

My opinion is, that the change is caused by the birds being in confinement.

In the Maximillian collection, now owned by the American Museum of Natural History, there is an example of a Parrot—also normally green—in which most of the feathers have changed to yellow; it is labelled "*Chrysotis amazonica* var. *domestica*." I think from the name, it is evident that Prince Maximillian considered the yellow coloring of this Parrot to be due to domestication.



NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF WHITE TOP MOUNTAIN, VIRGINIA.

BY WILLIAM C. RIVES, JR., M. D.

THE WHITE TOP and Balsam Mountains in southwestern Virginia, are the loftiest in the State, and none of equal elevation lie between them and New England. They may be regarded as forming the limit to the northward of the 'Land of the Sky,' for although wholly in Virginia, they are within a short distance of the North Carolina line and are directly adjacent to its mountain region. The altitude of White Top was given by Professor Guyot as 5530 feet, but according to the more recent observations of the U. S. Geological Survey its height is 5673 feet, and that of the Balsam (also called Mt. Rogers) 5719 feet.

The former mountain may be easily reached by means of a road which runs from Seven Mile Ford on the Norfolk and Western Railway, over its eastern shoulder into Ashe County, North Carolina. With the intention of visiting it, our party left Glade Spring, a station on the railway at the height of 2088 feet, on July 25, 1888, and arrived the same evening at Miller's, a few hundred feet below the highest point. Among the birds noticed on the journey, I caught a glimpse, while crossing the Iron Mountain about 4000 feet high, of one which appeared to be a Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*). About the lower part of White Top grow many magnificent trees, oaks, sugar maples, poplars (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) of remark-

able height, hemlocks, beeches and various lesser kinds, among them a species of mountain magnolia. Deciduous trees, even of large dimensions, are to be found nearly up to the summit. One birch tree of unusual size, less than a thousand feet from the top, we measured roughly, and estimated its circumference at twenty-three feet. On its southern exposure, the crown of the mountain is a beautiful grass field, affording excellent grazing for cattle and a congenial place for the numerous Snowbirds in which to construct their nests. On the northern side it is wooded and somewhat precipitous, while the extreme summit is covered with a thick growth of a species of balsam known locally as the lash-horn, and is carpeted with beds of moss and the pretty flowers of *Oxalis acetosella*, strongly reminding one of the Adirondack woods.

As my stay was short, three nights only being spent at Miller's, my ornithological investigations were chiefly confined to the upper 1000 feet of the mountain, which, it might be supposed, would be of special interest. *Junco hyemalis carolinensis* was, as I have intimated, abundant, and, I was informed, breeds there plentifully, the nests being usually found in the grass field I have referred to. I was shown one nest in a depression in the grass near the summit, containing three young birds recently hatched, and was told that one containing eggs had been seen the preceding Saturday, July 21. These were of course second broods. The feeble lisping notes of the Golden-crowned Wrens (*Regulus satrapa*) betrayed their presence, in the lashorns at the top, and they proved to be quite common, sharing that elevated abode with a few Black-throated Green Warblers (*Dendroica virens*). The latter birds were exceedingly common lower down, being numerous among the deciduous trees, and not at all confined to the balsams, as Mr. Brewster found them on the Black Mountain. The Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Dendroica caerulescens*) was not very common, not nearly so much so as *D. virens*, which was perhaps partly due to the comparative absence of large laurel brakes from this part of the mountain, although even in apparently suitable localities they were not abundant. One or more Blackburnian Warblers (*Dendroica blackburniæ*) were also observed, and were, I suspect, not uncommon, and the Black-and-white Creeper (*Mniotilta varia*) was seen quietly occupied as usual in its industrious

search for food. I was surprised not to find the Canada Warbler (*Sylvania canadensis*).

The fine mountain variety of the Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius alticola*) was common in the woods, and I frequently heard their pleasing notes, varied occasionally with the peculiar unmusical sounds which Vireos are in the habit of making.

Brown Creepers (*Certhia familiaris americana*) were seen about the hemlocks growing on the edge of a laurel brake. A Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*) was noted, and a rather large-sized Hairy Woodpecker (probably *villosus*). The Red-bellied Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) was rather common although shy; its presence was often disclosed by its *āānk āānk*, when by carefully looking for the source of the notes the little bird would frequently be seen hopping along some tree trunk or its branches after its characteristic fashion. Robins (*Merula migratoria*) were to be found even above 5000 feet, as not far from the top I caught a young bird in my hand, greatly to the distress of the parent bird which uttered vigorous complaints until I let it go. I had a glimpse of a Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) which, I believe, is not uncommon. I was unable to identify any Ravens, but on inquiring learned that they were often seen in this region, the difference between them and the Crows, which are also to be met with, being distinctly recognized. I noticed two Turkey Buzzards (*Cathartes aura*) sailing about in the air at a considerable height.

An animal described to me under the somewhat mysterious name of 'mountain boomer,' proved to be nothing more alarming than *Sciurus hudsonius*. It was quite common, and was an additional indication of the Canadian character of the fauna. On the day of leaving the mountain my attention was attracted by the melodious song of a bird whose notes I did not recognize. I spent some time in trying to obtain sight of it, but in vain, although at times it must have been within a short distance. It was not improbably the Winter Wren (*Troglodytes hiemalis*), with whose song I had not previously had the opportunity of making myself familiar.

The Balsam, its dark crest covered with coniferæ, of which it has a much more extensive growth than White Top, adjoins that mountain on the east, and an excursion to it might have disclosed other interesting species; it seems, however, to be rarely visited,

and the long and hard ascent with little or no path would have needed more time than I had to devote to it.

On the descent of White Top I heard a Quail (*Colinus virginianus*) at an elevation of 4500 feet; it is common in the lower country where I saw one and heard others whistling. I observed a Yellow-bellied Woodpecker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) above 4000 feet. In a clearing at the base, there were some Chimney Swifts (*Chætura pelagica*). In the country between the upper part of the mountain and the railway, or at Glade Spring and its vicinity, were noticed the Yellowbird, Dove (one of which was seen sitting on its nest), Catbird, Red-headed and Golden-winged Woodpeckers, a number of Purple Martins, the Kingbird, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Barn Swallow, Indigo-bird, Green Heron, Spotted Sandpiper, and some other species, and the notes of the Wood Pewee and Maryland Yellow-throat were heard.

A NEW NAME FOR THE SPECIES OF *SPOROPHILA* FROM TEXAS, GENERALLY KNOWN AS *S. MORELLETI*.

BY GEORGE N. LAWRENCE.

***Sporophila morelleti sharpei*.**

Spermophila albigularis LAWR., nec SP. IX.

Spermophila morelleti SCL., nec Bp.

Spermophila parva SHARPE, nec LAWR.

I described this species in 1851 (Ann. N. Y. Lyc. Nat. Hist., Vol. V, p. 123) as an inhabitant of Texas, under the name of *Spermophila albigularis* Spix. Mr. P. L. Sclater (P. Z. S., 1856, p. 302) decided that it was not different from *S. morelleti*, Bp. (Cons. Av., Vol. I., p. 497). With this decision I did not feel satisfied, as none of the numerous specimens received from Texas had the black band on the throat, which exists in the full-plumaged male of *S. morelleti*. It has thus remained until Mr. Sharpe in his investigation of the Fringillidæ for Volume XII of the British Museum Catalogue, at page 124, considered it to be