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BLUE GROUSE SIGHTING

Location: Mt. Abel, Los Padres National Forest, Kern Co.,  
California; down ski trail on north slope above Camp  
Condor, west side of steep ravine. App. location  
119 12' 05" x 34 51' 10" on Sawmill Mountain Quadrant, 7.5mi  
1943. Elevation 6900' - 7000'.

Date: 23 September 1976

Time: 1320 hrs.

Observers: Dick Smith (SBMNH), Mavis Hasey (USFS), Janet  
Hamber (SBMNH)

Weather: Mostly clear and sunny, some scattered clouds, little  
wind, temp. in 70's.

Vegetation: In stand of large Jeffery pine and white fir;  
ground cover mostly pine needles, some snowberry.

Viewed: Leitz Trinovid binoculars; upslope from tree, app.  
50' from bird.

Observations: The bird was first seen by Dick Smith as it  
flew from one tree to the Jeffery pine. Both  
Smith and Hasey heard the sound of the bird flying.  
Upon reporting to me that they had just seen a  
large bird land in a tree nearby, I moved upslope  
slightly and found the bird perched at an oblique  
angle on a bare area of a large branch of the  
tree about 40 feet from the ground and 6 feet from  
the trunk of a mature Jeffery pine. The canopy  
of the tree shaded the bird, but no part was  
obscured by branches. In the binoculars, I observed  
a large, 16 - 18 inch, bird with a small head;  
small, stout bill; short neck, plump body and fairly  
long, wide tail - squared off on the end. Definitely  
a gallinaceous bird. The bird was a dark, brownish,  
gray all over with some lighter mottling on the  
back. The tail was dark with a light 1/2" - 3/4"  
band on the end of the tail. The bird was in view  
for about 10 seconds. It then left the branch,  
sailed down the ravine on decurved wings and was  
lost to sight a few seconds later. The three of us  
checked the area carefully but could not find the  
bird again.

Janet A. Hamber  
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27 September 1976