

of the Hawaiian Islands are migratory. I have little doubt, as stated above, that the island strigine stock was derived from America; probably from Alaska. The occurrence of the bird above mentioned, 500 miles at sea and under the circumstances narrated, is most reasonably accounted for on the supposition that it had flown from the Alaskan coast, from which, at this season, thousands of plovers, turnstones, ulili, and ducks are migrating to the islands. An owl might readily follow the track of these birds, and be piloted directly to the islands which, otherwise, there would be small chance indeed of its reaching.

Once here, however, the wanderer is likely to remain, though, of course, it is impossible to say that a stray bird from the mainland might not choose to return home in the spring when it would find plenty of plovers and other birds bound for its own home.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the Short-eared Owl breeds abundantly upon the islands, where its distribution is local and the pairs seem to inhabit the same locality indefinitely. New additions from America (and these probably are few in number and arrive at long intervals) are much more likely to mate with the island birds already established than to part company with them and to undertake the hazardous experiment of a return. The islands appear to be well adapted to the habits of this, the only owl that so far has reached them, and although persecution of late years has diminished its numbers it is still far from uncommon.

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## DESCRIPTION OF A SUPPOSED NEW SUBSPECIES OF *PARUS* FROM NEW MEXICO.

BY FRANCIS J. BIRTWELL.

IN THE valley of the Rio Grande, about Albuquerque, New Mexico, during a residence covering two winters, the writer has noticed a peculiarity existing among the chickadees which pass through in the brief migrations from the high mountains and those wintering in the valley.

In brief, while the migrants are of the normal colors as well as those birds wintering in the cedar covered foothills about twelve miles from the valley, and those breeding among the mountain parks of the Pecos River Forest Reserve, the winter residents of the valley are heavily melanistic, and no ordinary chickadee appears to occupy the valley in the cold months with them. In the early spring the melanistic birds vanish and are not observed again until the next cold weather. These statements are also supported by the results of twenty-one years observations of Mr. W. H. Cobb of Albuquerque, about that city, which collectively considered, oppose the possible suggestion that the melanistic birds are but occasional examples of melanism.

Examinations of a large series of specimens show the strange birds to be peculiar to the Rio Grande valley alone, in the vicinity of Albuquerque. Sixty specimens kindly loaned from the National Museum exhibit no examples or even transition forms and these embrace specimens of various seasons from California, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico. The nearest approach to the supposed new form is from Palmer Lake, Colorado, but the resemblance is slight.

As shown by these specimens and by others, as well as many collected personally, the winter form of the valley deserves at least subspecific recognition. Specific rank is possible, but the birds belong to the *gambeli* series and bear the same relation to *Parus gambeli* as *Bufo borealis calurus* bears to *borealis*.

It is proposed to describe the new form as follows:

### *Parus gambeli thayeri*, subsp. nov.

Type, No. 226, author's collection, adult, sex?, Albuquerque, N. M., Dec. 27, 1900.

*Habitat* (so far as known): Valley of the Rio Grande, near Albuquerque, in winter.

*Subsp. char.*—Similar to *Parus gambeli*, but whole body markings, including the white of head and underparts, the black head areas, the ashy shade of the dorsum and the wings and tail, overcast with dull, heavy melanistic effects. In the type specimen the underparts are blackish slate slightly tinged with tawny on the sides, and this intensity represents the average example as observed by me. Bill and feet as in *gambeli*, black.

Measurements: Length, 4.85 in.; extent, 8.00; wing, 2.60; tail, 2.45; tarsus, .62; culmen, .30.

Compared with all available material the new form is clearly recognized at a glance, and with those specimens from northern California, Oregon, and Nevada, having very light underparts shaded with ochraceous, especially so.

I take pleasure in naming this peculiar bird after my generous friend Colonel John E. Thayer of Lancaster, Mass.

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## THE PTERYLOSIS OF *PODARGUS*: WITH NOTES ON THE PTERYLOGRAPHY OF THE CAPRIMULGI.

BY HUBERT LYMAN CLARK.

THROUGH the kindness of Mr. F. A. Lucas of the National Museum, a very fine alcoholic specimen of *Podargus* recently came into my hands for the study of its pterylosis. Unfortunately there is no label with it to indicate either the species or the locality. It is not likely, however, that specific variations in the pterylosis of this genus are any greater than among the other Caprimulgi, where they really amount to very little. Nitzsch says that the pterylosis of *Podargus gigas* is entirely like that of *Caprimulgus*, excepting the dorsal tract, but as his examination was probably of a dried skin, it is not surprising that he overlooked some very important differences. As a matter of fact the pterylosis of *Podargus* is very distinctive and shows some very interesting and important peculiarities.

The front part of the head at the base of the upper mandible is densely feathered and this tract continues backward over the crown as a broad median band. On each side of this, just above the eye, is a single very distinct row of contour feathers. The back of the head is very fully feathered and the upper cervical tract is strong, and divides into two forks which extend to the end of the shoulder blades. The dorsal tract is forked for a much greater distance than in any North American goatsucker; its two