMOUSE.—Fairly common among the junipers on New York Mountain. Specimen collected.

Psaltriparus plumbeus. LEAD-COLORED BUSH-TIT.—Several bands of these tits were seen among the junipers on New York Mountain. Usually in parties of eight or ten and passed rapidly along, feeding by the way. Two specimens.

Auriparus flaviceps. VERDIN.—One seen in a thicket near Fort Mohave, May 26.

Regulus calendula. RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET.—A few noted in the higher bushes along washes on the desert at Goffs, April 10 to 15.

Polioptila caerulea obscura. WESTERN GNATCATCHER.—Fairly common on New York Mountain, where two were collected June 7.

Polioptila plumbea. PLUMBEOUS GNATCATCHER.—Several seen and one secured at Goffs, April 11. Fairly common among the mesquites and creosote bushes on the lower mesas back from the river above Needles.

THE BIRDS OF THE ROSEBUD INDIAN RESERVATION, SOUTH DAKOTA.

BY ALBERT B. REAGAN.¹

WHILE U. S. Indian teacher of the White Thunder Day School of the Rosebud Indian Reservation in 1904, I took notes on the occurrence and habits of the birds that chanced to visit the region. These I give below.

1. **Gavia imber.** LOON.—Migratory; rare.
2. **Larus delawarensis.** RING-BILLED GULL.—I saw but one individual of this species.
3. **Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis.** BLACK TERN.—A male and female of this species were killed by an Indian of the camp who brought them to me for identification, remarking that they were sea birds.
4. **Pelecanus erythrorhynchos.** AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN.—An Indian of the camp killed a male pelican, skinned it and brought me the skin. I did not see the live bird.

The species of Anatidæ, given below, commenced appearing March 2 and commenced to go south August 21. None made residence in the region. But few crossed the area in the spring, they going further to the east. More passed in their southern journey. The journey south was much prolonged on account of the warm fall, the birds seeming in no hurry to leave.

Unluckily there was but little water in the vicinity of the author's location; consequently he had the opportunity of obtaining but a few specimens for identification.

5. **Anas boschas.** MALLARD.—Abundant in migration.
6. **Anas obscura.** BLACK DUCK.—I killed the only specimen I saw of this species.

¹ Supervising warden of the Olympic Bird Reserves, Washington.



Hollister, N. 1908. "Birds of the Region about Needles, California." *The Auk* 25, 455–462. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4070652>.

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