

# BIRDS OF YOSEMITE



Western Robin

Special Number  
YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

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# Yosemite Nature Notes

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## Birds of Yosemite

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(Revised November 1950)

### INTRODUCTION

Since the publication in 1924 of Grinnell and Storer's "Animal Life in Yosemite" there has been a constant and increasing interest in the natural history of the region, and particularly in bird study. This interest has resulted in a popular demand for a brief guide to the birds of Yosemite to supplement the very complete publication noted above.

This bulletin is intended to meet this demand, and is offered in the hope that it will not only aid visitors to the park in identifying the birds, but will also stimulate an increased interest in the pleasant and profitable hobby of bird study. In so brief a guide as this it is impossible to include more than names and descriptions, together with brief notes on voice, nest and habitat. For more complete information, the reader is urged to consult a copy of "Animal Life in Yosemite," a contribution of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, by Grinnell and Storer, which is the authority on Yosemite Vertebrate Zoology. Additional reference material is listed on the next page.

The 217 species thus far observed in Yosemite National Park have been arranged in four lists. A Check List of all species in the Park appears first; from this list we have taken all those seen regularly in Yosemite Valley and classified them under three headings: Permanent Residents, Summer Visitants and Winter Visitants, which are described in detail. In the Check List there are two additional classifications: Migrant and Casual Visitants, which need some explanation.

Only one Yosemite bird, the Rufous Hummingbird, is classed in this entire list as a migrant; 101 species are of such infrequent or irregular occurrence that they have been lumped together as Casual Visitants. This unusually large proportion of casual visitants is due to three things: first, that we have combined uncommon, accidental and vagrant species under this one heading; second, birds normally living in or migrating through the arid Mono

Lake region or the warm San Joaquin valley often wander into the park boundaries; third, it is almost impossible for these unusual birds to visit the park without being noted by an observer. There are few areas in the West so well adapted to accurate and all-inclusive bird censuses as is this valley, both because of its topography and because of the large number of keen observers who constantly patrol it.

It is proper here to thank these many observers for their assistance in making this bulletin possible. We cannot name them all here, since we must acknowledge contributions from a good percentage of the residents of Yosemite and from many visiting scientists and tourists as well. There are two major sources of information, however, which merit individual thanks. "Animal Life in Yosemite" has been freely drawn upon through the kind permission of the authors, Joseph Grinnell and Tracy I. Storer. Most of the descriptions, voice, and occurrence were taken verbatim from this excellent reference. In addition to this, the daily observations of Charles and Enid Michael during the last 20 years have been of great assistance. They have discovered many casual visitants unknown at the time Grinnell and Storer's book was published in 1924, and have also contributed much valuable information on dates of arrival and departure. Much of this data has appeared in "A Distributional List of Yosemite Birds" (1927) and "Special Bird Number of Yosemite Nature Notes" (1930), both of which are now out of print.

The American Ornithologists' Union Check List (1931) has been followed in arranging the order of families, genera and species.

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#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This limited list includes only a few of the more recent books best suited to beginning students of California bird life. Advanced students should consult the comprehensive "Bibliography of California Ornithology" by Dr. Joseph Grinnell.\* The first two references may be purchased from the Yosemite Natural History Association, and copies of all may be read in the Yosemite Museum Library.

1. Field Guide to Western Birds, Peterson, 1941—\$3.50 plus tax.
2. Birds of the Pacific States, Hoffman, 1924—\$4.00 plus tax.
3. Animal Life in the Yosemite, Grinnell and Storer, 1924.
4. The Birds of California, Dawson, 1923.
5. The Game Birds of California, Grinnell, Bryant and Storer, 1918.
6. Handbook of Birds of the Western United States, Bailey, 1917.
7. Field Book of Birds of the Southwestern United States, Wyman and Burnell, 1925.

\*Published by the Cooper Ornithological Club, Berkeley, Calif.—1924.

## CHECK LIST OF BIRDS, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

R —Resident  
 SV—Summer Visitant  
 WV—Winter Visitant  
 CV—Casual Visitant  
 M —Migrant

A. O. U. Order

Name	Status	Where best seen
Pacific Loon .....	CV	One record, Lower Yosemite Valley.
Eared Grebe .....	CV	High Mountain lakes.
Pied-billed Grebe.....	CV	Cascades, Yosemite Valley.
White Pelican .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Farallon Cormorant .....	CV	Two records in Yosemite Valley.
Treganza's Heron .....	CV	Tuolumne Meadows, one record.
California Heron .....	R	Merced River.
American Egret .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Snowy Egret .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Anthony's Green Heron .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Common Canada Goose .....	CV	Mirror Lake.
Hutchins's Goose .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Common Mallard .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Baldpate .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
American Pintail .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Green-winged Teal .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Blue-winged Teal .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Cinnamon Teal .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Shoveller.....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one flock observed.
Wood Duck .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Ring-necked Duck .....	WV	Yosemite Valley.
Canvas-back .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Lesser Scaup Duck .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, two records.
Barrow's Golden-eye .....	CV	Pleasant Valley, one record.
Buffle-head .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Harlequin Duck .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Ruddy Duck .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Hooded Merganser .....	CV	Two records, winter.
American Merganser .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, winter.
Turkey Vulture .....	CV	Lower elevations.
White-tailed Kite .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Western Goshawk .....	R	Canadian Zone.
Sharp-shinned Hawk .....	R	High Sierra, occasionally in Yosemite Valley.
Cooper's Hawk .....	R	High Sierra, one nest Yosemite Valley.
Western Red-tailed Hawk .....	R	Canadian Zone and up.
Swainson's Hawk .....	SV	High Sierra.
Golden Eagle .....	R	Often seen over Yosemite Valley.
Marsh Hawk .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, two records.
Osprey .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Prairie Falcon .....	CV	High Sierra and one record Yosemite Valley.

Duck Hawk .....	CV	Yosemite Valley and higher.
Eastern Sparrow Hawk .....	R	Throughout Park.
Sierra Grouse .....	R	Canadian and Hudsonian Zones.
Sage Hen .....	CV	Mt. Conness Region.
Valley Quail .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Plumed Quail .....	R	Yosemite Valley and Canadian Zone.
Virginia Rail .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Sora .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
American Coot .....	CV	Mirror Lake, High Sierra Lakes.
Killdeer .....	SV	Tuolumne Meadows.
Wilson's Snipe .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Spotted Sandpiper .....	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Solitary Sandpiper .....	CV	High Mountain Lakes.
Western Willet .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Avocet .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record 1917.
Black-necked Stilt .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Red Phalarope .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Wilson's Phalarope .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Northern Phalarope .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Western Gull .....	CV	High Mountain Lakes.
California Gull .....	CV	High Mountain Lakes.
Ring-billed Gull .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, two records.
Band-tailed Pigeon .....	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Mourning Dove .....	CV	Yosemite Valley or higher.
Road-runner .....	CV	Two records, western edge Park.
Barn Owl .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Pasadena Screech Owl .....	R	Lower elevations of Park.
Pacific Horned Owl .....	R	Up to Canadian Zone.
California Pygmy Owl .....	R	Yosemite Valley.
California Spotted Owl .....	R	Transition and Canadian Zones.
Great Gray Owl .....	R	Canadian Zone.
Long-eared Owl .....	R	Lower Canadian Zone.
Short-eared Owl .....	CV	Mt. Clark, one record.
Saw-whet Owl .....	R	Transition Zone.
Dusky Poor-will .....	SV	Lower Transition Zone.
Pacific Nighthawk .....	SV	High Sierra.
Black Swift .....	SV	Tenaya Canyon and Nevada Fall.
Vaux's Swift .....	CV	Over Yosemite Valley, winter.
White-throated Swift .....	SV	Over Yosemite Valley.
Black-chinned Hummingbird .....	CV	Yosemite Valley, late summer.
Anna's Hummingbird .....	SV	Upper Sonoran Zone.
Rufous Hummingbird .....	M	High Sierra, July, August.
Allen's Hummingbird .....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Calliope Hummingbird .....	SV	Yosemite Valley.



Western Belted Kingfisher	R	Merced River, Yosemite Valley.
Red-shafted Flicker	R	Throughout Park.
Western Pileated Woodpecker	R	Transition, Canadian Zones.
California Woodpecker	R	Black Oak Belt.
Lewis's Woodpecker	CV	Irregular, seasonally and zonally.
Red-naped Sapsucker	CV	Yosemite Valley, winter.
S. Red-breasted Sapsucker	R	Transition and Canadian Zones.
Williamson's Sapsucker	R	Upper Canadian, & Hudsonian Zones.
Modoc Woodpecker	R	Yosemite Valley.
Willow Woodpecker	R	Yosemite Valley.
Nuttall's Woodpecker	WV	Yosemite Valley.
N. White-headed Woodpecker	R	Transition and Canadian Zones.
Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker	R	Canadian and Hudsonian Zones.
Arkansas Kingbird	CV	Yosemite Valley, summer.
Ash-throated Flycatcher	CV	Casual above El Portal, summer.
Black Phoebe	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Say's Phoebe	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Little Flycatcher	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Hammond's Flycatcher	SV	Canadian Zone.
Wright's Flycatcher	SV	High Sierra.
Western Flycatcher	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Wood Pewee	SV	Yosemite Valley and higher.
Olive-sided Flycatcher	SV	Yosemite Valley and higher.
Dusky Horned Lark	CV	High Sierra.
California Horned Lark	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Violet-green Swallow	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Tree Swallow	CV	Yosemite Valley, one nesting record.
Rough-winged Swallow	SV	Yosemite Valley, along river.
Northern Cliff Swallow	CV	Hetch Hetchy.
Blue-fronted Jay	R	Yosemite Valley.
Long-tailed Jay	CV	Yosemite Valley, in fall.
American Magpie	CV	Lyell Canyon, one record.
Yellow-billed Magpie	CV	Yosemite Valley, two records.
Western Crow	CV	Yosemite Valley, spring and fall.
Pinon Jay	CV	Tuolumne Meadows and above Valley in
Clark's Nutcracker	R	Hudsonian Zone.
Short-tailed Chickadee	R	Yosemite Valley and higher.
Plain Titmouse	WV	Yosemite Valley.
California Bush-tit	R	Lower elevations of Park.
Slender-billed Nuthatch	R	Upper Sonoran to Canadian Zones.
Red-breasted Nuthatch	R	Transition and Canadian Zones.
Black-eared Nuthatch	R	Canadian Zone.
Sierra Creeper	R	Yosemite Valley and higher.
Pallid Wren-tit	CV	Merced Canyon, lower elevations.
Dipper	R	All streams of Park.

Western House Wren	SV	Upper Sonoran, in fall higher.
Western Winter Wren	WV	Yosemite Valley.
San Joaquin Wren	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Marsh Wren	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record, winter.
Dotted Wren	R	Yosemite Valley, canyon walls.
Common Rock Wren	SV	Sonoran up to 11,000 feet.
Western Mockingbird	CV	Yosemite Valley, post-nesting.
Sage Thrasher	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Robin	SV	Yosemite Valley and higher.
Northern Varied Thrush	WV	Yosemite Valley.
Alaska Hermit Thrush	WV	Up to Canadian Zone.
Dwarf Hermit Thrush	WV	Yosemite Valley.
Sierra Hermit Thrush	SV	Canadian and Upper Transition Zones.
Russet-backed Thrush	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Bluebird	WV	Yos. Valley; a few summer records higher
Mountain Bluebird	SV	High Sierra.
Townsend's Solitaire	R	Canadian Zone, lower in winter.
Western Gnatcatcher	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Golden-crowned Kinglet	R	Canadian Zone, summer; Yos. Valley, winter.
Western Ruby-crowned Kinglet	R	Canadian Zone, summer; Yos. Valley, winter.
American Pipit	CV	Up to timberline, fall and winter.
Bohemian Waxwing	CV	Yosemite Valley, two records.
Cedar Waxwing	CV	Yosemite Valley.
White-rumped Shrike	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Hutton's Vireo	R	Upper Sonoran, Lower Trans. Zones, in oaks.
Cassin's Vireo	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Warbling Vireo	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Lutescent Warbler	SV	Transition and Canadian Zones.
Calaveras Warbler	SV	Transition and Canadian Zones.
California Yellow Warbler	SV	Transition Zone.
Audubon's Warbler	SV	Up through Hudsonian Zone.
Black-throated Gray Warbler	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Townsend's Warbler	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Hermit Warbler	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Macgillivray's Warbler	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Yellow-throat	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Long-tailed Chat	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Golden Pileolated Warbler	SV	Canadian Zone.
English Sparrow	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Western Meadowlark	CV	Yos. Valley, summer; Hudsonian Zone, fall.
Yellow-headed Blackbird	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Kern Red-wing	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Bullock's Oriole	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Brewer's Blackbird	SV	Yosemite Valley; higher in fall.
Dwarf Cowbird	CV	Yosemite Valley.

Western Tanager.....	SV	Yosemite Valley; higher in fall.
Black-headed Grosbeak.....	SV	Yosemite Valley; higher in fall.
California Blue Grosbeak.....	SV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Lazuli Bunting.....	SV	Upper Sonoran and Transition Zones.
Western Evening Grosbeak.....	SV	Trans. Can. Zones; casual in winter.
Californian Purple Finch.....	SV	Yosemite Valley.
Cassin's Purple Finch.....	R	Canadian and Hudsonian Zones.
Common House Finch.....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
California Pine Grosbeak.....	R	Hudsonian Zone, not common.
Sierra Nevada Rosy Finch.....	R	Arctic-Alpine Zone.
Northern Pine Siskin.....	R	Canadian and Hudsonian Zones.
Willow Goldfinch.....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Green-backed Goldfinch.....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Lawrence's Goldfinch.....	CV	High Sierra, one record.
Bendire's Crossbill.....	R	Canadian and Hudsonian Zones.
Green-tailed Towhee.....	SV	Canadian Zone.
Nevada Towhee.....	CV	Glen Aulin, one record.
Sacramento Towhee.....	R	Yosemite Valley.
Sacramento Brown Towhee.....	CV	Above El Portal, one record.
Nevada Savannah Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley and Ten Lakes.
Western Vesper Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Western Lark Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Rufous-crowned Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one banding record.
Northern Sage Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley.
Slate-colored Junco.....	WV	Yosemite Valley, not common.
Thurber's Junco.....	R	Yosemite Valley and higher
Gray-headed Junco.....	CV	Yosemite Valley, not common.
Western Chipping Sparrow.....	SV	All over the Park.
Brewer's Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley and higher—post-nesting.
Harris's Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one banding record.
White-crowned Sparrow.....	SV	Hudsonian Zone; four nesting rec. Yos. Val.
Gambel's Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley in fall.
Golden-crowned Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley in fall.
White-throated Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley, three records, fall 1949
Alberta Fox Sparrow.....	WV	Yosemite Valley and above rim.
Shumagin Fox Sparrow.....	WV	Yosemite Valley and above rim.
Kodiak Fox Sparrow.....	WV	Yosemite Valley and above rim.
Valdez Fox Sparrow.....	WV	Yosemite Valley and above rim.
Slate-colored Fox Sparrow.....	WV	Aspen Valley, one record.
Mono Fox Sparrow.....	CV	High Sierra, one record.
Yosemite Fox Sparrow.....	SV	Canadian Zone.
Lincoln's Sparrow.....	SV	Canadian Zone, occasionally lower.
Forbush's Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley, one record.
Modoc Song Sparrow.....	CV	Yosemite Valley in fall.



### PERMANENT RESIDENTS OF YOSEMITE VALLEY

The 24 species listed here include only those which are regularly present in the Transition Zone areas of the Park throughout the year. We lack positive evidence of nesting in a few cases, notably the California Heron. Such species as Western Robin and California Purple Finch have been seen here every month of the year, but not enough to warrant inclusion in this list (see Summer Visitants). In the case of some species, notably Thurber's Junco, we are not sure whether the same individuals remain in the Park continuously, or whether those that nest here move out in the fall to be replaced by others from higher elevations. This is a promising field of study for some ornithologist who is interested in bird-banding. In scanning this list it will be seen that two-thirds of the species are either predatory or dendrophilous (living on trees, as Woodpeckers or Creepers) and are thus well able to remain in the Valley during the cold weather.

#### CALIFORNIA HERON (*Ardea herodias hyperonca*). (Great Blue Heron.)

Occasionally seen along Merced River and Mirror Lake in Yosemite Valley, but no nesting records.

#### GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos canadensis*).

Largest of Sierran land birds (length 30 to 35 inches, spread 6 to 7 feet). Coloration chiefly dark brown, becoming paler, more golden brown, on top of head; a grayish white area at base of tail and underside of each wing toward extremity.

Voice: A single loud cry, sometimes repeated several times in quick succession.

Occurrence: Occasionally seen over Yosemite Valley near Eagle Peak.

#### EASTERN SPARROW HAWK (*Falco s. sparverius*.)

Our smallest hawk, only slightly larger than Robin, but appearing bigger because of the longer wings; wings pointed and, when closed, reaching nearly to end of tail. Two narrow vertical black stripes on sides of head below eye; chin and belly white; top of head, back and

most of tail, rusty red; male with basal portions of wings slaty blue and tail with a broad subterminal black band and a white tip; female lacking slaty tone on wings, this being replaced by rusty brown, and tail narrowly barred with black throughout. Flight swift, with frequent quick turns; often hovers in one position for several seconds, with wings rapidly beating.



Voice: A shrill high-pitched killee, repeated.

Occurrence: Common resident; most numerous in the San Joaquin Valley, but ranges clear up through the Hudsonian Zone, at least in summer; in Yosemite Valley during most of year. Found chiefly about grass and meadow lands.

**PLUMED QUAIL**  
(*Oreortyx p. picta*)

Larger than Valley Quail; sexes alike; a long slender, usually backward-directed, black plume on head. Bands of black, white and chestnut on sides of body; throat chestnut; head, breast, and forepart of back, bluish slate; rest of back and wings, olive brown; belly whitish.

Voice: A single loud resonant "kyork" repeated at intervals.

Occurrence: Common resident in Transition and Canadian Zones, migrating down to below level of heavy snow in winter. Lives in and around brush patches.

**PACIFIC HORNED OWL**  
(*Bubo virginianus pacificus*.)

Large size (length about 20 inches); ear tufts present and conspicuous; exceeded in size only by Great Gray Owl, which lacks ear tufts. Plumage chiefly mixture of dark and light brown, streaked on back and barred on under surface; eyes yellow.

Voice: Our common hoot owl. Often heard moonlight nights.

Occurrence: Resident in moderate numbers throughout the region below Hudsonian Zone; observed twice in Hudsonian Zone and once on Lyell Fork, 10,700 ft. el. and at Ten Lakes. Lives in open woods in mountains.

**CALIFORNIA PYGMY OWL**  
(*Glaucidium gnoma californicum*).

Size very small (smallest of our owls); total length only about 7 inches, expanse 14½ inches; head round, without ear tufts; eyes yellow. Color of plumage above grayish brown, relieved by small white spots; below white, with sharp blackish streaks.

Voice: Different from that of any other owl, and frequently heard during the day; a single mellow whistle, repeated at intervals, or a prolonged slow trill, followed by two or three isolated notes.

Occurrence: Apparently a common permanent resident of the Transition Zone, and perhaps also of the upper margin of the Upper Sonoran Zone. Inhabits sparse woods.



**CALIFORNIA SPOTTED OWL****(*Strix o. occidentalis*).**

Of medium large size for an owl, less than that of a Pacific Horned; head round (no ear tufts); eyes lead-color (not yellow); plumage brown with numerous abruptly contrasted white spots in transverse rows.

Voice: Varied; perhaps most often a series of yelps like the barking of a small dog.

Occurrence: Resident in the Transition Zone. Strictly a night owl, and an inhabitant of woods.

**SAW-WHET OWL****(*Cryptoglaux a. acadica*).**

Sparse resident on floor of Yosemite Valley. One nesting record April, 1926, C. M. and Enid Michael.

**WESTERN BELTED KINGFISHER****(*Megasceryle alcyon caurina*).**

Size somewhat greater than that of Flicker; head big, tail small, bill stout and crest prominent. Color above, slaty blue; beneath, a silvery white with a broad belt of slate across breast. Female has also a belt, behind the slaty one, of bright rusty brown, with extensions of this color backward along each side. Flight rapid and usually in straight-

away course up or down a stream.

Voice: A loud grating clatter or rattle.

Occurrence: Frequent along streams and about the margins of lakes up at least to the altitude of Tuolumne Meadows, 8600 feet.

**RED-SHAFTED FLICKER****(*Colaptes cafer collaris*).**

Larger than robin; of woodpecker structure and general habits, save that it does much of its foraging on the ground. In flight shows large white rump patch and flash of dull red from wings and tail. General color above brownish, with narrow bars of black; beneath grayish with numerous sharp polka dots of black and a black crescentic bar across breast. Males have bright red patches at corners of mouth. Flight strong and direct, with quick but infrequent wing beats.

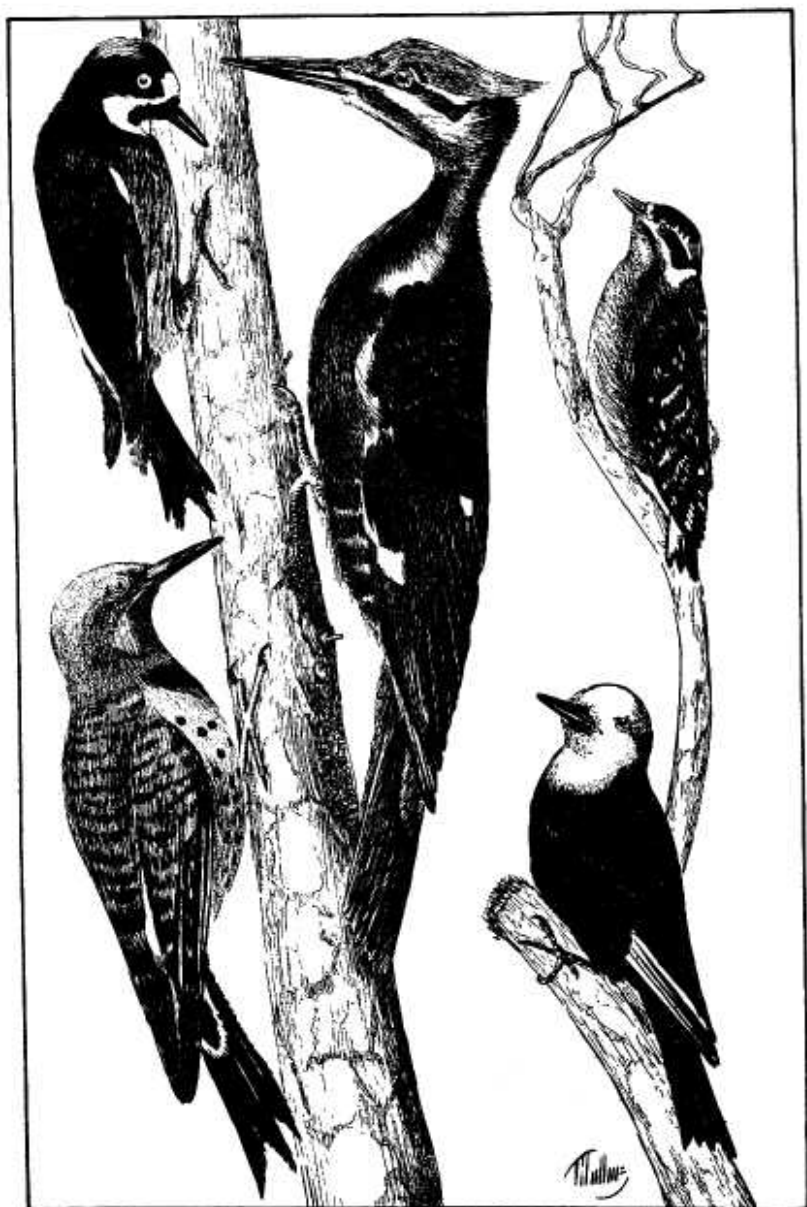
Voice: A sharp loud rolling call, repeated at length on practically one pitch.

Occurrence: Widely distributed apparently without regard for zonal boundaries; in summer and fall up to timber line. Occupies nesting holes in tree trunks. In winter, descends to the region below the level of heavy snows.

**WESTERN PILEATED WOODPECKER****(*Ceophloeus pileatus picinus*).**

Much the largest of our woodpeckers (length over 17 inches). Body plumage black, a brilliant red crest on head; a large white area on forward part of under surface of wing; a smaller spot of white on middle of outer surface of wing. Flies usually in direct course, sometimes in great undulations, with rather slow and regular wing beats.

Voice: A loud but low-pitched note (kuk), uttered a varying number of times in rather slow and irregular succession.



THE COMMON WOODPECKERS OF YOSEMITE

California

Western Pileated

Modoc

Red-shafted Flicker

Northern White-headed

Occurrence: Common resident in Transition Zone and Canadian Zone on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Seen in Yosemite Valley at all seasons of the year. Lives chiefly in white fir woods.

**CALIFORNIA WOODPECKER**  
(*Balanosphyra formicivora bairdi*).

Of medium size for a woodpecker, near that of robin. Conspicuously pied with black and white; patch on wing showing conspicuously in flight, broad bar across forehead, rump and belly, white; throat yellowish white; black of chest broken into streaks toward belly; conspicuous red patch on top of head; iris of eye white. Sexes alike save that in female the red crown patch is smaller, being separated by a black interval from white bar on forehead. Movements typically woodpecker-like. Flight undulating to a degree; a short series of strong flaps, then a deep sweep on set wings.

Voice: Sharp cry, "yakob" repeated several times.

Occurrence: Commonest woodpecker on floor of Yosemite Valley. Forage is chiefly in the black oak belt, often seen flycatching above oaks.

**SOUTHERN RED-BREADED  
SAPSUCKER**

(*Sphyrapicus varius daggetti*).

Not common in summer, but occasionally seen near rim of valley. Observed in Valley during fall and early winter.

**MODOC WOODPECKER**  
(*Dryobates villosus orius*).

A woodpecker the size of Robin or slightly less. Upper surface black, with a broad white stripe down middle of back; whole under surface, including outer stripe behind eye white. Adult males have narrow fringe of red feathers across back

of head, but this is not often to be seen at a distance.

Voice: A single sharp note (speenk), uttered at irregular intervals.

Occurrence: Resident in moderate numbers throughout the region except in the Lower Sonoran Zone and above timber line.

**WILLOW WOODPECKER**  
(*Dryobates pubescens turati*).

Smallest of our woodpeckers, about halfway between Junco and Robin in size. Upper surface, wings and tail chiefly black; lower surface dull white; a white streak over eye, and one across forehead and down along cheek; middle of back continuously white (no bars); outer tail feathers white, barred with black; outer wing feathers marked with white spots near tips. Males have a bright red band across back of head, this, however, often not seen; females without any red at all. Flight-course in short undulations; wing strokes intermittent.

Voice (seldom heard): A high-pitched run or trill of unique character.

Occurrence: Sparse resident of deciduous timber in Lower and Upper Sonoran and Transition Zones.

**NORTHERN WHITE-HEADED  
WOODPECKER**

(*Dryobates a. albolarvatus*).

Size somewhat under that of robin. Plumage wholly black, save for entirely white head and white area on wings, the latter showing best in flight. Flight course undulating, wing strokes intermittent.

Voice: A single high-pitched note, often repeated in short staccato series.

Occurrence: Resident in moderate numbers throughout the region except in the Lower Sonoran Zone and above timber line.



**BLUE-FRONTED JAY****(*Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis*).**

Somewhat larger than Robin. Head with conspicuous crest; tail as long as body, broad, and slightly rounded at end; wings short and rounded. Head (including crest) and forepart of body, blackish; wings, tail and hinder part of body, chiefly deep blue. Young more blackish, less blue, especially on lower surface, and plumage more fluffy.



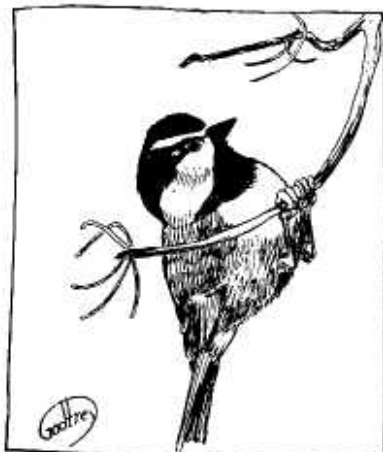
Voice: Extremely varied, usual calls harsh and loud.

Occurrence: Remains in Yosemite Valley throughout the year. Frequents wooded territories; stores food in ground. Non-flocking, but individuals quickly assemble about any object or sound which incites their curiosity.

**SHORT-TAILED CHICKADEE****(*Penthestes gambeli abbreviatus*)  
(Mountain Chickadee).**

About two-thirds size of Junco. Top and back of head, and whole chin and throat, black; side of head below eye and short stripe above eye, white; rest of body chiefly plain gray. Manner active and alert; when foraging, often hangs inverted from smaller twigs.

Voice: Commonest call a wheezy rendering of the syllables (chick-a-dee-dee).



Occurrence: Common resident in Canadian and Hudsonian Zones, less numerous in Transition. Lives in trees, mostly conifers, foraging up to 50 feet above the ground. In pairs at nesting time; flocking loosely at other seasons, sometimes in company with other small birds.

Red-breasted  
Nuthatch**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH**  
**(*Sitta canadensis*).**

Half size of Junco; tail about half length of body. Top and sides of head, black in male, slaty in female; a white stripe over eye in both sexes; back slaty gray; under surface of body reddish brown. "Hitches" about in all directions on bark of tree.

Voice: A nasal yank-yank.

Occurrence: Lives on trunks and branches of conifers, usually in the upper halves of the trees. Solitary.

#### SIERRA CREEPER

(*Certhia familiaris zelotes*).

Less than half size of Junco; tail as long as body, each feather stiffened, and pointed at tip; slender bill and curved. Coloration above dark brown streaked with white; under surface of body plain white. Hitches jerkily upward on trunks of trees.

Voice: Call note a high thin "seep."

Occurrence: Permanent resident in Transition Zone. Forages on trunks and larger branches of good-sized trees, and nests in crevices behind loose bark. Solitary or in pairs.

#### DIPPER

(*Cinclus mexicanus unicolor*).  
(Water Ouzel).



Body size nearly that of Robin, but tail very short, about one-half length of body. Whole plumage appearing dark slate gray; young paler toned beneath, with whitish throat. No contrasted markings anywhere in adults save for small white spot on upper eyelid; when perched

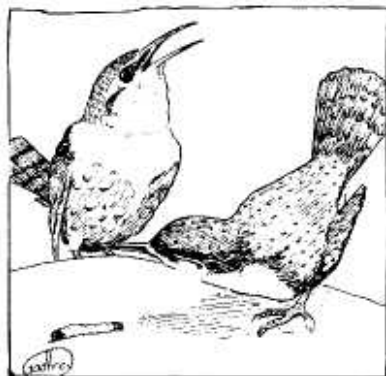
on rock or bank, bird bobs body down and up at short intervals.

Voice: Male has an elaborate and varying song.

Occurrence: Common in Transition, Canadian and Hudsonian Zones on both slopes of Sierra Nevada; resident at least up to Canadian. Lives along swift-flowing streams. Solitary.

#### DOTTED WREN

(*Catherpes mexicanus punctulatus*)  
(Canyon Wren).



Size more than half that of Junco; tail shorter than body; bill long ( $\frac{3}{4}$  in.) and slender. Coloration rich reddish brown; throat and chest clear white. Executes squatting movement every few seconds, by which white of throat area is emphasized.

Voice: Song a series of 10 or so loud clear whistled notes, the pitch descending and the timing slower toward end of series.

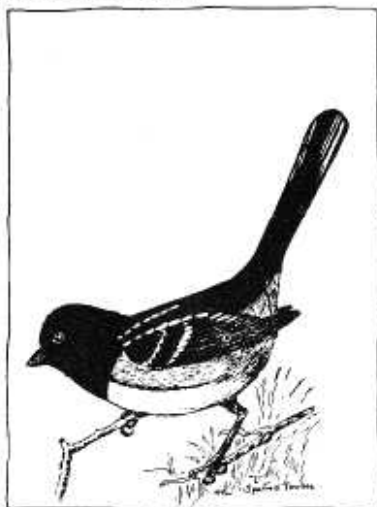
Occurrence: Resident in fair numbers from Lower Sonoran Zone up through Transition on west side of Sierra Nevada. Chiefly on and about rock walls of the larger canyons. Solitary.

#### SACRAMENTO TOWHEE

(*Pipilo maculatus falcinellus*)  
(Spotted Towhee).

Size large for a sparrow, bulk be-

tween that of Junco and Robin; tail about as long as body, and usually carried up at an angle with back. Whole upper surface and forepart of body, black; small spots (tear drops) in rows on wings, larger spots (thumb marks) at end of tail, and belly, white; sides of body orange brown. Male with black more intense than in female; young quite different, streaked.



Voice: A cat-like mewling call or alarm note, and a trilled song sounding like *to-who-e-e-e*, the first syllable inaudible beyond a short radius.

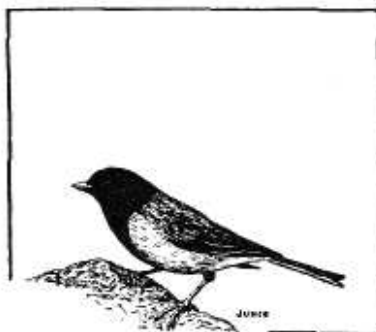
Occurrence: Ranges in the breeding season from the vicinity of Snelling up as high as the floor of Yosemite Valley. In autumn wanders still higher, as to Aspen Valley at 7000 feet and on Illilouette Creek at 6200 feet. Lives in brush thickets and forages on ground beneath such cover, seldom venturing into the open. Solitary.

**THURBER'S JUNCO**  
(*Junco oreganus thurberi*)  
(Sierra Junco).

A small sparrow (total length

about 6 inches, tail about 2½ inches long). Head, neck and breast covered by solid black (most intense in males, grayish toned in females and immatures), sharply set off from white on under surface of body. Bill whitish-appearing. Back and wings dark brown, unmarked; tail black centrally, two outer feathers on each side pure white. Juvenile birds lack the black "cow!" and have the whole head and body, both above and below streaked. When on ground, hops about rapidly in zig-zag course; if flushed, rises quickly, spreading tail so that white margin shows conspicuously; usually takes refuge within nearby trees or large bushes.

Voice: Song of male a quavering trill, metallic in quality, rapid in utterance.



Occurrence: Abundant summer visitant throughout the Transition, Canadian and Hudsonian Zones on both sides of Sierra Nevada. In winter descends to below the level of heavy snow, occupying the whole of foothill and lowland country, numbers appearing in flocks in Yosemite Valley. In summer lives in and about openings in forest or along open stream banks; nests on ground; in winter ranges widely. In pairs at nesting time, but in flocks of varying size during other parts of the year.

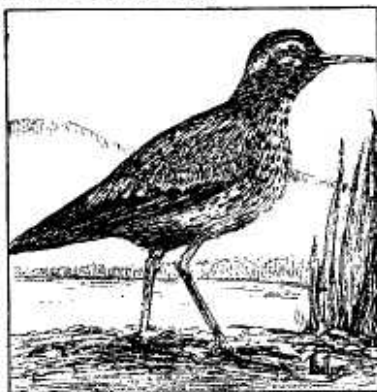
### SUMMER VISITANTS TO YOSEMITE VALLEY

This list of 35 species, together with the preceding group of 24 Permanent Residents, gives a total of 59 possible nesting species for Yosemite Valley and the Transition Zone areas of the Park. It does not include all the species designated as Summer Visitants in the Check List of Yosemite National Park, since many nest only in the Canadian or Hudsonian Zones above Yosemite Valley, while a few nest only in the Upper Sonoran Zone below the Valley. Hence this list might be more properly termed "Summer Visitants to the Transition Zone of Yosemite National Park," and bird students at Wawona, Hetch Hetchy, and other points of similar elevation will find it as useful as those whose studies are limited to Yosemite Valley.

#### SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularia*).

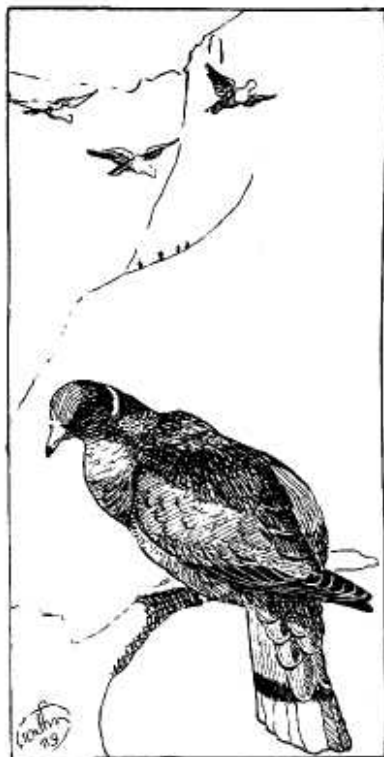
A "wader" between Robin and Junco in size; a slender build, with long legs, slender neck, and short tail. Upper surface olive brown; under surface, in summer adults, white with numerous rounded black spots; wing crossed by a narrow white band, readily seen in flight; outer tail feathers barred with brown and white. Course of flight usually semi-circular, the bird skimming low over the water. When on ground bobs hinder parts of body down and up every second or two.

Voice: A clear, whistle like "weet" or "weeter," uttered three or more times in succession.



Occurrence. Sandy or pebbly shores of lakes and smooth flowing streams. May to September.

#### BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Columba f. fasciata*).



Size and proportions of domestic pigeon; general effect of coloration of upper surface bluish gray, of under surface pinkish brown; a distinct dark band across middle of square-ended tail. Flight swift and

direct, with steadily flapping wings; leaves perch with loud clapping of wings.

Voice: A deep, rolled, "coo-coo" resembling that of a domestic pigeon.

Occurrence: Small flocks in open forests near or in oak trees or berry producing shrubs. Nests rather common in Yosemite Valley. Larger flocks during acorn harvest.

#### DUSKY POOR-WILL

(*Phalaenoptilus nuttalli californicus*)

Sparse visitor to lower Transition Zone, but rare in Yosemite Valley.

#### BLACK SWIFT

(*Nephoecetes niger borealis*)

Larger than any of our swallows or the White-throated Swift, but resembling the latter in its long slender wings; tail very broad. Plumage, black; no white marks ordinarily apparent. Flight more swallow-like, less erratic, than of White-throated Swift.

Voice: A high-pitched twitter. More quiet than White-throated Swift.

Occurrence: Forages in the open air. Found nesting in Tenaya Canyon, 1926, by C. M. and Enid Michael, the second known nesting location for this species. May to September.

#### WHITE-THROATED SWIFT

(*Aeronautes s. saxatilis*).

Resembling a swallow, but wings much longer and more slender, and tail longer; outline in flight cross-bow-like. Plumage, black, save for white on throat and midbreast, and white patch on either side of rump. Flight swift and erratic, with very rapid beats of the wings, which at times appear to operate alternately.

Voice: A series of shrill twittering notes, descending chromatically.

Occurrence: Summer visitant locally in small numbers west of the Sierra crest and below the Cana-

dian Zone. Courses about in the open air, usually high over sheer cliffs. March to September.

#### ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD

(*Calypte anna*).

Largest of the hummingbirds found in the Yosemite region. Male with whole top of head, chin and throat iridescent magenta or rose-red; lower surface grayish green. Back in both sexes metallic green; no rufous or buffy at all in plumage. Female with sides of body tinged with greenish, and with outer tail feathers broadly rounded at ends.

Occurrence: Common resident of Upper Sonoran Zone on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Seen in Yosemite Valley in some numbers after nesting season, mainly June to September.

#### CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD

(*Stellula calliope*).

Smallest of the hummingbirds in the region. Throat of male with long, lancet-like feathers of a striking lavender iridescence, the whole on a white background; back and top of head green; flanks tinged with buffy. Female with back and top of head iridescent green; lower surface grayish white strongly buffy tinged, but not bright rufous on base of tail as in the female Rufous; outer tail feathers broad-ended instead of narrow as in Rufous.



Calliope  
Hummingbird

Occurrence: Common summer visitant to Transition and Canadian Zones on both slopes of Sierra Nevada; observed from March until September in Yosemite Valley. In Yosemite Valley the arrival of these hummers seems timed by the first



opening of manzanita blossoms along the sunny north side of the valley. They forage chiefly about this shrub and also ceanothus and wild currant blossoms.

**LITTLE FLYCATCHER**  
(*Empidonax trailli brewsteri*).  
(Trail Flycatcher)

Smaller than Junco. No striking bright markings anywhere. Coloration above, brownish; beneath, nearly white. Perches with drooping wings and tail on prominent twig tips whence it flits out after insects which fly past.

Occurrence: Common summer visitant locally in Sonoran Zones, and lower part of Transition Zone "chiefly Yosemite Valley," on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Restricted to willow and azalea thickets of broad bottomlands. Nest usually in azalea. May to September.

**WESTERN FLYCATCHER**  
(*Empidonax d. difficilis*).

Smaller than Junco. Upper surface of body olive green, under surface definitely yellowish; lower mandible wholly yellow beneath.

Occurrence: Sparse summer visitant to Transition Zone on west side of Sierra Nevada. Observed in Yosemite Valley, especially about Mirror Lake. Frequents chiefly wooded canyon bottoms where incense cedars and alders line the streams. Forages singly, and perches 10 to 25 feet above the ground. Nest on moist banks. April to August.

**WESTERN WOOD PEWEE**  
(*Myiochanes r. richardsoni*).

Size of Junco, with posture and habits of flycatcher. Plumage above and on sides of body dark brown; middle of lower surface of body yellowish white. No special markings whatever: no white flank patch, no light eye-ring, wing bars want-

ing or else but faint. Perches in upright, straight-backed posture on lower bare branches of large trees, whence it darts out after flying insects.



Occurrence: Common summer visitant to Upper Sonoran, Transition and Canadian Zones on both slopes of Sierra Nevada. Seen in Yosemite Valley throughout the summer. Arrives about second week in May and departs about mid-September. Usual forage range about 15 to 40 feet above ground. Solitary except when caring for brood. Nest, a cup of dry fibers saddled on dead limb, frequently over water.

**VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW**  
(*Tachycineta thalassina lepida*)



White-throated Swift



Violet-green Swallow

Body size slightly less than that of Linnett or Junco; wings long and pointed, when closed reaching an inch beyond the slightly notched tail. Whole under surface of body, and sides of rump, pure white; up-

per surface of body intense green, with violet tinge on rump discernible at short range.

Occurrence: Common summer visitant to Upper Sonoran and Transition zones on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Forages in open, frequently over water, roosting and nesting in hollow trees or in rock crevices. Often in loose flocks while foraging. April to September.

**ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW**  
(*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis serripennis*)

Body size about that of Linnet or Junco; tail almost square-ended. Whole upper surface dull brown; throat and chest grayish brown; belly and leathers below base of tail white. No brilliant or iridescent markings whatsoever.

Occurrence: Sparse summer visitant in foothills west of Sierra Nevada. Frequents vicinity of gulches having steep earth banks. In pairs or small companies. Several pairs nest in banks of Merced River each summer in Yosemite Valley. April to August.

**WESTERN ROBIN**  
(*Turdus migratorius propinquus*)

Size, medium (length 10 inches); bill, slender; tail nearly as long as body. Lower surface of body bright reddish brown; upper surface plain dark slate gray, blackish on head and tail; chin, white; area under base of tail, white. Young birds have under surface of body pale reddish and conspicuously marked with rounded black spots. When on ground moves rapidly, either walking or hopping; stops abruptly and fixedly in upright posture for a few second after each advance. Flight steady, not undulating.

Voice: Of male, a loud caroling song. Both sexes utter short calls, some of them sound like squeals; these given singly or in various combinations.

Occurrence: Common summer visitant to forested portions of the Yosemite region, most abundant in Transition Zone on west slope, less numerous at the higher elevations and on the east side of the mountains. A few remain in Transition Zone, as in Yosemite Valley, in certain winters. Forages chiefly on open grasslands in summer and generally in berry-producing trees and bushes in winter. Seeks open branches of trees for singing or roosting. In pairs or families during nesting season; in loose flocks up to 50 or more at other times of year.

**SIERRA HERMIT THRUSH**  
(*Hylocichla guttata sequoiensis*)

Decidedly larger than Junco, but not so large as Russett-backed Thrush; bill, short and slender. Upper surface, plain brown; rufous tinged on tail; ring of buff around eye; wing with a concealed band of buffy, shown forth in flight; breast buffy, with numerous triangular dark spots; sides grayish, not streaked; belly, white. Manner, quiet; every few seconds, when bird is perched, the ends of the wings are spasmodically twitched and the tail is elevated and then slowly depressed.



Voice: Song of male, clear and musical, consisting of phrases uttered at varying intervals, each phrase of three to six "words" with

the pitch of successive phrases now high, now low, etc.; usual call note a rather low soft "sup."

Occurrence: Common summer visitant on west slope of Sierra Nevada, chiefly in Canadian Zone. Keeps to wooded glades and ravine bottoms. Solitary. Several nesting records on floor of Valley. May to August.

**RUSSET-BACKED THRUSH**  
(*Hyllocichla u. ustulata*).

Size nearly twice that of Junco; bill, short and slender. Whole upper surface plain brown; wing, with a concealed band of buffy, which shows in flight; breast buffy with triangular spots of brown; sides, brownish, not streaked; belly, white; eye surrounded by narrow ring of buff. Movements, deliberate.



Voice: Song of male a set theme, two to four clear deep notes, then an equal number of slurred ones, ascending in pitch, the last one finely attenuated; call note, a soft whistled tone.

Occurrence: Summer visitant in Transition Zone on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Keeps to low growths near streams, males going up into trees to sing. Solitary. May to September.

**CASSIN'S VIREO**

(*Vireo solitarius cassini*).

Three-fourths bulk of Junco; tail shorter than body. Plumage grayish green above, olive gray on head; under surface whitish; eye encircled by white; two light bars on wing; bill black. Movements deliberate.

Voice: Incessant singer—or talker. Pattern suggests "Jimmy, come here!"

Occurrence: Common summer visitant to Transition Zone, on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Frequents chiefly incense cedars and golden oaks. Solitary. April to September.



**WESTERN WARBLING VIREO**  
(*Vireo gilvus swainsoni*).

Two-thirds size of Junco; tail shorter than body. Plumage, grayish green, with no highly contrasted markings; a light line over eye; no light bars on wing. Movements slow as compared with warblers; keeps usually within crown foliage of trees.

Voice: An incessant singer all during the day. Three or four high warbled notes in each short song. Rising inflection.

Occurrence: Summer visitant in Upper Sonoran, Transition and Canadian zones on both sides of Sierra Nevada; commoner on west slope. Frequents deciduous trees chiefly, most often near streams; forages from 10 to 60 feet above ground. Solitary except when pairs are caring for broods. April to September.

**LUTESCENT WARBLER**

(*Vermivora celata lutescens*).

Half size of Junco. Whole body dull greenish, tinged with yellow

beneath. No wing bars or other contrasted markings of any sort.

Occurrence: Summer visitant in small numbers locally in Upper Sonoran and Transition zones on both slopes of Sierra Nevada. Keeps to inner foliage of trees on shaded hill-slopes; forages 10 to 30 feet above ground, but nesting on ground. Solitary. Seldom seen in Valley.

#### CALAVERAS WARBLER

(*Vermivora ruficapilla ridgwayi*)

Half bulk of Junco. Body coloration, yellow beneath, olive green above; head and neck (except throat), gray; eyelids, white; male has a chestnut-colored crown patch, visible only at close range. No white or black markings whatsoever on wings or tail.

Voice: Song of male, four or five rapidly uttered shrill notes followed by three or four lower ones.

Occurrence: Common summer visitant to Transition Zone on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Sings and forages 10 to 70 feet above ground in broad-leaved trees, such as black oak and maple, but nests in shaded situations on ground. Solitary. April to September.

#### CALIFORNIA YELLOW WARBLER

(*Dendroica aestiva brewsteri*)

Half size of Junco. Yellow color predominating; no black or white markings whatsoever. Male: clear yellow beneath (narrowly streaked with chestnut, but this not discernible at a distance); upper surface greenish yellow. Female and young pale yellow beneath, unstreaked; upper surface, dull greenish yellow. Movements, quick and nervous; hops along small branches in zig-zag course.

Voice: Song of male, very high pitched, piercingly shrill, four or five sharply enunciated notes, rising, followed by quick series of shorter ones descending in pitch.

Occurrence: Common summer visitant at both bases and on adjacent lower slopes of Sierra Nevada, extending up through the Transition Zone. Chiefly in cottonwoods and willows along streams, foraging up to 40 feet from the ground; nests in same general surroundings, but usually less than 15 feet from ground. Solitary. April to September.

#### AUDUBON'S WARBLER

(*Dendroica a. auduboni*).

Size, two-thirds that of Junco. Rump always yellow (except in young newly out of nest), and tail large-appearing and always with a wide bar of white across it near end. Chin usually distinctly yellow. Adult male in summer: top of head, chin, rump, and patch on each side of breast, yellow; breast, black; upper surface of bluish gray streaked with black. Adult female in summer: top of head, chin and rump, yellow; breast, mottled with gray and black; upper surface bluish gray. All movements quick and nervous; often flies out from foliage of tree in semicircular course.

Voice: Song of Male, a series of mellow notes, run together rapidly, not loud, and of tinkling quality.

Occurrence: In summer common visitant to Transition, Canadian and Hudsonian zones on both slopes of Sierra Nevada (most plentiful in Canadian). Keeps chiefly to coniferous trees, foraging 10 to 50 feet or higher above ground, and nests in same situation. In pairs or solitary. In Yosemite is often seen every month of the year.

#### BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER

(*Dendroica nigrescens*).

Half bulk of Junco. Head, chin and throat black (mixed with white in female and young), with a white line backward over eye and another from bill down side of throat; sides of body streaked with black; rest



THE COMMON WARBLERS OF YOSEMITE

*Facing left*  
**Black-throated Gray**  
**Audubon's**  
**California Yellow**

*Facing right*  
**Hermit**  
**Calaveras**  
**Lutescent**  
**Macgillivrays (Tolmie)**



of under surface white; upper surface, bluish gray; two light bars on wing; tail, white margined. No conspicuous yellow in plumage. Movements, rather deliberate for a warbler.

Voice: Song of male, slow drawling.

Occurrence: Moderately common summer visitant locally in Transition Zone on west slope of Sierra Nevada. In nesting time practically restricted to golden oaks. Solitary or in scattering parties. April to September.

#### HERMIT WARBLER

(*Dendroica occidentalis*).

Half size of Junco. Cheeks always yellow; under parts whitish, unstreaked; back bluish or greenish gray; two light bars on each wing; tail, white margined. Adult male: whole head clear yellow, except for black throat. Female and immatures: head dull yellow, crown mottled with blackish; little or no black on throat.

Voice: Song of male three or four two-syllable notes followed by two shorter ones, often with drawling intonation.

Occurrence: Summer visitant in varying numbers to Transition and Canadian zones on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Forages chiefly in coniferous trees, 20 feet or more above ground, and nests in same locations. Solitary. April to August.

#### MacGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER

(*Oporornis tolmiei*)

(Tolmie Warbler).

About two-thirds bulk of Junco. Head, neck and breast gray, darkest in adult males; eyelids, white; belly and under parts, yellow; upper surface, wings, and tail, plain dull green.

Voice: Song of male, three to five clean separated notes followed by one or several shorter ones close together and sometimes trilled.

Occurrence: Common summer visitant to Transition and Lower Canadian zones on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Keeps to low shrubbery, usually over damp ground, foraging four feet or less from ground; nests in same sort of surroundings. Solitary, or in pairs. April to September.

#### WESTERN MEADOWLARK

(*Sturnella neglecta*)



Very uncommon in the valley. Has been noted from April to November. Formerly nested here in small numbers.

#### KERN RED-WING

(*Agelaius phoeniceus aciculatus*)

(Red-winged Blackbird)

Somewhat smaller than Robin. Male, wholly black, except for red "epaulet" or shoulder patch on each wing at bend. Females, brownish black, with under surface more or less streaked with pinkish buff, feathers of back edged with buff, and a light stripe over eye.

Voice: "Kong-lure-lee," most characteristic.

Occurrence: Common locally below Canadian Zone. Restricted to fresh water marshes with abundant

growths of tules (or willows) or to boggy meadows with thick stands of



tall grass. More or less gregarious at all seasons. February to October.

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD**  
(*Euphagus cyanocephalus*).

Slightly smaller than Robin. Female about one-fourth smaller than male. Male entirely black, the plumage with a distinct sheen; iris white. Female dull brownish black; iris dark brown. No contrasted color marks in either sex.



Occurrence: Common resident of the lowlands and foothills (Lower and Upper Sonoran zones, sparingly Transition) on the west slope. In summer and fall months ranges up-

ward in mountains nearly to timber line. Nests singly or in small scattered colonies, but assembles in large flocks at other seasons of year. March to November.

**WESTERN Tanager**  
(*Piranga ludoviciana*).

Between Robin and Junco in size. Sexes different. Male: head, red; wings, upper back and tail, black; rest of body plain lemon yellow. Female: dull yellowish brown (sometimes greenish in effect) on upper surfaces; dull yellowish white beneath. Both sexes notably deliberate in all movements, the opposite of nervous.

Voice: Call note "pretty."

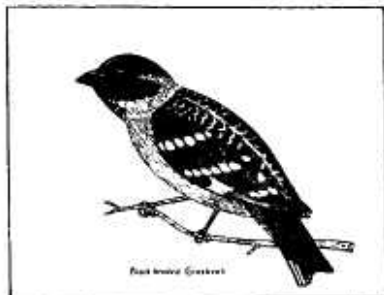


Occurrence: Common summer visitant in Transition and Canadian zones on west slope of Sierra Nevada. In pairs at nesting time, otherwise seen singly, except as small flocks may be formed in early fall, before departure. April to September.

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEEK**  
(*Hedymeles m. melanocephalus*).

Between Junco and Robin in size; tail shorter than body; bill, large and blunt. Adult male in summer: upper surface largely black; end of tail and middle of wing with large spots of white; collar around hind neck, rump, and under surface of body, light reddish brown. Female and immature: head with a light stripe over each eye and another over crown; rest of upper surface dull brown, streaked with blackish; under surface brownish white. Year-

ling males often wear a plumage intermediate between that of adult male and of female.



Voice: Song of male elaborate—a rapidly timed series of full warbling notes with both ascending and descending inflections.

Occurrence: Abundant summer visitant at lower altitudes on both sides of Sierra Nevada (chiefly in Upper Sonoran and Transition zones). Forages largely in crown foliage of deciduous trees, sometimes in shrubs, occasionally on ground. Non-flocking.

**LAZULI BUNTING**  
(*Passerina amoena*)

Decidedly smaller than Junco; tail shorter than body. Sexes different. Male: head, throat, back and rump, clear light blue; breast crossed by a bright tawny band; under parts otherwise white; tail and wings blackish brown with a white bar (sometimes a narrower one also) across each wing. Female and young: dull dark brown above, buffy and white on under surface, without contrasted markings of any sort.

Voice: Song of male a rather long, high-pitched hurried utterance of set character.

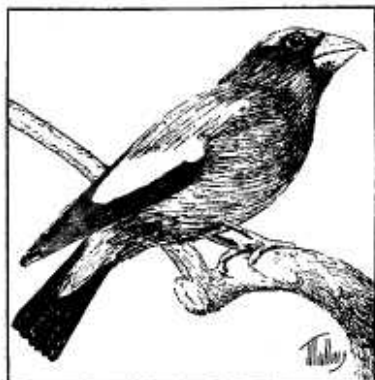
Occurrence: Common summer visitant at lower altitudes on both sides of Sierra Nevada; most abundant in Upper Sonoran Zone on west slope. Lives in low growths along ravine bottoms and near streams. Seen in pairs or singly, the

male more often than the female. May to August.

**WESTERN EVENING GROSBEEK**  
(*Hesperiphona vespertina brooksi*).

Size large for a sparrow, but less than that of Robin. Body chunky, tail short and indented at end; bill very large and conical. Male: body coloration brownish yellow; tail and wings black, each wing with a large white patch (mostly of innermost secondaries); top of head, black; forehead and stripe over eye clear yellow. Female: body coloration, grayish brown; wings and tail, black, much spotted with white.

Voice: Song of male three loud high-pitched notes uttered slowly.



Occurrence: Irregular, usually sparse, summer visitant to Transition and Canadian zones on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Observed from Crane Flat, Hazel Green and Chinquapin east to Mono Meadow; also in Yosemite Valley. Inhabits forest trees, foraging in crown foliage; less often shrubs or on ground. Usually in small flocks of loose formations, or in pairs. Commonest March to October.

**CALIFORNIA PURPLE FINCH**  
(*Carpodacus purpureus californicus*)

Size of Junco (length  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches); tail shorter than body, and decidedly notched. Male: top of head,

rump and lower surface of body from chin to breast, dull purplish red; belly, whitish, unstreaked; rest of plumage dark brown, more or less tinged with red. Female: entirely lacking red, the plumage above grayish brown (tinged with greenish) and the under surface broadly streaked with dark brown.

Voice: Song of male a rapid rolling warble lasting about two seconds and repeated at fairly regular intervals.

Occurrence: Moderately common summer visitant to Transition Zone on west slope of Sierra Nevada. In pairs or in small flocks. Casual in winter.

**WESTERN CHIPPING SPARROW**  
(*Spizella passerina arizonae*).



Western  
Chipping Sparrow

Decidedly smaller than Junco, and with narrow tail. Crown of head chiefly bright reddish brown; stripe over eye ashy white; upper surface of body brown, with black streaks on back; under surface of body ashy white, unmarked in adults, streaked in juveniles. No white on tail.

Voice: Song of male a monoton-

ous buzz lasting several seconds.

Occurrence: Summer visitant, widely from floor of San Joaquin Valley to near timber line on Sierra Nevada. Frequents various situations, most often margins of clearings adjacent to small trees. Forages chiefly on ground. Flocks loosely after nesting. April to October.

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW**  
(*Zonotrichia l. leucophrys*).



Never common in Yosemite Valley, but straggler, seen every year. A few nesting records in Valley. April to November.

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW**  
(*Melospiza l. lincolni*).

Nests from Yosemite Valley (4000 feet) up to 8000 feet as at Porcupine Flat. Several nesting records. Nests on ground in manner of Junco. April to October



### WINTER VISITANTS TO THE YOSEMITE VALLEY

California is popularly known as the winter home of many birds that nest in the north, but only a few of these winter visitors are attracted to the mountainous portions of the State. Yosemite Valley, at 4000 feet elevation, is the winter home of only 15 of these species, most of which nest farther north. However, there are several winter visitants that come to Yosemite from warm summer homes at lower elevations along the flanks of the Sierra Nevada. This unusual trait of moving to a cold climate for the winter is exhibited to some extent by the Nuttall Woodpecker, Plain Titmouse, Western Winter Wren and Western Bluebird. The latter is the only one present in numbers, in fact the general scarcity of species and individuals is the most outstanding feature of Yosemite's winter visitants. Only the careful observer will see any but the Kinglets and Bluebirds.

#### RING-NECKED DUCK (*Nyroca collaris*).

Head black, with purplish reflections in strong light; back and breast black; sides ashy, separated from breast by curved white line extending a short distance upward; area under tail black; rest of under parts white. Bill dark gray with a narrow band of white around the base, and a broader band of bluish white near the tip, tip black; iris yellow, feet grayish blue. Size medium for a duck.

Occurrence: Casual visitor to Merced River and Mirror Lake, December to March.

#### NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER (*Dryobates nuttalli*).

Size, small for woodpecker, little over half that of a Modoc Woodpecker. Whole back, wings, sides of body and outer tail feathers barred or spotted with black and white; therefore called "ladder-backed"; throat and breast white, unmarked; head, black, with a white stripe above and another below eye; back of head red in adult males. Juvenile birds of both sexes have more or less red on crown of head. Flight course in short swoops or undulations, with intermittent wing strokes.

Voice: A loud high-pitched trill.

Occurrence: Frequent oaks, digger pines, and to a lesser extent cottonwoods and willows. Irregular visitant to Yosemite Valley.

#### PLAIN TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus inornatus*).

Size somewhat less than that of Junco or Linnet. Coloration everywhere plain, grayish brown above, pale gray beneath; no contrasted markings of any sort. Head with a tapered crest, which is habitually kept erect. Manners, flight and notes resembling those of Chickadees.

Occurrence: Common resident of Upper Sonoran Zone on west slope of Sierra Nevada. Lives chiefly in foliage of oak trees. Expected November to February, singly or in pairs. Often with Juncos.

#### WESTERN WINTER WREN (*Nannus hiemalis pacificus*)

Smallest of the wrens; body size less than half that of Junco; tail but a little more than an inch in length. Coloration dark reddish brown, below as well as above; an indistinct light line over eye. Tail held always up at steep angle with back. Movements of bird quick; squats every now and then.

Voice: A rather extended and



varied song of rapid delivery and high pitch.

Occurrence: Sparse summer visitant at middle altitudes on west slope of Sierra Nevada; observed in Yosemite Valley and at Merced Grove of Big Trees. Winter visitant in fair numbers to Yosemite Valley and El Portal. Lives among root tangles and brush heaps near streams. Solitary. October to March.

**NORTHERN VARIED THRUSH**  
(*Ixoreus naevius meruloides*)

Size of Robin and somewhat similar in coloration, but with a black, or (in female), slaty, band across chest, and a shorter tail. Upper surface slate-colored; under surface bright rusty brown (more orange than in Robin); conspicuous stripe of same color behind eye; also bars and spots of same on wing. In flight like Robin, but with a pale band showing lengthwise of each spread wing.

Occurrence: A winter visitant to the western slope of the Sierras below the level of heavy snows. Common locally, reaching Yosemite Valley in late autumn and present in midwinter. Forages in scattered companies in chaparral or dense growths of small trees; seldom seen in the open. October to March.

**HERMIT THRUSH**

Alaska (*Hylocichla g. guttata*).

Dwarf (*Hylocichla guttata nanus*)

For description see Sierra Hermit Thrush in Summer Visitants.

Occurrence: Fall visitant at all altitudes on west slope of Sierra Nevada, and winter visitant there below level of heavy snow. Keeps to sheltered situations generally, even chaparral. Solitary. October to February.

**WESTERN BLUEBIRD**

(*Sialia mexicana occidentalis*).

Size half again that of Junco;

wings relatively long, reaching nearly to end of tail. Male: upper surface of body mainly intense dark blue, chin and throat the same; middle of back and breast, and sides of body, chestnut brown. Female: upper surface and throat dull grayish blue; breast and sides pale chestnut brown. Young: breast mottled with dusky. Of quiet demeanor, movements deliberate.



Occurrence: Common at all seasons in Upper Sonoran Zone on western foothills of Sierra Nevada. In autumn and early winter appears at higher altitudes eastward as far as Colby Mountain (near Ten Lakes) and commonly in Yosemite Valley. In nesting season lives chiefly about blue oaks; one nesting record Moraine Dome, but at other seasons of year frequents berry-producing plants especially the mistletoe on oaks. Flocks (openly) through most of year, breaking into attentive pairs at nesting time. October to March.

**WESTERN GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET**

(*Regulus satrapa olivaceus*).

Size very small; about one-third that of Junco; tail shorter than body.

Crown of head orange and yellow (male) or golden yellow (female) bordered on either side by black; a white stripe over eye; upper surface of body chiefly green; under surface whitish; one or two light bars on wings. Movements quick, wings fluttered often.

Voice: A series of fine and wiry notes.

Occurrence: Resident of Park, winters in Yosemite Valley, in small flocks. Keeps high in conifers. September to May.

#### WESTERN RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET

(*Corthylio calendula cineraceus*)

Size very small, about one third that of Junco; tail shorter than body. Upper surface of body grayish green; under surface buffy white; one or two light bars across each wing, and a light ring around eye. Male has a crown patch of brilliant red, usually concealed, but capable of being flashed into view. Movements quick, nervous, flutters wings frequently.

Voice: Song of male elaborate. Call note a scolding "eh" often repeated.

Occurrence: Resident Canadian Zone, winter visitant to Valley. Solitary. September to March.

#### SLATE-COLORED JUNCO (*Junco h. hyemalis*).

Similar to Thurber Junco (see

resident list), but black margin of cowl on breast curved downward rather than upward.

Occurrence: Irregular winter visitant. Most likely to be associated as single individuals in flocks of Thurber Juncos. October to April.

#### FOX SPARROWS (*Passerella iliaca*)

Alberta (*altivagans*)  
Shumagin (*unatashcensis*)  
Kodiak (*insularis*)  
Valdez (*sinuosa*)

Of chunky build, between Robin and Junco in size. Upper surface almost uniform dark brown, grayish, or reddish in tone, according to subspecies; wings and tail in any case with more or less of a foxy red tinge; under surface white, with bold triangular spots of dark brown or grayish brown, most numerous on fore neck; no white markings on either wings or tail; bill varyingly stout, dark-colored, in some races yellow below at base.

Occurrence: These subspecific forms are migrants and winter visitants, rare in Lower Sonoran Zone, but common in Upper Sonoran and (except in periods of heavy snows) Transition Zones, throughout the region. Inhabits thick brush, under which it industriously forages with much sound of scratching in the litter; found singly or in pairs, never in flocks. August to April.

#### DISTINCTIVE BEHAVIOR OF COMMON YOSEMITE BIRDS

HAWKS and EAGLES with long strong wings are most often seen in air circling and soaring.

OWLS more often heard than seen as most of them forage at night. Have large eyes, brownish coloration, flight noiseless.

SWIFTS are swiftest fliers which dart high in air about cliff walls capturing insects on wing.

HUMMINGBIRDS are the smallest of birds with iridescent plumage which buzz about flowers extracting nectar and tiny insects with their long needle-shaped bills.

KINGFISHERS fly or perch above water to plunge beneath surface to capture small fish in their long bills.

WOODPECKERS with long, strong bills, climb up and down the trunks of trees bracing with their tails and tapping the bark vigorously.

FLYCATCHERS sit erect with drooping, teetering tails, watching alertly for insect prey upon which they pounce in mid-air, afterwards returning to their perch.

SWALLOWS with long pointed wings, skim through the air in graceful and long sustained flights.

JAYS are good-sized blue birds, with raucous call and bold behavior, inhabiting open fields and wooded areas. Very common about camps.

CHICKADEES and TITMICE are small, noisy, active, restless birds feeding largely in foliage or on inner limbs. They have fluffy, grayish plumage and short straight bills, with which they often hammer seeds with woodpecker-like blows while holding them with their feet.

NUTHATCHES are smaller than woodpeckers and have much the same habit of climbing up and down tree-trunks but with a freer wig-wagging motion, often descending head downward.

CREEPERS as the name implies, creep upward on the trunks of trees and the larger limbs, searching for insects in the crevices of the bark.

DIPPERS, (Water Ouzels), of dark slaty gray plumage are seen dipping into rushing streams for food or bobbing up and down on mid-stream rocks.

THRUSHES, with the exception of the ROBIN and BLUEBIRD, are very plainly dressed and have spotted breasts. They run about on the ground stopping suddenly in listening attitudes.

KINGLETS, tiny, chubby birds with large eyes, move restlessly about in foliage, ever keeping on the move.

VIREOS are chubby, large-eyed birds, the color of foliage. They are at home in the boughs of trees and sing freely as they glide in and out among the leaves to feed.

WARBLERS are small, tireless, gaily-colored explorers of the twigs of trees and bushes. A few exhibit flycatcher-like habits.

BLACKBIRDS have bright plumage and usually inhabit open fields. The sexes differ in coloration. Winter flocking is the rule.

TANAGERS, remarkable for the brilliant plumage of the males, are birds of the coniferous forests during the summer.

SPARROWS and FINCHES have stout seed-cracking bills, feed on or near the ground, seldom fly high or far at a time, and are for the most part fine songsters. Juncos and Grosbeaks belong in this group.



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Sacramento (Spotted) - 14-15,	7	White-headed Woodpecker - 12, 5	
Townsend's Solitaire - - - -	6	White Pelican - - - -	3
Townsend's Warbler - - - -	6	White-rumped Shrike - - - -	6
Tree Swallow - - - -	5	White-tailed Kite - - - -	3
Turkey Vulture - - - -	3	White-throated Swift - - - -	17, 4
		Williamson's Sapsucker - - - -	5
Valley Quail - - - -	4	Willow Goldfinch - - - -	7
Varied Thrush - - - -	28, 6	Willow Woodpecker - - - -	12, 5
Vaux's Swift - - - -	4	Wilson's Phalarope - - - -	4
Vesper Sparrow - - - -	7	Wilson's Snipe - - - -	4
Violet-green Swallow - - - 18-19,	5	Winter Visitants - - - -	27-29
Vireo, Cassin's - - - -	20, 6	Winter Wren - - - -	27-28, 5
Hutton's - - - -	6	Wood Duck - - - -	3
Western Warbling - - - -	20, 6	Woodpecker, Arctic Three-toed - 5	
Virginia Rail - - - -	4	California - - - -	12, 5
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Winter - - - -	27-29	Modoc - - - -	12, 5
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		Nuttall's - - - -	27, 5
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California Yellow - - - -	21, 6	Wren, Common Rock - - - -	6
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Macgillivray's - - - -	23, 6	Western Marsh - - - -	6
Townsend's - - - -	6	Western Winter - - - -	27-28, 5
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Water Ouzel - - - -	14, 5	Wright Flycatcher - - - -	5
Waxwing, Bohemian - - - -	6		
Cedar - - - -	6	Yellow-billed Magpie - - - -	5
Western Bluebird - - - -	28, 6	Yellow-throat, Western - - - -	6
Western Crow - - - -	5	Yellow-headed Blackbird - - - -	6
Western Flycatcher - - - -	18, 5	Yellow Warbler - - - -	21, 6
Western Gnatcatcher - - - -	6		

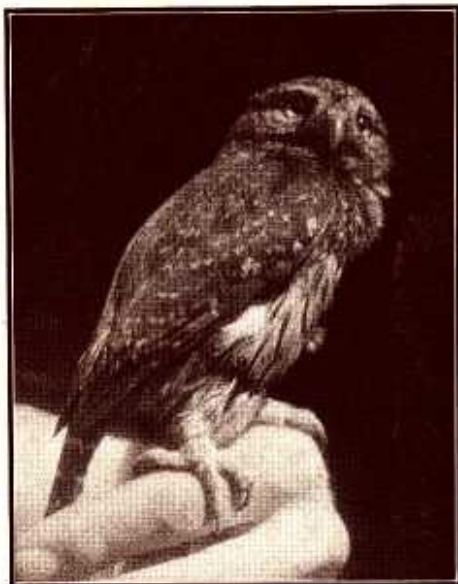


## Birds

*I know that I have never heard  
A song so lovely as a bird's.  
The soft low note from throat of Dove,  
Singing a symphony of love;  
A Meadowlark from nearest clod,  
Lifting a song in praise of God.*

*I think the sweetest rhapsodies  
Are sung by birds just for the trees.  
The Thrush sings softly with a stream,  
The joy of evening in his theme;  
That's why I know I've never heard  
A song so lovely as a bird's.*

CHARLES ALBERT HARWELL



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