

BULLETIN

OF THE

NUTTALL ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB.

VOL. VIII.

OCTOBER, 1883.

No. 4.

LIST OF BIRDS OBSERVED IN THE VICINITY
OF COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO, DURING
MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY, 1882.

BY J. A. ALLEN AND WILLIAM BREWSTER.

(Concluded from p. 161.)

54. **Poœcetes gramineus confinis.** GRASS FINCH.—First observed April 19. They soon became abundant, frequenting alike the open plains and the borders of thickets.

Colorado furnishes the most typical examples of *confinis* that I have seen. Some of our specimens actually have the bill as slender as that of *Passerculus savanna*. Were the distribution of the form limited to this region it would constitute a strongly characterized variety.

55. **Melospiza lincolni.** LINCOLN'S SPARROW.—More or less frequent in thickets along creeks from April 28 till about May 15.

56. **Melospiza fasciata fallax.** GRAY SONG SPARROW.—A few were observed during the latter part of March and one about April 10. Rare.

57. **Junco hiemalis oregonus.** OREGON SNOW-BIRD.—A single specimen was taken April 26 and another the next day. These were the only ones observed. They were in company with *Zonotrichia leucophrys* and *Z. intermedia*.

Two females, taken respectively April 26 and 27, are apparently referable to *Junco oregonus*, although in many respects peculiar. The ash of

the throat is not darker than in some examples of *hiemalis*, but its posterior outline is convex, as it should be with *oregonus*, and the ash does not extend along the sides of the body, which are only faintly washed with pinkish-brown. The upper parts are nearly uniform dingy olive-brown, inclining to ashy on the rump, but with no appreciable ashy on the crown or nape, where the brown is of even a lighter shade than on the back.

Mr. Brown has called attention* to similar specimens from Texas, several of which, now in my collection, are identical with these Colorado ones. I agree with Mr. Brown in considering them intermediates between *hiemalis* and *oregonus*.

58. **Junco annectens.** PINK-SIDED SNOWBIRD. — Very common during March and the early part of April. Last seen April 25.

59. **Junco aikeni.** WHITE-WINGED SNOWBIRD. — A single specimen was shot April 11, the only one positively identified.

A specimen (No. 7518, Coll. W. B.) taken by Mr. Aiken in El Paso County, Colorado, February 24, 1874, is peculiar in having the entire outer webs of the first two primaries, and a broad edging on the outer webs of the next three, snowy white to the tips of the feathers. The secondaries and tertials also, are broadly tipped with white and the wing-bands are exceptionally broad and pure, the general effect of the folded wing being white rather than dark. Elsewhere the coloring is normal.

Among Mr. Aiken's extensive series of these Snowbirds I found no specimens which showed any intergradation between *J. aikeni* and its allies.

60. **Junco caniceps.** GRAY-HEADED SNOWBIRD. — More or less common till about May 1.

61. **Spizella socialis arizonæ.** ARIZONA CHIPPING SPARROW. — Observed daily in small numbers from April 11 till May 8. At the latter date they became much more numerous, being met with in flocks, sometimes of large size, from this time till about May 20. They were especially abundant during a period of cold, stormy weather, lasting from May 8 to 14 in ravines bordered by oak scrub. A flock seen at Austin's Bluffs, May 13, must have contained at least a thousand birds, and flocks containing hundreds were repeatedly met with. There were with them usually a few Brewer's Sparrows.

The essential characters of this race, as compared with *socialis*, seem to me to be its longer tail and wings, lighter ashy about the head and neck, narrower dorsal streaks and the very much paler, more ochraceous ground color of the interscapular area. Weighed by these characters the variety is a constant and easily recognizable one. But in the series before me (embracing about thirty examples) all the other differences which

* This Bulletin, Vol. VII, p. 38.

have been claimed prove inconstant. Thus in the majority of specimens the bill is not appreciably narrower, nor the "rufous of the crown lighter and less purplish," while the alleged fine black streaks on the occiput are quite as often absent as in *S. socialis*. The character of the wing-bands also is similarly variable.

62. **Spizella pallida**. CLAY-COLORED SPARROW.—Apparently not common. One was taken May 4 and another May 9. A few were seen May 11.

63. **Spizella breweri**. BREWER'S SPARROW.—Common as early as May 10, when several were taken. They associated with *S. socialis arizonæ*, but formed only an inconsiderable portion of the large flocks above-mentioned. Later they were found in oak scrub.

64. **Zonotrichia leucophrys**. WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW.—First seen April 24, and were more or less common for several weeks, associating in small parties with *Z. gambeli intermedia*.

65. **Zonotrichia gambeli intermedia**. RIDGWAY'S SPARROW.—Probably arrived with the last about April 24, as specimens of each were killed at the same shot April 28. Small parties were met with till the middle of May, at first in dry ravines and oak scrub, but later they resorted to the willow thickets of the creek bottoms. They were much more numerous than *Z. leucophrys*.

66. **Chondestes grammacus strigatus**. LARK FINCH.—Became common May 8, when they were first seen.

67. **Calamospiza bicolor**. LARK BUNTING.—First seen May 13—a flock of about two hundred, all males, flying in a compact body through a ravine in Austin's Bluffs. They immediately became common on the plains near town.

68. **Zamelodia melanocephala**. BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK.—Appeared May 12, and immediately became common.

69. **Passerina amcena**. LAZULI FINCH.—Two males were seen May 8. Became common May 12.

70. **Pipilo maculatus megalonyx**. SPURRED TOWHEE.—First seen about April 7; gradually became common.

My series of sixteen specimens is a puzzling one. Among the males the majority have the white of the outer webs of the external rectrices confluent with the terminal spaces on the inner webs (a character of *arcticus*); while in all, the bases of the primaries are white on their outer webs and in two specimens this white extends uninterruptedly along the web to the tip of the feather, thus fulfilling one of the most essential

characters of *arcticus*. On the other hand, nearly half have the scapular spots edged and tipped with black, as in typical *megalonyx*. The length of the claws is variable in different specimens and often variable in the different feet of the same bird. An arbitrary assignment of these males by the characters given in standard descriptions, and without regard to locality, would result in the reference of two to *arcticus*, three or four to *megalonyx*, and a remainder variously intermediate between the two. The four females are all typical of *megalonyx*, with which, rather curiously, the female seems to be better characterized than the male.

Among the *Pipilos* with spotted scapulars three races may be easily recognized:—viz. *maculatus* of Mexico, in which the adult male combines the usual black head and neck with an olivaceous back seen only in the females of more northern forms; *arcticus* of the Missouri region, which has the outer webs of the spotted scapulars and of the outer rectrices wholly white; and *oregonus* of the coast region of Oregon and Washington Territory, which has the white of the scapulars edged and tipped externally with black and the outer webs of the external rectrices almost wholly black. The variety *megalonyx* is simply an intermediate between *arcticus* and *oregonus*. It cannot be said to have any distinctive peculiarities and it combines the characters of its allies in such varying degrees over the wide extent of its range that each locality seems to furnish a style of its own. This, to a certain extent, is true also of *arcticus* and *oregonus*, really typical examples of which are comparatively seldom met with. The aberrant ones of both are usually referred to *megalonyx* which has thus become a convenient receptacle, so to speak, of everything that is not pure *arcticus* or *oregonus*. Hence one of the worst muddles which at present exists to confuse the student of North American birds.

One way out of the difficulty would be to suppress *megalonyx* and extend the characters and distribution of *arcticus* and *oregonus*. But the matter cannot be summarily settled, for any arrangement that shall aspire to be final must be based on intelligent study of very extensive material.

71. **Pipilo chlorurus.** GREEN TOWHEE.—Seen as early as April 27, but was not common till about May 8; were then abundant till about May 16. In June were found breeding abundantly on West Monument Creek at the edge of the plains. (For notice of an hermaphrodite specimen taken, see this Bulletin, VIII, p. 17.)

72. **Dolichonyx oryzivorus.** BOBOLINK.—A single specimen was brought to Mr. Aiken May 18, and another May 23; two others reported as seen. But two specimens were previously known to Mr. Aiken as having been killed here.

73. **Molothrus ater.** COWBIRD.—Apparently not common.

74. **Agelæus phœniceus.** RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD.—

Common in flocks from March 21 till about May 15, when they apparently dispersed to breed.

75. **Xanthocephalus icterocephalus.** YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD.—An adult male was shot May 2, and several females were seen on the following day. We were informed that they occurred in numbers at a ranch twelve miles south of Colorado Springs.

76. **Scolecophagus cyanocephalus.** BREWER'S BLACKBIRD.—Common in flocks after April 25, frequently associated with Redwings.

77. **Sturnella magna neglecta.** WESTERN MEADOW LARK.—Very common. Seen as early as March 20; doubtless winters.

78. **Icterus bullocki.** BULLOCK'S ORIOLE.—Arrived May 12, and immediately became common.

79. **Corvus corax?** RAVEN.—Two birds seen flying at a distance April 7, were apparently of this species, but may have been *C. cryptoleucus*, formerly common here, according to Mr. Aiken, but now rare.

80. **Gymnocitta cyanocephala.** BLUE NUTCRACKER.—Several small flocks, very restless and shy, were seen in April and the early part of May.

81. **Pica rustica hudsonica.** MAGPIE.—Resident. Small flocks were seen in March, and single pairs here and there in April and May.

82. **Cyanocitta stelleri macrolopha.** LONG-CRESTED JAY.—Very abundant in the wooded creek bottoms till about May 17, when they apparently retired to the foothills and mountains to breed. Several pairs were seen daily during the breeding season on the West Monument, at the edge of the foothills.

83. **Aphelocoma woodhousii.** WOODHOUSE'S JAY.—Not infrequent, but wary and difficult to approach. Began nesting the last week of April.

84. **Eremophila alpestris leucolæma.** WESTERN HORNED LARK.—An abundant resident, frequenting in winter the outskirts of the town as well as the adjacent plains. A nest with two fresh eggs was taken about April 1; full-fledged young were seen April 22 and later.

A large series, taken after the beginning of the breeding season and

hence representing the resident form, shows only a limited amount of individual variation, the characteristic style of color and markings being very uniformly presented. The general coloring is very pale—quite up to the standard of typical *leucolæma*, and the peculiar pinkish of certain parts is bleached to a nearly obsolete tint. The black shield on the breast is restricted to the minimum size, but the black bar on the crown is always at least twice the width of the white on the forehead, or quite as broad as in *alpestris* and *chrysolæma*. The throat is usually pale yellow but there is never any yellow on the breast, and rarely any on the forehead or sides of the head. Only one example has a pure white throat, but in several the yellow is restricted to a mere tinge on the chin.

These specimens are uniformly smaller than eastern examples of *alpestris*, and hence smaller than typical examples of *leucolæma* which, according to Dr. Coues, should be about the size of *alpestris*. The measurements of an average Colorado specimen are as follows: Wing, 4.20; tail, 2.98; tarsus, .82; culmen from feathers, .46.

In "Birds of the Colorado Valley" (p. 187), Dr. Coues gives the breeding range of *E. leucolæma* as "plains of the United States, north of about 40°," and refers all the birds which breed south of this parallel, to the eastward as well as westward of the Rocky Mountains, to var. *chrysolæma*. This arrangement seems to me questionable. In a series of nearly one hundred Horned Larks from various points on the plains east of the Rocky Mountains, I find only a slight variation with latitude. There is, to be sure, a gradual diminution in size from north to south but this is not accompanied by any decided changes of color, and, making allowance for local variations, the region at large, between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River and the British and Mexican boundaries, furnishes a style which in its generally pallid coloration and restricted markings fulfills the essential characters of variety *leucolæma*. Furthermore the Horned Lark of Colorado and New Mexico (represented in my series by breeding specimens from Santa Fé), is a widely different bird from the bright-colored form which we get from California, and which passes current as typical *chrysolæma*. Whether this California race is really identical with the *chrysolæma* of Mexico or not I have no present means of judging, but if it be so, the alternative with the birds just discussed is to call them all *leucolæma*, or to separate the southern representatives under a new name. If the latter are true *chrysolæma* and Colorado forms cannot be re-named. In either case the California and Colorado forms cannot be considered identical.

The proper position of the Horned Larks which breed east of the Mississippi in the United States is also a matter that requires further investigation. Such specimens have been usually referred to *alpestris*, but all that I have differ considerably from that form. Four examples taken at Ann Arbor, Michigan, have scarcely any yellow about the head, and in one of them the throat and chin are pure white. Specimens from Southern Illinois are rather smaller and richer colored, but still

paler than Atlantic Coast birds. On the whole all of these specimens seem to me to be nearer *leucolama* than *alpestris*. If the breeding range of *leucolama* could be extended, without too much violence, to embrace the whole of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains (and perhaps of the Sierras as well), and that of *alpestris* proper restricted to regions north of our northern boundaries the case would be simplified. But the material which I have examined, although suggesting some such arrangement, is by no means extensive enough to warrant its serious proposal here.

85. **Tyrannus carolinensis.** KING BIRD.—Arrived May 10. Not uncommon in suitable localities.

86. **Tyrannus verticalis.** ARKANSAS FLYCATCHER.—Common. Abundant for several days on its first arrival, May 8.

87. **Tyrannus vociferans.** CASSIN'S FLYCATCHER.—A few seen with the preceding May 8 to 12.

88. **Sayornis sayi.** SAY'S FLYCATCHER.—Arrived March 30; were frequent in the town and elsewhere till May 8, when for a few days they were abundant. Later they were much less common, — a pair here and there where they found favorable breeding sites, usually the outbuildings of ranches.

89. **Contopus borealis.** OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER.—First seen May 17, when a pair was shot and others were seen. Occasionally observed later.

90. **Contopus virens richardsoni.** WESTERN WOOD PEWEE.—Taken May 18 and seen occasionally later. Common in summer on the West Monument.

91. **Empidonax minimus.** LEAST FLYCATCHER.—One taken May 4 and another May 9 were the only ones identified.

92. **Empidonax obscurus.** WRIGHT'S FLYCATCHER.—First observed April 25. Numerous specimens were taken later, it being, at least during the first half of May, the common *Empidonax* of the region.

93. **Empidonax hammondi.** HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER.—Arrived a little later than the preceding and was rather less common.

94. **Empidonax flaviventris difficilis.** WESTERN YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER.—A single specimen taken May 20.

95. **Antrostomus nuttalli.** NUTTALL'S WHIPPOORWILL.—A single specimen was shot May 3 in Austin's Bluffs — the only one met with in our numerous excursions in April and May, although probably not rare during the latter month in suitable localities. During the breeding season they were heard every

evening on the West Monument, and not infrequently came close to the house at dusk, after the manner of the common Whippoorwill in the east.

96. **Chordeiles popetue henryi.** WESTERN NIGHT-HAWK.—Abundant. Arrived about June 1.

97. **Cypselus saxatilis.** WHITE-THROATED SWIFT.—A few were seen in the Garden of the Gods, March 24. Before April 10, the next time the locality was visited, they had arrived in full force. On April 7 they were observed flying over the fields near the entrance to South Cheyenne Cañon. Occasionally observed later still further out on the plains. In addition to the large colony in the Garden of the Gods, others inhabit the two Cheyenne Cañons and William's Cañon, and doubtless other mountain gorges of the vicinity.

98. **Selasphorus platycercus.** BROAD-TAILED HUMMING BIRD.—First seen May 12. More or less common, but restless and hard to capture.

99. **Ceryle alcyon.** KINGFISHER.—A single individual seen May 10. A few pairs noted later.

100. **Picus villosus harrisi.** HARRIS'S WOODPECKER.—A pair taken May 8 and a few others seen in June. Not common.

101. **Picus pubescens gairdneri.** GAIRDNER'S WOODPECKER.—Rare. Only two seen in all our excursions, till a pair or two were met with on the West Monument in the breeding season.

102. **Sphyrapicus varius nuchalis.** NUCHAL WOODPECKER.—Not common. A few specimens were taken in April and one seen May 3.

103. **Sphyrapicus thyroides.** BROWN-HEADED WOODPECKER.—A male taken April 5, and a female taken April 15 were the only ones seen.

104. **Melanerpes erythrocephalus.** RED-HEADED WOODPECKER.—Began to arrive about May 18, but were not common till a week or ten days later.

105. **Melanerpes torquatus.** LEWIS'S WOODPECKER.—Seen occasionally from April 25 till May 12. Also in the breeding season on the West Monument.

106. **Colaptes auratus mexicanus.** RED-SHAFTED WOODPECKER.—Forms of *Colaptes* were more or less common during the last half of March and April, most of the specimens taken,

presenting various combinations of the characters of *auratus* and *mexicanus*. The few taken later proved to be all *mexicanus*, which Mr. Aiken tells us is the resident form, the "hybrids" being migrants.

107. *Asio wilsonianus*. LONG-EARED OWL.—Saw a number of fresh specimens at Mr. Aiken's, killed in March and the early part of April.

108. *Speotyto cunicularia hypogæa*. BURROWING OWL.—Several colonies on the plains within a few miles of Colorado Springs.

109. *Circus cyaneus hudsonius*. MARSH HAWK.—Occasionally seen.

110. *Accipiter fuscus*. SHARP-SHINNED HAWK.—Seen a few times in April.

111. *Accipiter cooperi*. COOPER'S HAWK.—Occasionally seen in April and May.

112. *Falco mexicanus*. AMERICAN LANIER FALCON.—Several pairs seen in April.

113. *Falco sparverius*. SPARROW HAWK.—Common.

114. *Falco richardsoni*.—Several Pigeon Hawks were seen at a distance and one adult male near enough to be recognized as of this species.

115. *Buteo swainsoni*. SWAINSON'S BUZZARD.—Not common.

116. *Archibuteo ferrugineus*. FERRUGINEOUS ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD.—A few seen but none taken.

117. *Aquila chrysaëtus*. GOLDEN EAGLE.—Frequently seen. An eyrie was discovered near the entrance to North Cheyenne Cañon, from which young were taken about June 1.

118. *Cathartes aura*. TURKEY BUZZARD.—Rare. Only a few times observed.

119. *Zenaidura carolinensis*. CAROLINA DOVE.—Abundant. Arrived April 20; found nesting May 15, on the ground.

120. *Ægialites vociferus*. KILLDEER PLOVER.—Not common. First seen March 27.

121. *Ægialites montanus*. MOUNTAIN PLOVER.—Not uncommon. First observed April 19. A perfect egg was taken from a female shot May 9.

122. *Macrorhamphus griseus scolopaceus*. WESTERN RED-BREASTED SNIPE.—Saw one example taken May 9.

123. **Ereunetes pusillus**. SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER.—Saw fresh specimens at Mr. Aiken's, taken May 1.
124. **Symphemia semipalmata**. WILLET.—A few were taken by gunners near Colorado Springs May 1 to 10.
125. **Rhyacophilus solitarius**. SOLITARY TATTLER.—Fresh specimens were brought to Mr. Aiken May 1.
126. **Tringoides macularius**. SPOTTED SANDPIPER.—Not common. First seen about May 1.
127. **Bartramia longicauda**. BARTRAMIAN SANDPIPER. Large numbers were brought in by gunners April 28.
128. **Gallinula galeata**. FLORIDA GALLINULE.—Saw one in the flesh taken May 9.
129. **Anas boscas**. MALLARD.—Saw specimens taken May 9.
130. **Querquedula cyanoptera**. CINNAMON TEAL.—Saw specimens taken by gunners May 9.
131. **Spatula clypeata**. SHOVELLER.—Saw a few taken by gunners May 9. These three species of Ducks were quite numerous at a few favorable points during the early part of May.
132. **Larus delawarensis**. RING-BILLED GULL.—Rare. One was shot near town during the first week in May.
133. **Sterna forsteri**. FORSTER'S TERN.—Taken at rare intervals, according to Mr. Aiken.
134. **Podiceps auritus californicus**. AMERICAN EARED GREBE.—Saw a specimen in the flesh at Mr. Aiken's, killed May 1.

BIRDS OF THE LOWER URUGUAY.

BY WALTER B. BARROWS.

(Continued from p. 143.)

60. **Phylloscartes ventralis** (Temm.).—Among the low bushes bordering the streams this bird was noticed several times in July. Owing to its diminutive size and sober coloring it was probably often overlooked and may have been much more plenty than it seemed.