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NOTES ON SOME BIRDS FROM ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF A SUPPOSED NEW WHIP-POOR-WILL.

BY WILLIAM BREWSTER.

At different times during the past year Mr. F. Stephens has sent me small collections of birds made at various points in southern Arizona and just within the western boundaries of New Mexico. As many of the species are as yet but little known, I take an early opportunity of announcing the capture of these additional specimens, and of presenting some brief but interesting field-notes which have been kindly furnished by Mr. Stephens. A critical study of one or two of the rarer species has suggested some original comments which are also offered in this connection; but certain developments affecting the genus *Polioptila*, which have been unavavoidedly crowded out, will be found elsewhere in the present number of the Bulletin.

1. **Harpornhynchus bendirei**, *Coues*. ARIZONA THRASHER. — Mr. Stephens sends me two specimens of this interesting Thrasher, both males, and both from the neighborhood of Tucson, where the bird seems to be common but very locally distributed. These specimens are in freshly-assumed, perfect spring plumage, a condition which does not appear to have been previously examined, the original types in the Smithsonian collection being in "worn summer dress," and the three individuals taken

by Mr. Henshaw in 1874, in fall feathering. My birds have the breast-spotting decidedly more distinct than in *H. palmeri* but the color of the arrow-heads is not darker than that of the back.

After reading all that has been written on the subject and carefully comparing *bendirei* with *cinereus*, I am inclined to differ from my friend Mr. Henshaw and to agree with Dr. Coues, in considering *bendirei* a distinct species. Its close relationship to *cinereus* is evident enough, in spite of the very different coloring of the two birds. But Mr. Henshaw's statement that "the wide separation of the two forms in question, and the fact that the Cape Saint Lucas bird is restricted to the coast, while the Bendire's Thrush inhabits the dry, almost waterless, plains of the interior, will sufficiently account for the discrepancies between them," seems to me rather to concern the original derivation of the Arizona form than to affect its specific standing. The very character of the distribution of the two birds favors the assumption that they are distinct. So far as we know, the Arizona Thrashers are confined to a very limited area, and if, as the evidence goes to show, their colony is *absolutely* cut off from the equally restricted one of *cinereus*, there can, of course, be no intergradation between the two, and the well-marked characters of *bendirei* must entitle it to specific rank.

2. **Harporynchus lecontei** (Lawr.) Bp. LECONTE'S THRASHER. — A fine adult male taken near Phoenix, Feb. 21, 1880, is in the present collection and brings the number of known specimens up to five. The species is apparently a very rare one in Arizona. Mr. Stephens has seen only two individuals during several years' experience. He writes: "I took this specimen ten miles north-west of Phoenix. The locality was a brushy desert with large cacti. At the time, it was singing in a similar manner to *H. palmeri*, only very sweetly. I should consider them excellent songsters. They do not mock other birds and the song is unlike that of *H. redivivus*. A short time afterwards I saw two other Thrushes, one of which was *lecontei*. They were flitting through the brush and on shooting I got the wrong one, an *H. palmeri*. The latter was abundant in the locality and *H. bendirei* common."

In the "Key to North American Birds" Dr. Coues reduced Leconte's Thrasher to a variety of *H. redivivus*, and this arrangement, also followed in his later works, has been generally

endorsed by such ornithologists as Ridgway, Henshaw, and others who have since had occasion to notice the bird. But although I dislike to differ from such an array of authority I cannot for a moment believe that *lecontei* should be associated with *redivivus*.

Even if we admit (as I am however by no means prepared to do) that the radical color-differences which exist between them are explainable by climatic modification, there still remain certain *structural* characters which cannot be similarly disposed of.

In the first place, the bill of *lecontei* is very much shorter, slenderer, and narrower than that of *redivivus*. The inferior convexity of the lower mandible is evenly rounded, whereas in *redivivus* it is laterally compressed, forming a quite sharp ridge or angle which is apparent to the eye as well as upon gently passing the finger along the bill below. A corresponding difference is also somewhat similarly shown by the upper mandibles; that of *lecontei* having a nearly perfect convexity beyond its basal third, while in *redivivus* the greater width of the bill gives the sides of the maxilla a decided slope or inclination, the lateral outlines of which are actually concave to the very tip.

Furthermore, in *lecontei* the cutting edges of the maxilla are decidedly recurved or rounded to within a short distance of the tip, and when the bill is closed the edges of the opposite mandibles nearly meet, those of the upper only slightly overlapping; but in *redivivus* these edges are not recurved beyond their basal fifth, being, on the contrary, nearly as sharp as a knife-blade, while they decidedly overlap the lower mandible.

Leconte's Thrasher otherwise differs in having the tail very much shorter and more rounded; the soles of the feet smoother; and the rictal bristles much more abbreviated and fewer in number.

On the whole I regard the affinities of this Thrasher as closer to *H. curvirostris palmeri* than to any other known form.

Despite the fact that *palmeri* is obsoletely spotted below, their coloring is much more nearly alike than is that of *lecontei* and *redivivus*. And in form and proportions, as well as in the general shape and character of the bill, they are strikingly similar. Indeed, were it not for the fact that the habitats of the two overlap it might be difficult to argue their specific distinctness. But the occurrence of *lecontei* at Phoenix, in actual company with *palmeri*, as observed by Mr. Stephens, effectually precludes any

surmises looking to a nearer relationship than that of allied species.

I subjoin the measurements of the present specimen of *lecontei*, for comparison with some taken from specimens in my collection of *H. curvirostris*, *H. curvirostris palmeri* and *H. redivivus*.

Harporyhynchus lecontei. ♀ (No. 5232). "Length, 10.50; extent, 12.20"; wing, 3.90; tarsus, 1.25; tail, 4.57; bill (chord of culmen), 1.35; bill from nostrils, .98; width below posterior angle of nostril, .21.

H. curvirostris. (No. 564, Texas.) "Length, 11.00; extent, 13.25"; wing, 4.05; tarsus, 1.28; tail, 4.07; bill (chord), 1.27; from nostril, .91; width below nostril, .23.

H. curvirostris palmeri. (No. 4988, Arizona.) "Length, 11.06; extent, 13.30"; wing, 4.12; tarsus, 1.40; tail, 4.30; bill (chord) 1.37; from nostril, 1.10; width below nostril, .25.

H. redivivus. (Nos. 566, Saticoy, Cala; 4182 and 4183, San Bernardino Co., Cala.) "Length,—, 12.20, 12.00; extent,—, 13.20, 13.10"; wing, 4.10, 4.16, 4.15; tarsus, 1.47, 1.40, 1.47; tail, 5. (worn), 5.17, 5.07; bill (chord), 1.70, 1.66, 1.75; from nostril, 1.30, 1.25, 1.35; width below nostril, .30, .26, .27.

3. **Cardellina rubrifrons**, (*Giraud*) *Scl.* RED-FACED WARBLER. — A young male obtained at Fort Bayard, New Mexico, July 16, 1876, extends the range of the species considerably to the eastward of Camp Apache and Mt. Graham in Arizona, where it was found by Mr. Henshaw in 1874. This evidence is important from its bearing upon the original record by Giraud in 1841, when it was included among the famous "Sixteen Species" alleged to have been procured in Texas. Mr. Stephen's specimen was taken "in a cañon, among high mountains."

4. **Pyrranga hepatica**, *Swainson*. HEPATIC Tanager. — There are four specimens of this Tanager in the collection. The birds themselves offer nothing worthy of mention, but some notes which accompany them are of much interest. Under date of May 30, 1880, Mr. Stephens writes: "The species is rather common here (Chiracahua Mountains). They keep mostly among the pines (but sometimes in oaks) and several haunt the vicinity of the house, where I can hear them singing at all times of the day. The song is loud and clear, but short. I have found no nests but a female, taken May 26, had laid all but her last egg."

This description of the song, is, so far as I can remember, the first that has been given. Mr. Henshaw, writing of his experience

with the species at Camp Apache in 1874, says, "with the exception of the call-notes used by both sexes, and which resemble the syllables *chuck, chuck*, several times repeated, they were perfectly silent and neither here nor elsewhere did I ever hear any song." This was probably due to the lateness of the season, Mr. Henshaw's observations being made in July and August.

5. *Cardinalis virginianus igneus* (Baird) Coues. SAINT LUCAS CARDINAL.—A single adult male of this well marked race is in the collection, from the San Pedro River. I mention it in the present connection chiefly for the purpose of calling attention to some interesting specimens collected by Mr. N. C. Brown, in Kendall Co., Texas, during the spring of 1880. These birds are nearly intermediate between *cardinalis* and *igneus*, their tails being much longer than in the eastern species, while the bills are larger and more swollen; the red of the crest clearer, and the black on the forehead reduced to the narrowest possible line.

6. *Icterus parisorum*, Bonap. SCOTT'S ORIOLE.—Mr. Stephens sends me three males of this Oriole. They were taken in the Chiracahua Mountains, not far from the locality where Mr. Henshaw met with the species in 1874. The accompanying notes describe them as "active, restless, and very sweet singers." They were rather uncommon and no females were seen. The adult plumage is apparently not perfected before the second year, as two of the present examples lack the black hood and back, and are otherwise dull-colored, although taken late in the spring.

7. *Antrostomus vociferus arizonæ*, var. nov. STEPHENS'S WHIP-POOR-WILL.

CH. SP. Similis *A. vocifero*; sed major; alis longioribus; rictus setis longioribus; loris, strigæ superciliari, gulæ phalerisque lunatis fulvis; albo in cauda contractiori.

♂ (No 5238, author's collection), Chiracahua Mountains, Arizona, May 22, 1880. Generally similar to *A. vociferus* but much larger; with the rictal bristles considerably longer; the gular crescent and a pretty well defined superciliary stripe, ochraceous; the lores and auriculars tawny ochraceous. The white of the tail barely tipping the outer web of the lateral feathers and on the others confined to a narrow apical space;* the under tail-coverts nearly without barring.

* On the inner web of the outer pair of feathers this space measures 1.11 inches in depth; of the second pair, 1.50; of the third, 1.55.

Dimensions. "Length, 10.20; stretch, 19.40" (collector's measurements); wing, 6.65; tail, 4.45; tarsus, .73; longest rectal bristle, 1.80.

Habitat. Chiracahua Mountains, Arizona.

The differential characters presented by this specimen, are, in my opinion, well worthy of varietal recognition. My collection embraces a very good suite of eastern specimens of *vociferus*, and among them I find no decided approaches to the Arizona bird. The white on the tail, although somewhat variable in extent, is never limited to so small an area, and the rectal bristles are invariably much shorter. Nor have I seen any eastern males with the gular collar uniformly ochraceous, even autumnal examples having the white largely predominating over this space. The difference in size also is very considerable. Taking the wing as the best exponent of this, the wing of *arizonæ* gives 6.65, while seven males of *vociferus* measure respectively 5.80; 5.80; 5.83; 5.96; 6.20; 6.21; 6.40.

I am indebted to my friend Mr Ridgway, for an opportunity of examining a male and female of the Mexican species *A. macromystax*, from the collection of the National Museum. These specimens differ so widely from my *arizonæ* that a comparison between them and the latter, is scarcely necessary. *Arizonæ* has the white of the tail deepest on the inner feathers and decreasing in extent towards the outer pair, precisely as with *vociferus*; while in *macromystax* the white areas decrease very rapidly inwards, the third pair of rectrices being barely tipped with that color. Furthermore, *macromystax* has the bill longer and much more compressed; the nostrils larger and more prominent; the rectal bristles thicker; the feet and tarsi stouter, and *dull orange* in color; the general plumage much darker; the under parts with broad but sparsely scattered blotches of fulvous white; and the decided abdominal zone of light color wanting.

With the pair of *A. macromystax* Mr. Ridgway also sends me four examples of *vociferus*, from Mexico and Gautemala. Only one of these bears any date (Tehuantepec City, Nov. 2, 1869), but two of the others are apparently winter specimens also, and as all three agree perfectly with my autumnal specimens of *vociferus* taken in New England, I regard them as winter visitors from the eastern United States. The fourth, however, (No. 74,355, National Museum) from Guanajuato, Mexico, shows an

approach to the type of *arizonæ*, in its large size (wing 6.50), in the great length of the rictal bristles, and in the decided tawny-ochraceous of the lores and auriculars. The gular-crescent is however mixed with white, and the white areas of the tail are nearly as extended as in typical *vociferus*. It is possible that this bird represents the form characteristic of Northern Mexico but in the absence of more satisfactory data regarding its history, the characters which it presents have no direct bearing on the case in hand. Specimens intermediate between *vociferus* and *arizonæ* are of course to be expected and the Guanajuato example is simply one of these.

The most western point within the United States from which the Whip-poor-will has been previously announced is the valley of the Lower Rio Grande in Texas, where both Merrill and Sennett found it in small numbers.

The distribution of the Arizona form must be exceedingly local. Mr. Stephens has never before met with it, and Mr. Henshaw failed to detect it during his very thorough explorations. Dr. Coues, however, probably heard it at Fort Whipple* in 1865, but no specimens were actually obtained there.

In the Chiracahua Mountains it is apparently not uncommon, to judge from the following notes which accompanied my specimen. "I have heard several of these Whip-poor-wills singing at one time and am told that they were heard here last year. I hear *A. nuttalli* every evening. They keep high up the mountain sides, while *A. vociferus* affects the lower part of the cañons. This is the only locality east of the Missouri River where I have found the latter species."

In a recent letter Mr. Stephens adds: "I heard the first Whip-poor-will about the middle of May. By June 1, they were as common as I ever knew them to be in the East. Sometimes I could hear three or four whistling at once. They were very restless and rather shy, so I got only the specimen I sent you, and a female shot in the daytime. The latter flew off her nest, which, as usual, was only a very slight depression in the ground, but in this case was overhung by a rock. The single egg (now before me) is plain white, with *very* faint browish spots, so faint that one would hardly notice them. She would have laid no more. This was on July 4, 1880. The people in the cañon said they

* Ibis, 1865, 538.

were not as plenty in 1879 as they were last summer. I heard the males until August, at which time I left the Chiracahua Mountains. I have not heard of the species elsewhere in Arizona."

8. **Picus stricklandi**, *Malherbe*. STRICKLAND'S WOODPECKER.—The only record of the occurrence of this Woodpecker within the United States is that by Mr. Henshaw, who found it abundant in the Chiracahua Mountains, Arizona, in August, 1874. An adult male and female, kindly presented to me by Mr. Stephens, were taken April 6, 1880, in precisely the same locality. The latter gentleman writes that the species "is at least as common here as any other Woodpecker. I hear or see them daily and could get as many as I had time to prepare. In the next range of mountains, seventy-five miles to the northwest, I am positive they never come, for I lived there a year and collected much of the time without finding them."

9. **Callipepla squamata**, (*Vig.*) *Gray*. SCALED QUAIL.—A fine male and female of this species, taken respectively March 13 and April 2, 1880, on the Rio San Pedro, Arizona, differ so materially from Texas specimens as to strongly suggest varietal distinctness. Although in remarkably fresh plumage, their general coloring is very pale and bleached. There is not the slightest trace of the usual rusty chestnut patch on the abdomen, that part being nearly concolor with the lower portion of the breast. The yellowish-rusty of the anal region and crissum is very light in tint, and the blueish cast on the breast is barely appreciable. The bill, also, is shorter and slenderer than in either of my Texas examples.

In the absence of a larger suite of specimens, I cannot decide as to the stability of these differences, but should they prove sufficiently constant to entitle the Arizona form to varietal separation I would suggest the name *pallida* as an appropriate one. So far as I can learn, most of the specimens actually examined by ornithologists, have come from localities considerably to the eastward of that represented by the present examples.

Some additional species in the collection do not seem to call for any special elaboration and I accordingly give them with the accompanying localities and dates, in the following list.

10. **Harporhynchus crissalis**, *Henry*. RED-VENTED THRASHER.—♂, Tucson, Arizona, Feb. 28, 1880.

11. **Dendrocæa graciae**, *Coues*. GRACE'S WARBLER.—♂, Chiracahua Mountains, Arizona, April 6, 1880.

12. **Setophaga picta**, *Swain*. PAINTED REDSTART.—♂ and ♀, Chiracahua Mountains, April 7, 1880.
13. **Pipilo aberti**, *Baird*. ABERT'S TOWHEE.—♂, Big Sandy Creek, Arizona, Feb. 7, 1880.
14. **Aphelocoma sordida arizonæ**, *Ridg.* ARIZONA JAY.—Three specimens, two ♂, one ♀, Chiracahua Mountains, taken April 6-7, 1880.
15. **Empidonax fulvifrons pallescens**, *Coues*. BUFF-BREASTED FLYCATCHER.—♂, Chiracahua Mountains, April, 12, 1880.
16. **Centurus uropygialis**, *Baird*. GILA WOODPECKER.—♂, Tucson, March 8, 1880.
17. **Colaptes chrysoides** (*Malh.*) *Baird*. MALHERBE'S FLICKER.—♂, Tucson, March 7, 1880.

REMARKS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE
SYSTEMA AVIUM.

BY P. L. SCLATER.*

[Concluded from p. 37.]

4. COCCYGES.

THE remaining families of Nitzsch's Picariæ (*i.e.* the Coccoymorphæ of Huxley) stand associated together in our 'Nomenclator' under the name Coccoyges, given to them by Sundevall in 1835 (*K. Vet.-Ac. Handl.* 1835, p. 69), and are divided according to the structure of their feet nearly after the plan suggested by Prof Huxley (*P. Z. S.* 1867, p. 466). I fear, however, that this is not likely to be a permanent arrangement. Although we may not at once go to the length of following Prof. Garrod in separating the whole class of Birds into "Homalognatæ" and "Anomalognatæ," there can, I think, be no question that some weight must, in future, be allowed to the presence or absence of the ambiens muscle, and that it must be allowed that the Cuculidæ and Musophagidæ, in possessing this character and in other respects, stand *per se* among the Picariæ of Nitzsch, and show much affinity with the Gallinæ. I believe therefore that it will

* From the "Ibis," 4th Ser., Vol. IV, pp. 399-411, Oct., 1880.