

Notes on Some of the Birds of  
Fort Klamath, Oregon, collected by Lieu-  
tenant Willis Wittich, 21st. Infantry, U. S. A.,  
With Annotations and Additions by  
The Collector

This article is compiled from notes and collections forwarded to me, at different times, by Lieut. Wittich, during his residence of nearly four years at Fort Klamath.

The Fort is situated near the head of Upper Klamath Lake, one of a number of large lakes composing the Klamath basin, of Southern Oregon<sup>1</sup>. Its altitude is 4400 feet above the sea level — above the limit of oak-trees. The country is well forested, in most places. The trees are of large size, and mainly evergreens — pine, fir, spruce and juniper, with a mingling of aspens. Mount Shasta, in California, appears in view in the South, and Mount Pitt at the North.

The Klamath basin occupies a chain of large lakes, <sup>bordered by</sup> ~~and~~ marshes of "tule" etc.<sup>2</sup>, which abound in shoal water and low islands. These wide surfaces, <sup>\*\*\*</sup> densely covered with rushes, afford most convenient retreats for a large number of swimming and wading birds, which nest and pass the summer there.\*

Ducks, geese, herons, plovers, and sandpipers <sup>are</sup> exceedingly abundant. Dr. J. S. Newberry, quoted above, thus describes the arrival of the water

<sup>1</sup> Please give the exact situation, with latitude, longitude, mean temperature, and average vari-fall.

<sup>2</sup> Please give full details.

Dr. J. S. Newberry,  
\* Pacific Railroad  
Report, Vol. II, p.  
99, 1857.

fowl in autumn: "With the first October rain, vegetation begins to spring over all these prairies, and the geese and ducks now come in. Flock after flock in increasing numbers they come, until their flights rival those of the Passenger Pigeon, and the heavens are always marked by their characteristic triangles, and the air filled with their cries.

The ducks descend to the bays, streams, and lakes, and almost cover the smaller bodies of water, while the geese settle on the prairie and feed upon the fallen grain of the oat, or the first tender sprigs of springing grass, which now begins to tinge the landscape with green.

Below is given a list of specimens; with biographical notes, and notes of other species that occur, by Lieut. (and Mrs.?) Wittich;

3. To be filled in etc.

\* This measurement is always taken from base of rectrices, inside of skin.

A few stay all winter. —  
 This is the common one.  
 See also (466) 1875.  
 - 1875.  
 Build on ground (or in timber low down).

1. Anas migratoria, Linné. Robin. No. 1, ad., 1875. Wing, 5.05; tail, 4.25; bill from nostril, .55; gape, 1.09; tarsus, 1.32.

This specimen is probably a female. It is not distinctly referable to Ridgway's variety propinqua, though the white on the tail is confined to a rather broad terminal edging to the inner webs of the outer rectrices; the back has a faint brownish wash.

2. Anas nasuta, Gmelin. Varied Thrush. No. 2, ad., 1875. Wing, 4.88; tail 3.81; bill from nostril, .56; gape, 1.09; tarsus, 1.25.

"C"

3. Sialia mexicana, Swainson. Western Bluebird.  
No. 3, ♂ ad., May, 1875. Wing, 4.24; tail, 3; bill from  
nostril, .38; gape, .79; tarsus, .76.

Sialia arctica, Swainson. Arctic Bluebird.  
Found at Fort Klamath (?).

4. Parus montanus, Gambel. Mountain Chickadee.  
No. 4, ad., May, 1875. Wing, 2.66; tail, 2.50; bill  
from nostril, .33; tarsus, .65.

5. Sitta pygmaea, Vigors. Pigmy Nuthatch.  
No. 5, ad., 1875. Wing, 2.50; tail, 1.63; bill from  
nostril, .44; gape, .68; tarsus, .52.

6. Anthus ludovicianus, (Gmelin) Leitch. Flickert.  
No. 6, ad., 1875. Wing, 3.25; tail, 2.73; bill from  
nostril, .37; gape, .58; tarsus, .80. An exact  
duplicate of typical Eastern specimen.

7. Dendroeca aestiva (Gmelin) Baird. Summer  
Warbler, No. 7, ♂ ad., ~~May~~, 1875. Wing, 2.36;  
tail, 1.88; bill from nostril, .30; tarsus, .70.

8. Dendroeca audubonii (Townsend) Baird.  
Audubon's Warbler. No. 8, ♂ ad., May, 1875.  
Wing, 3.11; tail, 2.60; bill from nostril, .30; tarsus, .68.  
No. 9, ♂ ad., May, 1875. Wing, 3.07; tail, 2.63; bill  
from nostril, .30; tarsus, .67.

Very abundant during the migrations, fluttering  
about the junipers, upon whose berries they feed.

See page 100 x  
High. Quail  
about 9 1/2 ft.  
g.

Not on list at  
Hospital.

Muncion x  
Winter residents  
Not known to breed  
here on June 1 - June  
6. October 1. Same  
as May 1st.

April 14. 75

June 15 75

May 5. 75

Not on list  
at hospital

9. Geothlypis philadelphia (var. macgillivrayi Baird?) Macgillivray's Ground Warbler.  
No. 10, ♀ ad., Spring of 1875. Wing, 2.16; tail, 2.26;  
bill from nostril, .28; gape, .51; tarsus, .76.

Summer  
resident

(April 25")

x 10. Myiodioctes pusillus, var. pileolatus, Ridgway.  
Western Green Black-capped Flycatching Warbler.  
No. 11, ♂ ad., April, 1875. Wing, 2.24; tail, 2.25; bill  
from nostril, .24; tarsus, .72. This specimen is  
distinctly variety pileolatus. It differs from  
Eastern specimens in being much brighter  
yellow beneath, scarcely tinged with olive on  
sides; frontal band and throat, with a  
suffusion of orange; pileum with brighter  
steel-blue metallic gloss.

Not seen in winter

seen in  
summer

June 15"

x 11. Pyranga ludoviciana, (Wilson) Bonaparte.  
Louisiana Tanager. No. 12, ad., June, 1875.  
Wing, 3.75; tail, 3.10; bill from nostril .43; tar-  
sus, .75. No. 13, ♂ ad., Spring of 1875. Wing, 3.75;  
tail, 3.13; bill from nostril, .44; tarsus, .75.

April 28  
abundant

H. horreorum  
also found.  
Recorded at  
hospital June 15 "1875  
Ran Swallow

x 12. Tachycineta bicolor, (Vieillot) Coues. White-  
bellied Swallow. No. 14, ♂ ad., April, 1875.  
Wing, 4.62; tail, 2.40; bill from nostril .20;  
gape, .51; tarsus, .39.

Plumbeous Vireo.  
Recorded at hosp. No date

June 14 "1875

x 13. Carpodacus purpureus, var. californicus, Baird.  
Californian Purple Finch. No. 15, ♂ ad., <sup>May</sup> ~~May~~  
(June), 50.  
1875. Wing, 3.75; tail, 2.78; bill from nostril, .39;  
tarsus, .69.

Piekinet  
Ch. Pigeon  
May, 1875

14. Passerculus savanna, var. sandwichensis, Baird.

Northwestern Sparrow. No. 16 (probably young  
in autumn). Wing, 2.82; tail, 2.37; bill from  
nostril, .30 (from base of culmen, .45); tarsus, .78.

American Goldfinch  
Yellowbird - Thistle  
Ch. Frigate - June  
1875

15 - not on list.

Melospiza Baird  
Swamp Sparrow - M. Palustris  
April 26, 1875

15. Melospiza melodia, var. \_\_\_\_\_ (?)

Song Sparrow. No. 17, May, 1875.

\* This is the usual  
- ornament of bill  
always given,  
which not other-  
-wise stated.

Wing, 2.64; tail, 2.75; bill (from base of culmen),  
.49; tarsus, .86. Recorded by McEldery April 26<sup>th</sup> 1875.

Junco - wagleri  
Snowbird.  
J. hyemalis, Oct. 29  
1875

16. Junco oregonus, Townsend & Slater. Oregon

Snowbird. No. 18, ♂ ad., February, 1875. Wing, 3;  
tail, 2.82; bill, .42; tarsus, .76. No. 19. Wing, 2.92;  
tail 2.77; bill, .38; tarsus, .78.

Abundant at Klamath in winter etc.

Spizella Bonaparte  
Chipping Sparrow  
Ch. bird - chippy. X  
June 9 - 1875  
Zonotrichia -

17. Zonotrichia leucophrys, (Foster) Swainson. White-  
-crowned Sparrow. No. 20, <sup>ady</sup> ~~male~~, 1875. Wing, 3.12;  
tail, 2.25; bill, .46; tarsus, .93. This specimen  
is typical leucophrys. (April 26<sup>th</sup> 1875)

(Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> 1875)

18. Zonotrichia coronata, (Pallas) Baird. Golden-  
-crowned Sparrow. No. 21, 1875. Wing, 2.96;

tail, 3.07; bill, .46; tarsus, .89.

19. Passerella iliaca, var. townsendii, (Audubon)

Nuttall. Townsend's Fox Sparrow. No. 22,  
1875, is typical townsendii. Wing, 3.28; tail, 3.50;  
bill, .48; tarsus, .93.

20. Cyanospiza amoena (Say) Baird. Lazuli

Finch. No. 23, ♂ ad., June 15, 1875. Wing, 2.78;  
tail, 2.45; bill, .42; tarsus, .62.

Oregon Towhee  
P. maculatus - Var. by  
Oct. 5 - 1875

21. Pipilo chlorurus, Townsend Baird. Green-tailed Towhee; "Blandings's Finch". No. 24, ad, May, 1875. Wing, 3.06; tail, 3.65; bill, .52; tarsus, .95

Numerous in  
Summer  
No. 2, in fall  
4 eggs

22. Agelaius phoeniceus, (Linn.) Vieillot. Red-winged Blackbird. No. 25, ♂ ad. Wing, 4.92; tail, 4.23; bill, .90; tarsus 1.11.

(Red-shouldered Blackbird)  
Agelaius phoeniceus, var. gubernator, (Wagler) Leuc.  
Agelaius phoeniceus, var. tricolor, (Nuttall) Leuc.  
Red-and-white Shouldered Blackbird. All of the above varieties are found together at Klamath (?)

June - 1875

23. Xanthocephalus icterocephalus, (Bonaparte) Leuc. Yellow-headed Blackbird. ~~Extremely~~ abundant about the Klamath marshes (?)

Please give me a little biography - real sketch of the Meadow Lark

23. Sturnella magna, var. neglecta, (Audubon) Allen. Western Fieldlark. No. 26, ♂ ad. Wing, 5.03; tail, 3.75; bill, 1.35; tarsus, 1.55.

Very numerous  
Permanent resident  
Corvus cryptoleucus  
Rau - 1875

24. Scotocophagus cyanocephalus, (Wagler) Cabanis. Blue-headed Grackle; Brewer's Blackbird. No. 27, ♂ ad. Wing, 5.09; tail, 4.53; bill, .86; tarsus, 1.25. ~~Probably to 25~~ 25 not on list at hospital

\* Pacific Railroad  
Rep., Vol. II, p.  
82-3, 1857  
Very rare

25. Corvus americanus, var. caurinus, (Baird) Leuc. Northwestern Fish Crow. No. 28, ad, 1875. Wing, 11.00; tail, 7; bill, 1.62; tarsus, 2.15. Appears to be uncommon at Klamath. Dr. Newberry remarks: "in the Klamath basin we did not see it, but it appeared again with

The oaks on the Des Chutes river etc."

X 26. Picicorvus columbianus (Wilson) Bonaparte.  
June '75. Clark's Crow. No. 29, ♀. Wing, 7.05; tail, 4.55;  
bill, 1.34; tarsus, 1.33. No. 30, ♂ ad. Wing, 7.55;  
tail, 4.87; bill, 1.60; tarsus, 1.35. The first spec-  
-imen (No. 29, ♀) has a faint suffusion of  
brownish laid over the ash of the dorsal  
surface; and the bill is much shorter  
and more convex.

July '75 X  
Throughout summer.  
Pica melanoleuca, var. tudsonica, (Sabine) Allen.  
American Magpie. Found at Klamath (2) Yes

No  
Certainly seen or noticed  
Pica melanoleuca, var. nuttalli, (Audubon) Coues.  
Yellow-billed Magpie. Found at Klamath (2)

2. What other Jays do you have? June '75  
X 27. Cyanurus stelleri, (Gmelin) Swainson  
Steller's Jay. Nos. 31, and 32, ad. <sup>June, 1875</sup> Wing, 5.70;  
tail, 5.80; bill, 1.16; tarsus, 1.60.

Canada Jay  
Feb. 26 1876

X 28 Tyrannus verticalis, Say. Arkansas Flycatcher.  
May 31 '1875 No. 33, ad., May, 1875. Wing, 4.78; tail, 3.85; bill  
from nostril, .52; gape, .96; tarsus, .75.

X 29 Contopus borealis, (Quainson) Baird. Olive-sided  
June 15 '1878 Flycatcher. No. 34, ad. Wing, 4.25; tail, 3.30; bill  
from nostril, .52; gape, .95; tarsus, .66.

X 30. Contopus virens, var. richardsonii, (Quainson)  
Night Hawk Coues. Western Wood Pewee. No. 35, ♀ ad., May, 1875.  
Bill Cat  
C. virginianus  
June 1875  
Wing, 3.27; tail, 2.75; bill from nostril, .35; tarsus, .54.  
No. 36, ♂ ad. Wing, 3.48; tail, 2.93; bill from nostril, .38;  
tarsus, .56

You must shoot  
some and put  
them in alcohol  
for a few days;  
then send by  
mail, and I will  
skin them!

Nov. 1. 75

Trochilidae. - Hummingbirds. \* Abundant at  
Klamath. Species not determined.

Caliope, S. rufus

X 31. Ceryle alcyon (Linné) Boie. Belted Kingfisher.  
No. 37, ♀ ad. Wing, 6.40; tail, 4.25; bill from  
frontal feathers, 2; Abundant at Klamath <sup>4/25</sup> (2)

June 75

X 32. Picus villosus, var. harrisi (Audubon) Allen.  
Harris' Woodpecker. No. 38, ♂ ad., June, 1875.  
Wing, 5; tail, 3.55; bill, 1.40; tarsus, .81.  
Numerous among the pines (?)

May. 75

X 33. Sphyrapicus varius, var. ruber, (Gmelin) Baird.  
Red-breasted Woodpecker. No. 39, ♂ ad. Wing, 4.65;  
tail, 3.40; bill, .96; tarsus, .77.

May 10/75

X 34. Melanerpes formicivorus, (Swainson) Bonaparte.  
Lewis' Woodpecker. No. 40, ♂ ad., ~~April~~, 1875.  
Wing, 6.62; tail, 4.38; bill, 1.18; tarsus, .95; No.  
41, ♀ ad., April, 1875. Wing, 6.50; tail, 3.82; bill,  
1.23; tarsus, .92.

June 15/75

35. Colaptes mexicanus, Swainson. Red-  
-shafted Flicker. No. 42, ♀ ad. Wing, 6.56; tail, 5.20;  
bill, 1.53; gape, 1.72; tarsus, 1.10.

Cooper's Hawk  
Chicken Hawk  
Sept. 2 1875

Lamer Falcon  
F. mexicanus

Rusty Capped Falcon  
Sparrow hawk  
Aug. 1875

X 36. Circus cyaneus, var. hudsonius, Gmelin.  
Marsh Hawk; Harrier. No. 43, ♂ ad. (bluish  
plumage), June, 1875. Wing, 12.90; tail, 9;  
bill from ~~base of cere~~ cere, .65; tarsus, 2.85. No. 44,  
♂ juv., 1875. Wing, 12.95; tail, 9.75; bill from  
cere, .63; tarsus, 2.90.



37. Nisus fuscus, (Gmelin) Bonaparte. Sharp-  
shinned Hawk. No. 45, ♀ ad., 1875. Wing, 7.98;  
tail, 7.15; bill from cere, .48; tarsus, 2.10.

38. Buteo swainsoni, var. ————— (?)  
Swainson's Buzzard. No. 46 \*\*\*

Bondion haliaetus (Linné) Savigny. Fish Hawk;  
Osprey. Numerous on the rivers and about  
the Klamath lakes (breeds?) Summer residents

Haliaetus leucocephalus, (Linné) Savigny  
White-headed Eagle. Common along the  
rivers and especially so at the head of  
~~upper~~ Klamath lake (?) (Breeds?)

39. Aegialitis vociferus, (Linné) Cassin. Killdeer  
Plover. No. 47! Wing, 6.34; tail, 4.33; bill,  
.75; tarsus, 1.40.

40. Himantopus nigricollis, Vieillot. Stilt.  
No. 48, ad. Wing, 8.37; tail, 3.20; bill, 2.47;  
tarsus, 3.93; middle toe (without claw), 1.36.

41. Steganopus wilsoni (<sup>Sabine</sup> ~~Gemmick~~) <sup>Low</sup> Bonaparte.  
Wilson's Phalarope. No. 49, ad., 1875. Wing, 4.65;  
tail, 2.40; ~~bill~~ tarsus, 1.22.

42. Gallinago wilsoni (Gemmick) Bonaparte.  
Wilson's Snipe. No. 50 ad. Wing, 5.10; tail, 2.92;  
bill, 2.65; tarsus, 1.19.

Specimen  
packed away.  
A very interesting  
bird; will send it  
to Ridgway at  
Washington, for  
his opinion etc.

43. Totanus melanoleucus, Gmelin. Greater  
Tall-tale. No. 51, ad. Wing, 6.97; tail, 3.28;  
bill, 2.01; tarsus, 2.25.

44. Totanus solitarius, Wilson. Solitary Tattler.  
No. 52, ad. Wing, 5.15; tail, 2.66; bill, 1.20; tar-  
sus, 1.23.

45. Grus americanus, (Linné) Ord. Whooping  
Crane; White Crane. No. 53 \*\*\*.

also  
Common Rail  
Carolina rail  
June 17.75  
Yellow rail

x 46. Rallus virginianus, Linné. Virginia  
Tall. No. 54, ad. Wing, 4; tail, 1.82; bill, 1.60;  
tarsus, 1.62; tarsus, 1.38.

Anser ——— (?) Goose - sent to Dr.  
Cous - what species (?)

packed away  
at present.

47 Crismatura rubida (Wilson) Bonaparte.  
Ruddy Duck. No. 55, ♂, adult breeding  
plumage \*\*\*

48 Hydrochelidon lariformis (Linné) Leves  
Black Tern. No. 56, adult breeding  
plumage. Wing, 7.67; tail, 3.55; bill, 1.07;  
tarsus, 5.9.

48 species - 56 specimens. Besides Dr.  
Cous Goose - we must find out about it

List of Birds whose occurrence at Klamath  
is probable - to be looked for etc.

1. Turdus swainsoni, var. costulatus, Nutt. Cooper's Oregon Thrush.
2. Amelospiza mexicana, Sw. 7; also Cooper's Dipper.  
Clear streams in the mountains - flies under water - special desideratum.
4. Regulus satrapa & calendula - Golden, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets - (Evergreens; very small.)
5. Parus rufescens, Townsend. Chestnut-backed Chickadee.
6. Sitta carolinensis, variety aculeata - Slender-billed (White-bellied) Nuthatch - (Bluish bird; habits of a woodpecker)
7. Sitta canadensis - Red-bellied Nuthatch - (smaller than above; red belly; habits same.)
8. Certhia familiaris - Brown Creeper. (Long, slender, decurved bill; creeps on trunks of pines & cedars)
9. Troglodytes osoletus - Rock Wren. ("This Wren was found inhabiting piles of <sup>broken</sup> trap rock on the shores of Klamath lakes etc" (Merriam's Report))
10. Thryothorus spilurus. Western Wren (Fallen logs)
11. Telmatorhynchus palustris. Marsh Wren (Reedy marshes) There are several other Wrens.
12. Alauda alpestris. Horned Lark; Skylark.
13. Helminthophaga ruficapilla. - Nashville Warbler. (special desideratum; low bushes)
14. Helminthophaga celata - Orange-crowned Warbler.
15. Dendroica nigrescens, (Townsend) Baird. Black-throated Gray Warbler - Good specimen a special desideratum - for my cabinet.
16. Dendroica coronata - Yellow-rumped Warbler. Special desideratum; like the two beautiful Audubon's Warblers you sent me; but without yellow on throat etc; habits same
17. Lanius naevius; Water Wagtail; Water Thrush (has the tilting motion of sandpiper; frequents brooks & ponds)
18. Geothlypis trichas, Maryland Yellowthroat (sides of head black; on the ground)
19. Icteria virens. Yellow-breasted Chat. (Makes ridiculous noise; turns summersaults in the air etc.)
20. Lichyocineta thalassina - Violet Green Swallow
21. Petrochelidon lunifrons - Cliff Swallow - (special desideratum; wings, head & tail will do.)
22. Stelgidopteryx serripennis - Rough-winged Swallow. (Breeds in holes in banks &c.)

23. Progne subis. Purple Martin -
24. Ampelis cedrorum. Cedar Bird - (Gorge crest on head; eat berries of juniper (cedar).)
25. Myiadestes townsendii. Townsend's Flycatching Thrush. Good specimen very desirable - (Mountains; canyons; cedar trees on rocky places; sings deliciously)
26. Loxia americana. - Cross-bill Special desiderata - found in the <sup>yellow</sup> pines feeding on cones)
27. Chrysomitris - Goldfinches - (several species; flight undulatory; found where you find the Goshawk Finch)
28. Sparrows & Buntings - Lots of 'em.
29. Icterus bullockii; Bullock's Oriole? (don't know about finding it so high up)
30. Corvus corax, var. carnivorus. Raven. Special desiderata - good skin.
31. Gymnokitta cyanocephala, (Maxim.) Bonaparte Blue Crow; Cassin's Jay; Maximilian's Jay. Very specially a desideratum
32. Apelocoma floridana var. ~~floridana~~ californica California Jay. Special desiderata; probably not found at such an altitude.
33. Picisoreus canadensis Canada Jay; Whiskey Jack very special desideratum
34. Flycatchers; several of 'em.
35. Antrostomus nuttalli. - Nuttall's Whippoorwill
36. Panyptila saxatilis, White-breasted or Rock Swift Inhabit ledges of rock (near water?) fly very high. Very special desideratum
37. Chaetura vanxi Chimney Swift
38. Three species of Hummingbirds - all special desiderata.
39. Woodpecker - Several species

Hawks, Owls, Vultures, Eagles, Pigeons, ducks, geese, gulls, terns, waders, divers etc etc.