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## ADDITIONS TO THE BIRDS OF VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

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THE 'List of Birds observed in Ventura County,' by Professor B. W. Evermann, in 'The Auk' for January and April, 1886, compiled from the observations of two years, is very full and probably nearly exhaustive for a short period of observation, comprising, as it does, 202 species, only one of which is considered doubtful by the author, and that one (*Empidonax obscurus*) was obtained by myself. It is, however, doubtful whether such a county list could ever be made complete without including ninety per cent of the birds known to inhabit California, or about 325 species. This doubt arises from the fact that Ventura County is situated within the winter range of most of the southward migrants, and also the range northward of most of the southern group of summer visitors, while it extends upward from the ocean level to 8500 feet altitude on Mount Pinos, near its extreme northeast corner.

The chief utility of such a list is, therefore, not to show what species occur in the whole county, but their modes of occurrence and other habits within a limited portion where the author lived. While he worked diligently and made several additions to the known range of certain species, as well as to their known habits, he probably did not observe two-thirds of the species to be found in the county limits, and yet it is one of the smaller counties of

California, with much less variety of surface than several others present.

The following species of his list were not observed by me during my residence of fourteen months at Saticoy, in 1872-73, viz. :

Phalacroptilus nuttalli,	Dendroica nigrescens,
Trochilus alexandri,	Dendroica occidentalis,
Trochilus costæ,	Geothlypis macgillivrayi,
Empidonax hammondi,	Cinclus mexicanus,
Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis,	Oroscoptes montanus,
(Corvus americanus),	Parus atricapillus occidentalis,
Poocætes gramineus confinis,	Regulus satrapa olivaceus,
Phainopepla nitens,	Myadestes townsendii,
Dendroica graciae,	Hesperocichla nævia;

in all 18 species, and chiefly those frequenting the hills. The Professor calls the first part of his article "birds observed" and the second part "birds obtained" but does not positively state that he preserved all the species, and a doubt therefore exists as to the specific identity of a few, viz. :

Uria troile californica,	Corvus caurinus,
Larus cachinnans,	Dendroica nigrescens,
Grus mexicana,	Dendroica occidentalis,
Chordeiles virginianus henryi,	Parus atricapillus occidentalis.
Corvus americanus,	

He has also admitted at least two species which he did not obtain within the county—*Ptycorhamphus aleuticus* and *Cephus columba*, stated to be "rather common about the Santa Barbara Islands," some of which belong to other counties. In a late description of Ventura County, only the nearest island, Anacapa, and the most distant, San Nicolas, are said to belong to it, so that specimens from the other four islands would not be within its political limits.

The fact of their occurrence on the islands is, however, in itself, almost positive proof of occurrence in Ventura County, since they wander throughout the channel between the mainland and the islands, and if not coming ashore voluntarily, are washed ashore after winter storms which kill many of the old or diseased sea-birds. But the same cause will also bring ashore, at times, all the species known to inhabit the islands, and we may, therefore, safely add

<i>Brachyramphus marmoratus</i> ,	<i>Puffinus creatopus</i> ,
<i>Brachyramphus hypoleucus</i> ,	? <i>Puffinus stricklandi</i> ,
<i>Fulmarus glacialis glupischa</i> ,	<i>Oceanodroma melania</i> ,
<i>Fulmarus glacialoides</i> ,	? <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i> ,

found by myself and others, two species of which are a little doubtful, though representing species observed.

Following the same reasoning we may safely assume that all the species found in Santa Barbara County occur also in Ventura, as the former county lies entirely west of Ventura, and extends north of it only a few miles, thus being within the same degrees of latitude and bordering on the "Santa Barbara channel" also, which runs there east and west. We thus find the following to be added from my own collections at Santa Barbara :

<i>Urinator lumme</i> ,	<i>Botaurus exilis</i> ,
<i>Pelecanus californicus</i> ,	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i> ,
<i>Oidemia americana</i> ,	<i>Macrorhamphus scolopaceus</i> ,
<i>Oidemia perspicillata</i> ,	<i>Heteractitis incanus</i> ,
<i>Branta nigricans</i> ,	<i>Arenaria interpres</i> ;

and from Mr. Henshaw's Report,

<i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus resplendens</i> ,	<i>Rallus obsoletus</i> ,
<i>Merganser americanus</i> ,	<i>Porzana jamaicensis</i> ,
<i>Clangula hyemalis</i> ,	<i>Ammodramus savannarum pallidus</i> ;

all swimmers or waders except the last: total, 24 to be added from the westward.

Mr. Henshaw traversed Ventura County from west to east, but his report does not specify the localities within its limits where any species were collected additional to the list, and travelling in the driest months he saw very few of interest between the coast and the "Tejon Mountains," which lie partly within the the northeast corner of the county. There a different group of birds was met with, between 4000 and 8500 feet, at Mount Pinos.

As Fort Tejon is only about ten miles from the boundary of the county, and in the mountain region, its birds must fairly represent the group inhabiting that region. I have therefore quoted from the collection made there by John Xantus in 1857-58, published in the 'Proceedings' of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences by Professor Baird. He obtained in all 144 species, of

which ten or fifteen were probably obtained at the lakes in Tulare Valley, being waders and swimmers, only one of which, *Dendrocygna fulva*, has not been found on the coast. Omitting this, the land birds are,

Syrnium occidentale,	Spinus pinus,
Nyctala acadica,	Vireo solitarius cassini,
Trochilus calliope,	Helminthophila ruficapilla gut-
Contopus borealis,	turalis,
Picicorvus columbianus,	Certhia familiaris americana,
Carpodacus cassini,	Parus gambeli.

To these we may add Henshaw's Tejon Mountain birds, *Dendragapus obscurus*, *Xenopicus albolarvatus*, *Vireo solitarius plumbeus*, and *Sitta pygmæa*—making fifteen not found in the lower western tracts, though some of them are reported from Santa Barbara by Streater, as rare winter visitors.

I may here refer to the list of birds lately published by C. P. Streater in the 'Ornithologist and Oölogist' for April, May, and June, 1886. He may be in error in a few cases in identifying the species, such as *Tringa canutus*, *Piranga rubra cooperi*, *Polioptila plumbea*, and *Turdus ustulatus swainsoni*, and longer observation will probably change his opinions as to the habits of some species, but still the list adds one water and one land bird to those before known in the region. I could add several to the birds from migratory species found in counties farther south, which must pass through Ventura County, but will leave them out at present.

Though not admissible as birds of Ventura County, those obtained at Santa Barbara, especially the land species, are almost certain to be found in the former county.

The collectors on the Pacific R. R. Surveys in 1853-55 traversed the east and west ends of the county, which was not then separated from Santa Barbara County, but I have not found any additions to the list in their reports, nor does Dr. Heermann's account of collections at Fort Tejon contain any.

The absence of lakes and deserts in Ventura County deprives it of the species found only in such localities in Kern County on the north and Los Angeles County on the east, except as stragglers, so that we cannot assume that any of them are found in it until actually recorded. The 24 seashore birds, and 15 of the mountain fauna are, however, without doubt, to be included in the list.

My own additions to the Ventura County avifauna have nearly all been published as from Southern California. Some references will be given to the various works in which they are mentioned when not of easy access.

I collected chiefly near the village of Saticoy, eight miles east of San Buenaventura, and six or seven from the nearest part of the seashore. The Santa Clara River runs half a mile distant, but is dry in summer for seven or eight miles along that part of its course, leaving a wide, sandy and gravelly bed, destitute of vegetation except on a few higher patches where small poplar and willow trees grow, with low shrubbery, and which become islands in the high water of winter. Some sandhills along this portion also sustain thickets of low shrubbery, much like that of the desert regions east of the county. At Saticoy, however, about 30 feet above the river-bed, springs issue from the edge of the 'mesa' or terrace for half a mile, constant in summer, and forming a considerable marsh, about half of which was then covered by willow groves, thirty or forty feet high, and uniting, the waters form a brook large enough to run a mill at all seasons, discharging within a mile, into the bed of the river. From the river bed the valley slopes gently upward to the hills of the 'Sulphur Range' on the north, rising about 200 feet in three miles, and is naturally prairie land, producing no trees. At that time about a third of the valley was cultivated in grain and young orchards; but these were still too small to bear fruit or to have any influence on the birds. The hills northward were also grassy, with scattered oaks and other trees in the cañons between. The Saticoy springs furnished the only water in summer, and the only tree shelter for a circuit of three or four miles, the brooks running from the hills drying up nearly to their sources. About three miles east of Saticoy the Santa Clara River runs permanently and a grove of poplars and willows lines its marshy shores for several miles. Near this grove was the oldest orchard in the valley, the trees quite large and productive, forming an attraction to many birds that eat the fruit and build in the trees. In my notes on birds I call the orchard and grove referred to East Grove. A water-ditch was dug from the river above this grove, intended to carry water to San Buenaventura, but being too small the water was all used by the time it got a mile or two west of Saticoy, and had little if any effect on the prairie birds' habits.

The old Indian-Spanish natives that formerly lived at Saticoy, had also cultivated a thicket of *Opuntia tuna*,\* a small vineyard, and a few pear trees on the edge of the marsh.

About three or four miles west of Saticoy another grove of poplars, willows, and stunted live-oaks, partly open and partly crowded with dense shrubbery, lay along the south bank of the river for three miles, and was the most productive bird-hunting locality I found in the valley, though many species of the hills were rarely seen there. I have called this West Grove.

I also made several trips into the hills, once up to the pine region, about 3000 feet altitude, finding the same birds mentioned by Professor Evermann, with the exceptions before noted. I also visited the seashore often, and made two trips across the level plain south of the river to the west end of the Santa Monica range of hills at Point Duma. No birds were seen there, however, that are not also found in other parts of the surrounding region.

1. *Tantalus loculator* (188). Small flocks or families came to Saticoy in June, both of 1872 and 1873; probably broods raised farther east, and possibly along Santa Clara River. They doubtless breed in San Joaquin Valley, as some are shot there every year. After leaving the nest the broods of young wander, and I have several times seen them flying at midday in wide circles high over San Francisco Bay. I have also seen one from Santa Barbara. One was shot some years since at San Leandro near Haywards, having incautiously alighted on a shade tree by the roadside; and these young birds always seem destitute of that natural fear of man so necessary for their safety. Like many other large birds of California, they will soon become extinct there, unless they acquire this protective instinct.

2. *Rallus virginianus* (212). I shot several of this species on the marsh at Saticoy, and heard them during the whole year, so they no doubt breed.

I did not see the large *R. obsoletus* there, but as it is chiefly a salt-water bird, and has been obtained at Santa Barbara, also by myself at San Pedro Bay (where it breeds), it is doubtless to be found near the seashore in Ventura.

3. *Porzana carolina* (214). Quite common with preceding (212). I shot one in winter, but doubt if it breeds there.

4. *Phalaropus lobatus* (223). A flock was seen in a pond near the seashore in July. A few occur in such ponds along the coast in every month except, perhaps, June, but I suspect they are barren birds. I shot one in perfect nuptial plumage in San Diego County, May 1, 1872, the only one seen there, about fifteen miles inland.

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\*A Mexican species, much larger than the native kinds found on the dry plain.

5. *Totanus solitarius* (256).—I saw some of this species in winter, near fresh water streams.

6. *Symphemia semipalmata* (258).—This was a common shore bird near the salt marshes in winter, as elsewhere on the coast of California, and I think some remain to breed.

7. *Ægialitis semipalmata* (274).—Also found on the seashore in winter.

8. *Ægialitis montana* (281).—Small flocks came on the prairies near Saticoy from the eastward, and I shot several in December. They are also brought from Sacramento Valley in winter to San Francisco.

9. *Buteo swainsoni* (342).—I shot four of this species, chiefly in the West Grove, where they came in flocks in September. Only one was of the pale variety, which is rare near the coast. They remained common during the next summer and I saw one on its nest in the grove April 29; also several young about Santa Paula, July 8.

(See notes on the flocking of this species, and other remarks in the 'New Facts on Ornithology of California,' in Proc. Cal. Acad. Sciences, VI, 189.)

10. *Archibuteo ferrugineus* (348). I obtained two during the winter and saw many more, besides some in summer which probably had nests in the hills near by.

11. *Aquila chrysaëtos* (349). Not rare during my residence, and I have several times been within fifty feet of them, both sitting and flying. One was also offered me that was shot in the wing near town. Their destructiveness to lambs causes them to be shot without mercy by farmers, and they are becoming scarce. Coming from the thinly peopled regions of the north, or the mountains, all these Raptores are slow in learning the fear of mankind.

12. *Falco mexicanus* (355). I did not obtain a specimen but saw what I thought to be this bird several times, generally distinguishable by its light brown color, and its habit of frequenting the dry prairies away from water. Common resident in Southern California.

13. *Falco peregrinus anatum* (356). I shot one in the West Grove that had nearly as pale brown color as the preceding. I have passed in a carriage within ten feet of one on the Los Angeles plains, where it was so intent on devouring a Duck it had captured as to pay no attention to our team.

14. *Falco columbarius* (357). I shot three of this species in winter, all agreeing with the typical form.

15. *Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis* (364). I did not think Fish Hawks worth shooting, but saw a few near the coast where they were then plenty at all seasons, and little molested.

The seven Raptores here given, but not seen by Evermann in Ventura, must have become much rarer or more wary since I lived there.

16. *Sphyrapicus ruber* (403). One specimen shot November 7, near Saticoy, was all I met with.

17. *Colaptes auratus* (412). I shot one in the West Grove in November, and as it is everywhere rare on this coast, it may be considered a

winter straggler, possibly from Alaska. (See 'New Facts,' etc., for further particulars; also the Appendix to Vol. III, North American Birds, where several other of these Saticoy birds are mentioned.)

18. *Chordeiles texensis* (421). A rare bird in the valley, and probably this is the limit of its northern range. I shot one April 15, in the West Grove, of such large size that it would have been taken for *C. virginianus*, if not distinguished by the specific marks, especially the position of the white wing-patches. Length, 9.12; extent, 22.25; wing, 8; tail, 4.60.

19. *Chætura vauxii* (424). Migrating flocks appeared April 22, 1873, at Saticoy, but did not remain, seeking the high pine woods at that season.

20. *Empidonax difficilis* (463). Arrived at Saticoy March 18, 1873, but none remained near there in summer, although, as Henshaw found them at that season in Santa Barbara and eastward, they no doubt breed in the hills near by.

21. *Empidonax pusillus* (465). First seen at Saticoy, May 22, and appear to be always late in arriving in California. They frequent the swamps at Saticoy with the last species, and are reported by Henshaw to build in similar willow groves at Los Angeles, though I have also found them in summer high on the mountains. They also breed in a willow swamp near Pleasanton, Alameda County.

*E. obscurus* (469). I mention this to confirm Evermann's belief in its occurrence, and the eggs he obtained are good evidence that it breeds. I found them only in winter, killing two on November 19 and December 14, besides seeing others, which makes it probable that a few winter there.

22. *Pyrocephalus rubineus mexicanus* (477). I shot two perfect male specimens of this brilliant subtropical bird in West Grove on October 21 and November 7. Seeing no more west of the Colorado Valley, except one near San Diego, I considered it a rare species near the coast, but one that probably breeds in the county. The two shot had but lately obtained perfect plumage, and seemed likely to be young from the same nest.

23. *Corvus corax sinuatus* (486). The Raven was very common, especially about sheep ranches, and some were killed while I was there for destroying lambs, so that they are no doubt scarce now. I once counted thirty soaring with Turkey Buzzards, above a sheep fold near East Grove, is is their frequent habit about midday, after feeding on dead sheep when the flocks had gone out for the day. A fine male, killed November 20, measured 23.40; extent, 46.30; wing, 16.25. I cannot but believe that this is the species taken for *C. americanus* by Evermann, while he took the latter for *C. caurinus*. Both being rather smaller in southern California than farther eastward, it was a natural mistake to make, though the habits of the Raven are very different from those of Crows. A pair of Crows shot November 6, at Saticoy, measured, ♂ 17.75; extent, 36.50; wing, 12.25; ♀ 17.50; extent, 35; wing, 11.75. They are thus of middle size between eastern *americanus* and northwestern *caurinus*. Mr. Henshaw also considers the Crows of this region different from *americanus* of the East, and calls them *caurinus*. I have before tried to show that all the West Coast Crows form one variable species (omiting the Raven).



24. *Spizella breweri* (562). I shot two from a small migrating flock of this species near East Grove, April 10, the only time I met with any, and I suppose, therefore, that they do not breed there. I never saw them elsewhere in Southern California, and noticed a marked difference from the *S. pallida* I got at Fort Mojave.

25. *Melospiza lincolni* (583). Not rare about Saticoy Grove in winter, where I preserved two. The newly-fledged young of *M. fasciata samuelis* is so similar, that, before shooting some, I thought *M. lincolni* had remained in summer, but have since found the nest of the latter only from 7000 to 9000 feet altitude in the Sierra Nevada.

26. *Passerella iliaca unlaschkensis* (585a). A few of this species wintered near Saticoy, and I preserved two, of which one, sent to Washington, was found by Mr. Ridgway to be intermediate between the northwestern and eastern varieties. (On the dates of migration of this and other birds here mentioned, see Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus. for 1880, pp. 241-251.)

27. *Helminthophila celata lutescens* (646). I shot one at Saticoy, and know it to be a constant resident in the brushy cañons among the hills of Southern California, but not easily distinguished at a distance from some other small birds, unless when its peculiar song is heard in the spring.

28. *Troglodytes hiemalis pacificus* (722). Three or more of this species remained in the willows at Saticoy all winter, and I preserved one. This is about its most southern range.

29. *Cistothorus palustris* (725). A few seen in the Saticoy marsh in winter only.

I may add a few notes on the breeding and other habits of some other birds in Evermann's List. Some of the island birds, especially burrowing species, are known also to breed in high bluffs on the mainland, such as border the northwest and southwest corners of the county. These 'probable' breeders are *Cerorhinca monocerata*, *Ptychoramphus aleuticus*, *Brachyramphus hypoleucus*, *Cephus columba*, etc. *Phalacrocorax pelagicus albociliatus* is not a 'probable' but a certain breeder on the islands, as I got eggs there. It also breeds on ledges of cliffs along the rest of the coast, as do many other water birds, but perhaps not within the county. *Anas boschas* is also a certain breeder in Ventura County. Of land birds *Amphispiza belli* is more than probably a breeder, as I found nests at San Diego, and breeding birds at Monterey and on the islands in summer, among shrubs along the sea-shore. *Penæa ruficeps* is also a summer resident on the hills, and on some islands, where they doubtless breed. *Vireo belli* I found a nest of at Saticoy in a low willow, as described in App. Vol. III. N. A. Birds. I have no doubt, also, that *Vireo huttoni* breeds, as it is a constant resident, though I never found the nest. (See Orn. of Cal., I 122, as to early laying at San Diego.)

*Dendroica æstiva* is also a certain breeder there, as I got several nests in the willow grove at Saticoy.

*Turdus ustulatus* I also consider a breeder, though I got no nests in the county, as I saw them in June in willow groves about Los Angeles, and they breed in abundance further north.

On May 10, 1872, I visited the mouth of the river purposely to see what birds bred there, but I found only a Mallard sitting among the cat-tails in the wettest part of the marsh, most of which seemed too dry for safety, as eggs on the ground would have been exposed to many wild animals' depredations. (Perhaps the eggs of *Anas boschas* were taken for those of *Aythya americana* by Evermann.) Cattle grazed all over the marshes.

I must remark, however, that the winter and two summers partly spent by me at Saticoy were uncommonly dry, and it is probable that wetter seasons may make the marshes along the twenty miles of low coast line more suitable for marsh-breeders. I could ride a horse through almost any part of them, the exceptions being some salt lagoons encrusted with the white crystals, and unfit for nests, besides being almost deserted by all the birds, those seen being only a few small Waders and Sparrows. As the river is subject to violent floods in winter, which change its channels and make new islands near the mouth, which becomes blocked up by sandhills in summer, from the waves beating on shore, the advantages for birds to breed there must vary much in different years.

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## DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF *RHAMPHO-* *CINCLUS* FROM ST. LUCIA, WEST INDIES.\*

BY CHARLES B. CORY.

### *Rhamphocinclus sanctæ-luciæ*, sp. nov.

SP. CHAR.—Top of the head dark brown, showing a dull rufous tinge; back and rump rufous brown; lores and below the eye black, shading into brown on the ear-coverts; throat and breast pure white; belly white; sides of the body chocolate brown; wing and tail dark brown; bill very dark, nearly black; legs olive brown.

Length, 8; wing, 3.10; tail, 3.60; tarsus, 1.15; bill, .85.

*Habitat.* St. Lucia, West Indies.

[\* An author's edition of 250 copies of this paper was published Feb. 3, 1887.—EDD.]