

Penn., on the edge of a dense swamp. It differs from the type in being more washed with yellow below, and olive above. Dr. Fisher (to whom the bird was sent for identification) writes that it closely resembles his specimen from Englewood, N. J. (See Auk, IV, p. 348).—WITMER STONE, *Germantown, Pa.*

The Yellow-breasted Chat Breeding in Malden, Mass.—On June 2, 1887, while exploring a large tract of wooded swamp in the eastern part of Malden, I was so fortunate as to discover a nest of the Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*). The bird was sitting when I approached the nest which was almost completely concealed by the thickly-clustering leaves of a dense, stunted witch-hazel bush growing in a partially cleared tract of swamp. She sat very close, and made little complaint when she flew. The nest held five eggs, the full complement, which I found to have been incubated a few days. I visited the nest several times, nearly always finding both parent birds near it. A brood of three was successfully reared, and left the nest on June 19. The nest is now in my possession. It was built three and a half feet from the ground, and is very thick-walled and deep. On June 29 and 30 I saw a Chat that might have been the male of this pair. On both occasions he was in a dense thicket fully a mile from the nest.—H. P. JOHNSON, *Everett, Mass.*

Sylvania mitrata at Germantown, Pennsylvania, in November.—On November 19, 1887, Mr. Herbert Brown, of Germantown, presented me with a Warbler that he had just shot, and which proved to be a Hooded Warbler (*Sylvania mitrata*) in immature plumage. The bird was taken in a cabbage patch where it was apparently feeding on insects.—WITMER STONE, *Germantown, Pa.*

On the Nesting of Palmer's Thrasher.—In 'The Auk,' Vol. IV, No. 2, Col. N. S. Goss asks: "What constitutes a full set of eggs?" In reply I offer no suggestions, but pass my observations, which were carefully and conscientiously made, to the more mature judgment of others.

Among the birds most common on the cactus-covered plains of Arizona, is Palmer's Thrasher (*H. c. palmeri*). I particularly speak of this bird because of my long familiarity with it. From observations made in 1885 and 1886 I was led to believe that three eggs constituted a full set, but my oölogical notes of 1887 on this particular point are much at variance with those of the two preceding years.

March 6, 1885, I found a nest of this bird containing four young sufficiently feathered to fly. I secured several nests containing eggs—generally three—but four was no uncommon number. I also noted other nests containing a like number of young, but none of the latter so far advanced as the ones first mentioned. By the 13th nesting was well under way, not only with the *palmeri*, but also with the Bendire's Thrasher (*H. bendirei*) and Cactus Wren (*C. brunneicapillus*). I cite these additional cases as proof of the early nesting of birds that year. Throughout the next several

months I had occasion to examine many nests of the *palmeri*, nearly always with the same result. Two eggs I considered an imperfect set, and as such left them undisturbed, unless debarred by distance from returning for them when the set was completed. Those that were taken were almost invariably fresh, while sets of three and four were frequently more or less incubated. Towards the latter part of May I was at the Quijotoa, some eighty or ninety miles southwest of Tucson. In that vicinity Palmer's Thrashers were exceedingly abundant. I had there an opportunity to examine many nests, and, to my surprise, they contained but two eggs each. This, however, I attributed to the fact that the eggs in question were, as I supposed, the second or third broods of the season.

In 1886 I was early in the field, and although nests had apparently been completed for several weeks past I did not find an egg of a *palmeri* till February 28th. On that day I took two nests, each containing three eggs. March 28 I was again out, and took a nest of four. April 18, another nest containing three. From various causes this practically ended my observations for the year.

In the spring of the present year (1887), for some cause unknown to me, the nesting season opened unusually late, although as in the preceding year some nests had apparently been ready for weeks. On March 20 I took three nests of the *palmeri*, each containing two slightly incubated eggs. April 10 I examined eleven nests of this same bird, seven of which contained two young each, one, one young, two, two eggs each, and one, three eggs. April 17 I examined seven more nests; three contained two young each, three, two eggs each, and the other, one egg. April 24 I examined three nests, of which two had two eggs, and one, one egg.

May 15 I took two nests, one of which contained two eggs and the other had four. The latter were unusually light in color and much undersized. May 16 a boy brought me a nest containing three eggs which he assured me were all of the same set; but this is doubtful, as one egg was larger than the other two and pinkish in color. All were much incubated. May 20 I examined six nests, four of which contained two eggs each, one three, and one one. May 21 I examined five nests, four of which contained three eggs each, the other two eggs. May 24 I examined six nests, two of which contained three eggs, two, two eggs each, and two, one egg each.

June 4 I took one nest containing two eggs. June 14 one nest with two eggs. June 19 one nest with three eggs. Beyond this I could give them no attention, but I have certain knowledge that they continued nesting late into July.

If the numerical difference here noted was due to climatic changes, why were not the Bendire's Thrashers affected likewise? Both occupy the same locality and have a similarity of habits. The Bendire's nested later than the Palmer's, as usual. It was April 10 when I noted the first eggs of the Bendire's Thrasher. That was a month, all but three days, later than I found them in 1885. During the past season I examined eighteen nests of this bird, eight of which contained three eggs each, seven contained two eggs each, two contained one egg each, and one nest contained

four. This enumeration does not include nests found containing young, several of which I examined, but in no one instance did I see less than two. There is no difference, on the average, in the size of sets between the years 1885 and 1887.

The winter and spring of 1884-85 were unusually cold. Ice an eighth of an inch thick formed repeatedly in the valley, and the mountains were as often snow-capped. The winter and spring of 1885-86 were very mild, but more especially were those of 1886-87. Unfortunately I cannot give the temperature, but the appended table shows the extent of the rainfall:—

Year.	Jan.	Feb.	March.	April.	May.	June.
1885	0.00	0.42	0.40	0.00	0.23	0.13
1886	1.61	0.35	0.87	0.06	0.00	0.00
1887	0.00	0.85	0.00	0.38	0.00	0.26

Dried grass usually is a staple article with Palmer's Thrashers for nest lining. A nest last year lined with feathers and grass was the first deviation I had ever seen from it, but this year nothing seemed to go amiss for that purpose. Those nesting in the vicinity of a slaughter-house frequently economized on grass by using about one half pig bristles. In a nest of this build I also saw a piece of baling rope that had been skillfully worked in. I saw several that were lined with grass and horsehair, also several that were lined with grass and feathers. The *H. bendirei* by no means confine themselves to grass for nest lining, as is abundantly evidenced by my oölogical notes.—HERBERT BROWN, *Tucson, Arizona.*

Feeding Habits of *Sitta canadensis*.—On the 28th of October last in the Northern Adirondacks I noticed that the Red-bellied Nuthatches seemed to be feeding exclusively on the seeds of the black spruce. After that I watched them for a number of days, and although they were abundant, I did not see them feeding on anything else. Alighting on a bunch of cones at the extremity of a bough, the Nuthatch would insert its bill between the scales of a cone and draw out a seed. Then flying to a horizontal bough near by it would detach the wing which adheres to each seed, letting it fall to the ground, swallow the seed, and fly back for another. Frequently a good many trips would be made between the same bunch of cones and the same bough where the wing was separated from the seed.

The Red-bellied Nuthatches were very abundant—much more so than the White-bellied—and it was an interesting sight to watch them feeding in this way. One specimen, killed while feeding, contained no food but the seeds of the spruce. I did not observe the White-bellied Nuthatch make use of this supply of food.—C. K. AVERILL, JR., *Bridgeport, Conn.*

Spotted Eggs of *Parus gambeli*.—In the spring of 1882, when living at Gold Run, in the Belt Mountains, I noticed a pair of Mountain Chickadees flitting about a knot-hole some fifteen feet up in a cotton-wood tree.