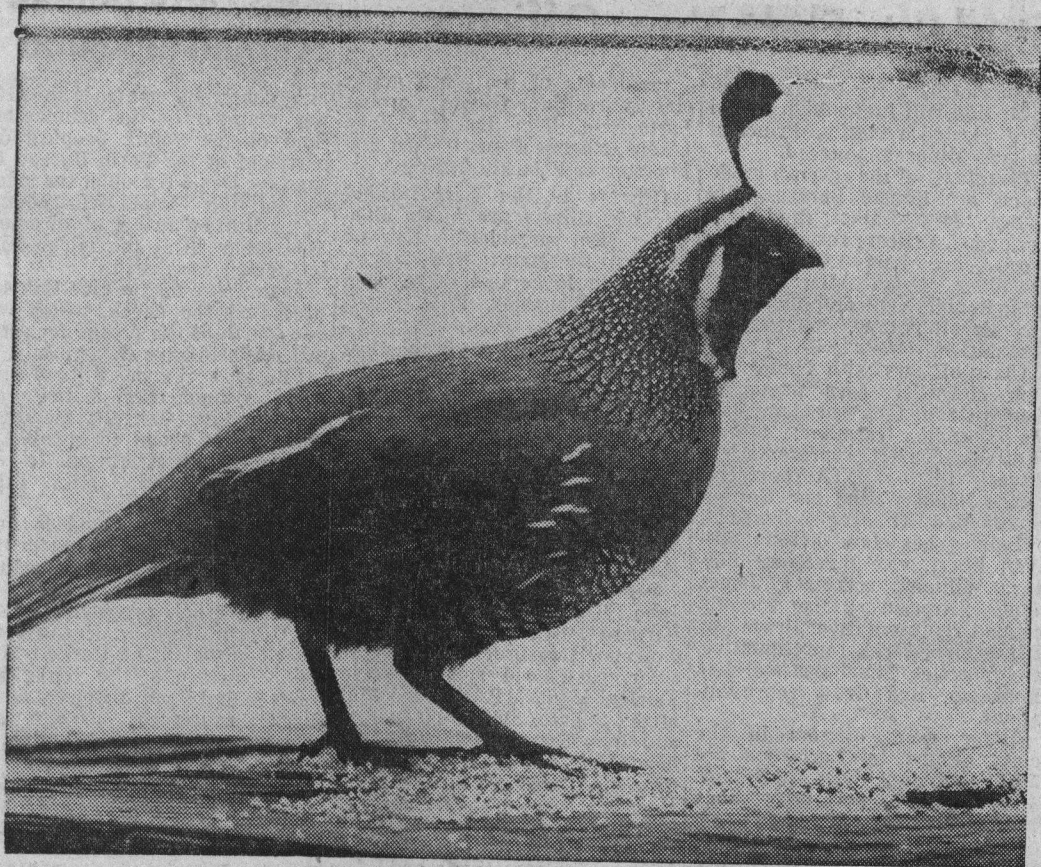


This Fellow Is California's State Bird



Surveying the area before he indulges in a little of the cracked corn at his feet is this California quail, one of the species which in the past has

been so prevalent in California it has earned the title of "state bird." Although depleted by humans and animal predators, there still are a lot of Califor-

nia quail around. The males are particularly conspicuous because of their plumes which, as the picture shows, resemble an apostrophe.

Along The Trail

by

ken legg

Most of us are familiar with the California quail; in fact he's so prominent a part of the California landscape that he has been designated the state bird. Unlike many other species which occur in other states, as well as in California, this quail is primarily restricted to the Golden state.

Southern Oregon has some and he has been introduced into Hawaii and Peru. His California range is from the north to the south border.

Quail belong to the order of gallinaceous birds, a group of fowl-like birds to which belong the turkey, the pheasant and the grouse. Birds of this group are principally ground inhabitants, although they usually take to trees for roosting. They scratch for their food. The crops and are

and land clearing has reduced their numbers until now a flock of 50 is a large one.

Quail are birds of the brushland, and when found in fields or other open situations, always have dense brush within flying range in which to take shelter.

Most large city parks support a covey and Natural Bridges is no exception. About 30 are year-round residents here.

Hunters like to shoot quail on the wing, but unless pursued in low brush or in fairly open country the birds are loathe to fly, running beneath the matted canopies of poison oak and other shrubbery.

Quail are gregarious except during the breeding season when they pair off for nesting. Usually the nest is a depression beside a stump, a log, in a brush pile or under a tussock

Fliers, Plane Are Rescued From Pacific

San Francisco (AP). — The freighter Harry Culbreath was headed for San Pedro yesterday with a disabled Catalina flying boat and its four crewmen, who were picked up at sea 530 miles southwest of San Francisco yesterday.

The aircraft was hoisted aboard with only slight damage after pilot Clark Dixon of Danville, landed it undamaged next to the freighter despite nine foot ocean swells. The plane was enroute from Guam to Oakland, when one of its two engines quit about 1000 miles out of Honolulu, too far out to turn back.

After it was clear he did not have enough fuel to reach Oakland, Dixon learned the freighter's position by radio and landed

A closet

with in

primarily vegetable, the bill being adapted for seed eating.

Early California settlers recall coveys of as many as 1000 birds but wide-scale hunting

of grass.

Many ground-nesting birds, perhaps to offset the losses to predators, lay large clutches of eggs. The California quail lays from six to 28. When more than this number is found, it indicates that two females have laid in the same nest.

Quail are touchy and often desert nests seen by man. The male, during nesting, as well as when the birds are flocked, often spends long hours on watch from some elevated perch. Some people call this "posting of sentries" and doubtless it is done to warn others of impending danger.

The young are precocial. Like baby chickens they are down-covered and are able to run nearly as soon as they leave the egg. Indeed, young quail have been seen running from the nest with bits of shell still sticking to their down.

Many out-of-state visitors inquire as to the identity of this quail which is so well known to Californians. The valley quail and the California quail are essentially the same. Another species, the mountain quail, is larger, has a long, straight head plume and, as his name implies, is usually found in mountains, or at least in forested areas.

Quail are good to eat and also nice to have around. The fellow in the photo used to bring his flock to my front yard every evening for the cracked corn I put out. Their main call has been interpreted as "Chicago," "Come right here," "Where are you," and probably many other phrases. The call often is used by the flock leaders to collect a covey after it has been scattered.

The enemies of quail are many, for a host of animals like to dine on him. Foxes, coyotes and bobcats consume what they can catch. Possums, skunks and coons eat the eggs, and the feral house cat is known to catch birds, both young and old. Probably his most destructive avian predator is the Cooper's hawk, and from first hand experience I know the hawk to be an effective captor.

However, the hawk cannot follow him into brush, but must catch him in the open. Quail, in their haste and panic to escape the Cooper's hawk, often fly into buildings, roofs or windows and break their necks.

I was stationed at a 1000-acre park where quail were abundant. Daily forays of hawks by day and coyotes by night kept them ever on the alert, and though both predators took regular toll the quail numbers were great. No hunting was allowed in this preserve and there was little to upset the balance in this phase of nature. From a natural standpoint the predators found good eating and the quail population remained consistent with the food supply. But, if a quail has a psychological side, what of his feelings, knowing that every time he presents himself to the open spaces some thunderbolt may drop upon him and sink sharp talons into his flesh. Maybe the quail's memory is as short as his tail, and he soon forgets the narrow escape of some other day as he goes his merry whistling way.

BOYS.. MEN

September 30, 1955

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a gathering "Truth edom, that the hear a message

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NEWS

OCTOBER 8