

Birdwatchers Visit Mexico

By WILLIAM H. PATEY
Past President
Maricopa Audubon Society
Phoenix

This vast land of ours has always had its nature lovers. Some of them specialize in its soul stirring vistas of scenery. "I love thy rocks and hills, thy woods and temple hills," a true expression of the feelings of many Americans. Then there are those who have specialized in one or more of the fascinating phases of wild-life, such as the so-called "birdwatchers." Of this latter group, the best known is that of the National Audubon Society, and while this organization has done valiant work in the wide field of conservation, and continues to do so, there is not one of its hundreds of branches that does not take a very active interest in bird-life.

In this day of scientific concentration on space and the far reaches of our universe, we who are interested in ornithology, feel this is also important, and we seek to learn more about the world in which we live; especially those interesting children of Nature, the birds.

Our National Audubon Society was founded in 1905, and is the oldest and largest conservation organization in North America. It is entirely privately financed, and does not receive any governmental funds. It is supported primarily by membership dues, contributions and bequests. Its major purpose is to advance public understanding of the value and need of conservation of wild-life, plants, soil, and water, together with their intelligent treatment, and wise use, in relation to human progress.

THE MARICOPA Audubon Society of Phoenix follows the general pattern of the national society. Its field trips are open to the public and are made over a wide area of the state. Recently some of its members, including the writer, made a field trip more than 1,200 miles south of Phoenix in the interesting neighbor country of Mexico.

We were well rewarded by seeing and photographing hundreds of birds native to Mexico, the great majority of which are not seen north of the border.

As we traveled toward the tropics, we noted the small homes, along the way, made so beautiful with gorgeous blooms of vines and shrubs, some of which literally covered the homes.

South of Culiacan we passed the stone shaft with its bronze marker, denoting the Tropic of Cancer. The trees and flowers are indeed "different" and very tropical, such as papaya, coconut palms, Santa Palo trees (with no leaves, but whose branches were filled with white blooms, which made a perfume of the area) and many others too numerous to mention.

Highway 15 from Nogales to Mexico City travels along the western coastal plain of Mex-

ico, until it turns east at Tepic, the capital of Nayarit. We were therefore able to make trips to the shore and observe many birds. Perhaps one of the most interesting is the osprey — also known as the fish-hawk. This bird is well equipped with black talons; curved, sharp, and strong and able to securely hold a fish while the osprey is in flight. The keen vision of these birds easily detects any fish near the surface, and a lightning-like dive, feet first when he hits the water, and Mr. Fish is seized. Sometimes the osprey disappears beneath the surface, but invariably bursts forth with his prize locked in his strong talons.

The caracara, which is the national bird of Mexico, is a very large hawk and a beautiful bird, with white head, neck and breast, black belly and white tail, the latter having a sharply contrasting black tip. In flight, or perched, the caracara is a bird of dignity and beauty.

WE SAW flock after flock of one of the most spectacular members of the oriole family, the cacique—who builds a hanging nest similar to the oriole of the north, but with this difference, the cacique's nest is as much as 30 inches long.

Near San Blas we were greatly elated at seeing a pair of Guatemalan Ivory billed woodpeckers; large birds 13 to 14 inches long with red heads, and resembling the pileated woodpecker of the north. It also resembles both the ivory billed woodpecker of the southeastern United States, (believed nearly extinct) and the imperial ivory billed woodpecker of the high Sierra Madre mountains of Mexico, which is also reported near extinction.

We traveled in a native dug-out, a strong and worthy craft along lanes where the jungle growth arched overhead, and fought from both sides to choke the water-way, which it would soon do, were it not for a constant battle waged by men who use the water-ways.

Sunlight filtered through the

jungle ceiling, as we went along with eyes and ears alert, for this is the home of the alligator, the boa constrictor, the coati-mundi, otters and many other jungle animals, including the jaguar. Suddenly our guide pointed to an over-hanging limb, and there was a boa constrictor, perhaps drowsing after a full meal. We saw great termite nests hanging in the jungle a few feet above the swamp water. Floating water lettuce (not edible) not rooted, just drifting along in leafy clusters about a foot in diameter. Parasitic plants draped from the jungle boughs; great clusters of orchids of many hues. In the watery depths of the swamp were thousands of bright green lily leaves, extending three feet above the water, with beautiful white blooms of six white petals, with red pistils, forming a bloom eight inches in diameter.

THERE WERE birds galore, some of them familiar in the north, such as the belted kingfisher, but near him was the green kingfisher—who is not known to us. The orchard oriole was a surprise, knowing him to nest far north in the States—but he had found a good place for winter, and there he was.

We must end this—but first we want to call attention to the fact that the coastal plain near Obregon has some of the most productive soil in the world, and the great fields are well worked and the farms mechanized with the most modern and efficient machinery.

Those who have observed Mexico for the past two decades have much to say in praise of the nation-wide accomplishments in agriculture, industry, highways, education and general modernization.

Perhaps the greatest industry in Mexico has no chimneys. It is the tourist business which brings in hundreds of thousands of travelers and many millions of dollars.

Our trip was a most successful one, and we can recommend travel in Mexico as being safe and enjoyable.



REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Phoenix 1/10/62 Bird Watchers Find Many Wintering Here

By GINGER ARLINGTON
Gazette Staff Writer

They stopped, looked, and listened.

"I hear a Gila," someone said.

Binoculars aimed in the direction of the Gila woodpecker's churr.

"I hear him, but I don't see him," came a mild complaint.

Mrs. David Demaree, of the Maricopa County Audubon Society and leader of the Encanto Park bird walk, pointed out a red-capped fellow.

"The Gila is the bird that makes a lot of those holes in saguaro cacti or in your coolers and houses," she told her group of watchers.

The group traveled on. They were only part of 50 Phoenix residents and winter visitors walking and watching at the park.

THE WATCHERS pointed out various birds and asked questions.

"Is that the ordinary sparrow with that little black tie?"

They compared bird-eating habits.

"They like pyracantha berries, but he eats pepper berries."

"I feed about 25 Inca doves every morning."

They discussed traveling companions.

"Do the two birds, the Ore-

gon Junco and the gray-headed Junco, travel together?"

A green heron perched on a metal pipe. The watchers examined him through binoculars. His green back and head and rust-colored neck drew exclamations of delight.

Bird watchers seem to have other things in common besides an interest in birds. They all have binoculars, a love of wild life, and extremely sharp eyes.

MANY TRAVEL from state to state finding new species of wild life. But, according to Mrs. Demaree, there are plenty of birds to be seen right here in Phoenix during the winter.

Within a 15-mile radius in the west part of town, 103 species of birds were seen recently. Among those seen at Encanto were the Bridal Tit-mice and Anna's Hummingbirds.

But, as one lady said, looking around at the Encanto greenery, "Even if you didn't see any birds, it would still be a pleasant walk."

The next Encanto bird walk is scheduled Feb. 5 at 10:30 a.m. behind the Encanto Park club house.

The walks, co-sponsored by the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department and the Maricopa County Audubon Society, are open to the public free of charge.



Phoenix Gazette 10-31-62

Audubon Film Scheduled Here

Kenneth Morrison's color film, "The Long Flight Back," second production in the national Audubon Screen Tours, will be shown at 7:45 p.m. today in the Phoenix College auditorium, 1202 W. Thomas.

The film, which tells the story of the vanishing whooping crane, roseate spoonbill and American flamingo, will be narrated by Morrison, nationally known natural resources conservationist.

Locally Screen Tours is sponsored by the Phoenix Evening College and the Saguaro Camera Club, in cooperation with the National Audubon Society.

It is open to the public. Admission is 90 cents for adults, and 50 cents for children.



Gazette Staff Photo

CONSERVATIONISTS TO MEET

Details of the program for Arizona Conservation Council's annual banquet program tomorrow at 7 p.m. are worked out by Mrs. Scott Spaw, 1505 E. Cheery Lynn, program chairman; Ken Smithee (standing), Glendale, council president; and Stan Calhoun, Scottsdale, executive secretary. Public dinner-meeting will be held at Beef Eaters Restaurant, 300 W. Camelback, with William T. Davoren of Salt Lake City, a field representative of Department of Interior, as speaker.

NOTES: The National Wildlife Federation is scheduled to begin publishing a magazine this month that will go to associate members . . . Anyone interested may contact the federation at 1412 16th St., N.W. Washington 6, D.C. . . . The Maricopa County Sheriff's Water Safety Patrol wants nominations of individuals or organizations for its annual Frank J. Schmidt Award for outstanding achievement in promoting water safety . . . Nominations must be in hands of Lloyd F. Wortman, 4601 E. Almeria, by tomorrow night, and award will be made at annual patrol meeting Nov. 17 . . . Monte Dodson, district predator control agent for the Fish and Wildlife Service, will present a slide lecture on predator control at the Maricopa County Audubon Society meeting at 8 p.m. Tuesday in Goettl Brothers Auditorium, 2005 E. Indian School.

AZ Republic 11-4-62



Photographed at the Grand Canyon... a fine specimen of the Clark's Nutcracker.



Author Peggy Spaw, past President of the Maricopa Audubon Society, and Audubon representative to Arizona Conservation Council

If "the worthy use of leisure hours" is the classic definition of recreation, then the program of the National Audubon Society is a classic expression of recreation.

In Arizona, the National Audubon Society has an active, progressive branch. This is the Maricopa Audubon Society, a member of the Arizona Conservation Council.

Cartoons to the contrary, members of Audubon are anything but a collection of passive eccentrics. The average Society member shares the humor of his image as the dauntless bird chaser. But he is also a member of the nation's first and oldest organized conservation unit. Theodore Roosevelt's birdlife observations were his lifetime hobby, and John Foster Dulles' name was among the many prominents on our membership rosters. Birdlife included, all of nature's landbound resources — creatures, water, soil and vegetation are within the husbandry of the National Audubon Society.

Audubon activities are a "come as are" form of recreation. No special equipment is required to participate. Just a pair of walking shoes and a willingness to look and listen.

With bird observation as its most

popular medium, the Maricopa Audubon Society has recreation to offer all kinds of people: A shut-in need not miss contact with nature. Books for study, recordings of bird and creature sounds, and his own ears, trained to tune-in on the world just outside, can keep him in touch with the joys of nature.

For the Community's young, the Audubon Society will bring its Junior Audubon programs into any school. Children may see our 16 millimeter films, carefully compiled to show Arizona's birds in their typical settings. Nest displays, talks, and Audubon kits to use for further stimulation are offered our youngsters. This is in the hopes that their interest in birds will lead them to correlate all outdoor sights and sounds into a wholesome appreciation of our resources. Grade school classes in the Valley make use of the Society's planned nature walks through Encanto Park. Finding the visitor birds, the children are shown the shrubs and trees that have attracted these creatures to stop at a park in the center of their city.

From September through June, the Maricopa Audubon Society shares its

activities with all who are interested: The Society's monthly meetings feature presentations of film and lecture by some of the finest naturalists available. Ben Avery, an authority on Arizona wildlife, has visited several times. Odd Halseth, Arizona's pioneer authority on conservation, has shared his wisdom with members and guests. The Arizona Sonora Desert Museum has sent its internationally recognized naturalist, Mr. Lewis Walker, to instruct and entertain us. We have heard authorities on water, geology, and anthropology, and watched the herptologist, Mr. William Woodin, the Director of Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, pull snakes and lizards from his white carrying sacks while he delivered a priceless lecture on the reptiles' habits and home grounds.

The Encanto Bird Walks, sponsored jointly by the Audubon Society and the Phoenix Department of Parks and Recreation, have become a wintertime institution in Phoenix. These walks take off twice a month from the Encanto Boathouse, and hundreds of visitors and residents have made the walk a regular, sunny habit.

The Society opens its twice-monthly fieldtrips to public participation. Sometimes these trips take us just ten minutes from town. Some days the group, led by a trained Audubon leader, goes for a whole day to areas where zone changes will show corresponding changes in birdlife, vegetation, and animal life.

Our fieldtrip leadership workshop series, concluded just last April, were offered to all youth leaders of the community. In this series, to name a few, Professor Gordon Bender of the Life Sciences Department, A.S.U., headed up a two-hour field study of the insectivorous habits of birds. Gail Monson, Refuge Manager of the Kofa



A native Arizonian — the Gila Woodpecker — clings in precarious nonchalance to his tree trunk perch. This 'cliff hangin' stance is typical of the species.

1962?

2nd Annual Founders Day Dinner



Arizona Conservation Council

ACC Affiliates

American Camping Association, Coronado Section

Arizona Association of Landscape Architects

Arizona Bowhunters Association

Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs

Arizona Game Protective Association

Arizona Outdoor Writers Association

Arizona Parks and Recreation Association

Arizona State Parks Association

Arizona Federation of Women's Clubs

Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Association

Arizona Council of Camera Clubs

Arizona Zoological Society

Arizona Education Association

Maricopa Audubon Society

Arizona State Horsemen's Association

Arizona Wildlife Conservation Club

Council Representatives

Dr. Martin Mortensen, American Camping Association

Mr. Jim Leader, Arizona Association of Landscape Architects

Mr. Al Henderson, Arizona Bowhunters Association

Mrs. Margaret Sadler, Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs

Mr. Fred Greenwald, Arizona Game Protective Association

Mr. Robert Manion, Arizona Outdoor Writers Association

Mr. Kenneth J. Smithee, Arizona Parks and Recreation Assoc.

Mr. Devens Gust, Arizona State Parks Association

Mrs. C. R. Hensing, Arizona Federation of Women's Clubs

Mr. Glenn Taylor Jr., Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Assoc.

Miss Dorothy O'Rourke, Arizona Council Of Camera Clubs

Mr. Robert Mattlin, Arizona Zoological Society

Mr. Olus Lunt, Arizona Education Association

Mrs. Peggy Spaw, Maricopa Audubon Society

Dr. Louis Taylor, Arizona State Horsemen's Association

Dr. Lyle Sowles, Arizona Wildlife Conservation Club

Invocation

Martin Mortensen

Dinner

Introduction of Distinguished Guests

by

Stanley Calhoun

ACC Executive Director

Annual Report by Exec. Direc.

President's Annual Report

by Kenneth J. Smithee

Introduction of Speaker

by

Fred Greenwald, ACC V.P.



Wasteful Killings Irk Hunters, Too

By BEN AVERY

IN TODAY'S Arizona's Outdoors is a column, "The Naturalist," by Mrs. Una E. Miller of the Maricopa County Audubon Society concerning killing of a burrowing owl and other wasteful killing of birds, particularly coots.

I do not agree entirely with Mrs. Miller, but I think it important for every sportsman to read her column, then think twice before he kills a wild bird, animal, or member of the reptile family.

Mrs. Miller, I believe, and many other nature lovers are too quick to convict all hunters. For some reason they never mention the fishermen who kill fish, nor do they become irate at the housewives who swat or poison flies, or the crop dusters who kill all insects and anything else that gets in the way. Yet insects are just as important in the scheme of things—sometimes more important—than birds or animals.

At any rate Mrs. Miller had no proof that it was a hunter that killed the burrowing owl, and I doubt if she is sure it was hunters who killed the ducks and coot and herons. It just could have been some careless user of poison, or even a disease or contamination.

But if even one of them was killed by a hunter and left to rot, it would be one too many. In talking with Mrs. Miller I learned a good many things, and came to realize how distasteful it can be to many good citizens for hunters to brag too loudly of killing five bears in five days, bagging the Big 10 of game animals, or printing too many pictures of dead animals in the newspaper.

Mrs. Miller, and a good many others motivated by the finest ideals of appreciation for nature, don't understand the thrill of the hunt for the hunt's sake, of tramping the hills with a gun, bow and arrow, a shotgun and a dog, or stalking the deer, the elk or the wild turkey.

Sportsmen recognize feelings of those like Mrs. Miller even though they do not agree with the doctrine wildlife can be preserved unharmed and undamaged. In ages past many species have become extinct without hunting. It is doubtful if sport hunting ever seriously hurt any species. Some proof of this can be found in Europe where some species have been hunted for centuries.

The real danger to any species is in its habitat and food supply. Our mourning dove faces a serious threat, one aggravated by the fact that many who believe like Mrs. Miller, want to halt all hunting of the mourning dove. The threat, however, is destruction of the dove's nesting places by farmers who are suffering grain and safflower damage by whitewings, not doves.

Resources of conservation agencies, including the Audubon Society, is needed to save the mourning dove by carrying out an education program, and, through research, trying to find some way to protect the farmers' crops from whitewing damage.

Why is the whitewing and not the dove to blame? Because the whitewing feeds on heads of grain and other seed sources, while the mourning dove is a ground feeder, and only picks up that which falls to the ground, including weed and Johnson grass seeds.

But it looks as if we will get little help from the Audubon people if they continue to direct their efforts against the hunter and fisherman conservationist instead of joining him, looking the other way when someone passes the roast duck or venison, and pitching in to work for wise management of all wildlife.

I was happy to note that the head of the National Audubon Society spoke up recently at Jackson Hole in support of sport hunting of elk in Yellowstone Park as a means of protecting their range, instead of slaughter by park rangers.

Unfortunately, few Audubon members will agree with him and he may soon be jobless.

Meantime, sportsmen should clean their own house by never killing anything they don't intend to eat. And even then they should not be hoggish by trying to fill a freezer with wildlife.

The Naturalist

Owl's Death Blamed On Wanton Hunters

By The Maricopa Audubon Society

Five days after the current dove hunting season opened, we were driving along 115th Avenue near McDowell shortly after dark, when we saw what looked like a dead bird lying in the middle of the road. I stopped the car, got out, and picked up one of the most engaging of our native birds, a burrowing owl. It had been shot through the breast, just for the fun of it. Or should I say the "sport" of it?

This was a wanton act, performed on the public highway. It was furthermore an ignorant act, as well as a cruel one, as any owl is an economic asset to any neighborhood for its control of insects and small rodents.

The burrowing owl lives in the ground and forages at night. Its home is restricted to a certain quality of soft dirt, easy to dig into with its wings. Like all owls, it is an unconscious clown and is irresistibly charming.

Those of us who believe that wildlife also has a right to exist, have cherished the few habitats of the burrowing owl, and have watched them in the vain hope that they would remain unmolested. Three years ago I saw 12 owls sitting two by two on a secluded sandy road in Southwest Phoenix. Each year since we have seen fewer live birds and more dead ones, shot during the hunting seasons. The owner of the ranch tried to protect them, he told me, but the hunters defied him, fi-

nally killing one of his bulls. The owls are all destroyed. I have seen Lake Sullivan, 20 miles north of Prescott, and said to be the source of the Verde River, littered with dead birds, coots, ducks and herons, during the hunting season. A pond on Olive road was ringed and floating with dead ducks and coot on the final days of a recent hunting season.

And this is conservation? Or sportsmanship?

"Not a sparrow falleth."

Birds and all wildlife are in the public domain, and I am declaring my vested right and enjoyment in them by demanding their protection, alive, against the presumption of those who take pleasure in destroying them, U.E.M.

Una Miller

Mesa Tribune July 2, 1962

The Public Pulse

POOR PHRASE

To the Editor:

Reed Peterson discussed the problem of feral burros in the June 25th Public Pulse. I agree with him that our native bighorn sheep and other range wildlife are valuable resources and that the burro problem needs intelligent attention by our state government.

Mr. Peterson chose a poor phrase, however, when he wrote that a certain bill had been defeated by the "so-called dickie bird watchers of Arizona". I believe he has confused birdwatchers with that group of people who campaign for absolute protection of every living thing. There are certain individuals who fit into both groups, but the following facts should convince my fellow readers of The Mesa Tribune that it is inaccurate and unjust to lump the two groups together.

I am a member of the Maricopa Audubon Society, local branch of the national organization and probably the hard core of the central Arizona birdwatching fraternity. The society has publicly stated it does not oppose the hunting of mourning doves since it is quite aware that hunting has not threatened the extinction of this species.

Our branch, some 92 members, is composed largely of people like myself who are enthusiastic observers of birdlife and natural history in general. We regret the burro situation as much as any ardent sportsman. We not only enjoy our outdoor pastimes but try to make intelligent appraisals of all our natural resource problems.

Gale Monson, veteran manager of the federal bighorn sheep ranges in Yuma County, is an outstanding student of birdlife, not only the game birds but all the small songbirds which in the hunter's vernacular are called "dickie birds". We birders are most proud that both Thomas Jefferson and Teddy Roosevelt (big-game hunter, as well) were both keen birders who kept lists and notes on what birds they saw.

There are two ways in which the expression "dickie bird watcher" has been used. Cartoonists and others often kid bird watchers good-naturedly about this pastime and the birders generally have enough sense of humor to take no offense. But some folks are prone to apply this phrase in a scornful manner, and it is my feeling that Mr. Peterson intended no compliment. Bird-watching normally is a wholesome pursuit, above scorn. It is not the blank-minded surveillance that "watching" might imply but an educational, healthful, and recreational activity.

W. C. Royall, Jr.

Mesa Tribune
June 25, 1962

The Public Pulse

BURRO FACTS

To the Editor:

This letter is in regard to the article concerning the shooting of a wild burro which appeared in the Mesa Tribune June 19. While the legal aspects of the case are closed, there are other important matters relating to it which should be brought to the attention not only of the people of Mesa but also to the entire state of Arizona.

This news item had hardly hit the news stands before I was receiving phone calls from all over Mesa expressing surprise that the wild burro is protected by the state. Many of those who called had participated in burro hunts as members of clubs, unaware of the consequences. The fact appears to be that many state hunters are misinformed concerning the legal status of this animal.

The wild burro is not under the protection of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, but under the Arizona Livestock Sanitation Board. A couple of years ago, a bill was introduced into the state legislature trying to get the burro under the Game and Fish Department so that something could be done to regulate this animal. But the bill was defeated by the so-called "dickie bird watchers" of Arizona. These people claimed that the burro is a docile, picturesque animal that was part of the winning of the West and therefore should be protected.

The truth about the wild burro can be expressed by the views put forth in the Arizona Wildlife Magazine, which Bob Householder edits. Bob is considered by many as the outstanding authority on big game hunting in Arizona.

For the past year, Bob has carried on a campaign to educate hunters as to the real status of the wild burro. The wild burro is a greater threat to the bighorn sheep herd of Arizona than either predator or hunter. This little, so-called docile animal is actually the most vicious animal in the hills. It can keep sheep, deer and even a full grown bull away from water.

This view of the burro is also shared by the biologists of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, who are the real experts on game and range management.

The bighorn sheep of Arizona is considered by many to be the outstanding big game animal of our state. Any American hunter wishing to make the grand slam of sheep kills must come to Arizona to hunt the desert bighorn since this is the only state in the nation where it can be taken. To protect this wonderful game animal, the Arizona Game Department controls its hunting very closely. Only one bighorn may be taken by a hunter in a lifetime. In the past months pressure has been put on the legislature to raise the resident permit fee from \$25 to \$50 or even \$100. Last year 85 permits were issued for the entire United States to hunt Arizona bighorn sheep.

It doesn't make sense to me that the people of Arizona, although shackled by archaic legislation, would sit idly by and watch the wild burro threaten the existence of our top game animal.

One thing has been proven for certain. No one can go out and shoot a burro. If they do, they are liable to prosecution and fine. If it should so choose, the Livestock Sanitation Board, under the existing law, could bring charges of felony against the shooter of a wild burro, another fact few hunters are aware of.

The answer lies in new legislation which would remove the burro from the protected list. I would certainly like to clarify my position by stating that I am in opposition to opening a shooting war to exterminate the burro. It would be much more sensible and humane to obtain legislation which would force their removal from the ranges by a responsible agency of the government.

While I recognize that this letter does not vindicate my own action, it is my sincere wish that it might enlighten the people of Mesa and subsequently be a step forward in insuring posterity a chance to hunt the desert bighorn.

Sincerely,
Reed Peterson

4-15-62 Phx Gazette
4-15-62? Phx. Gazette



Gazette Staff Photo

Charles G. Kimmel of 5617 N. 62nd Ave., Glendale, a former supermarket executive in Vashon Island, Wash., peers at birds in Encanto Park.

MISCELL.

4-15-62 **Last Bird Walk Of '62 Tuesday**

THE 10TH and last Encanto Park bird walk of 1962 will start at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday from behind the park clubhouse at 2605 N. 15th Ave.

So far this season there have been 367 persons taking part in the walks. They represent Phoenix residents and visitors from 24 states and Canada.

Four new species, the mountain chickadee, Costa hummingbird, Red Head duck, and black-throated sparrow, were added in the past year to the 92 birds identified in five years. *AZ. Republic*



STARTLED STARLING—Cal Royall, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, fastens a bright yellow, four-inch, plastic streamer to the leg of a starling which he trapped at the UofA Experimental Farm here. The bird will be released and its movements traced in an effort to learn more about the behavior of starlings in Arizona and their economic importance as an agricultural pest.

Birdwatchers' Help Needed

If you are a birdwatcher, either amateur or professional, you are in a position to do a good turn for agriculture here.

Simply keep your eyes peeled for starlings or blackbirds with such long, yellow, plastic streamers fastened to their legs.

When you see one, dead or alive, jot down the time and location on a postcard and send it to Cal Royall at the UofA Mesa Experimental Farm here.

His mailing address is Post Office Box 1006, Mesa.

CAL, WHO IS employed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has been trapping and banding starlings and blackbirds by the hundreds for several months now. It is part of a study that he has launched in an attempt to assess the economic importance of these two species of birds and their relation to agriculture.

In recent years, birds of one sort or another have developed a taste for grapes, lettuce, sorghum, safflower and other crops grown in the Salt River Valley. So much so, in fact, that in some instances they have come to be regarded as a major agricultural pest, right along with insects, gophers and other unsavory creatures.

And when birds invade a feedlot in large numbers, which they often do, they can tuck away an alarming amount of expensive cattle feed.

BLACKBIRDS and starlings aren't the only suspects, but they are the logical species on which to concentrate first, Cal reports. Both species have built up tremendously in Arizona within the past few years, and


it is known that they do cause damage to some crops.

"But before we can take any steps one way or the other, we need to know more about their habits and movements so that we can find their weak point and attack them there if control measures are deemed necessary," he said.

"We also need to know more about their diet. As it stands

now, we suspect that they eat a lot of bugs and fly larvae too. It could be that in the long run they destroy enough insects to pay for the damage they do," Cal added.

All of which explains why he is interested in learning what happens to those birds with the yellow streamers. If you see one let him know.



PATIENCE IS the prime attribute of a Bird Watcher. Here Neal Berger waits with camera ready for a bashful bird. A fast reflex camera and faster reflex action are among other prime requirements.

Ariz Journal

March 9, 1962

March 8-9-62



COVER AND concealment are important in bird watching. E.C. McCullaugh (above) shows how its done. That plaid shirt may give the whole game away, however. Unless birds are color blind.

ArizJournal
March 9, 1962