

Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus luteus*) in San Juan County, Wash.— A typical specimen, an adult male, was taken Oct. 15, 1907, on Orcas Island, in San Juan County, Wash., one of the islands of the San Juan group in Puget Sound. It was brought me and the skin was forwarded to Washington, D. C., for further identification, and pronounced as above.— S. F. RATHBUN, *Seattle, Wash.*

Numbers of the Meadowlark still Increasing in Maine.— In this part of Maine, at least, there continues to be an increase in the numbers of the Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna magna*). On Oct. 12, 1910, I found near Winnock's Neck, Scarborough, many more Meadowlarks than I had ever seen in one day before. Flock after flock was flushed, as I walked over the marshes, and there could not have been less than two hundred birds. This is a remarkable number in the case of a species which was uncommon a few years ago and was once a rarity.¹

About fifty Meadowlarks remained near Pine Point railroad station until late in November, 1910; but only about twenty passed the entire winter of 1910-1911 near here,— fewer than stayed through the previous winter.²— F. S. WALKER, *Pine Point, Maine.*

The English Sparrow at Tucson, Arizona.— The popular side of bird life is to anathematize the so-called English Sparrow. If it has a known virtue it is kept sedulously in the background, but inasmuch as the complaint is general it is barely possible that they are entitled to the total sum of badness heaped against them, but the rule is rare that has no exception. The English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) was first noticed in Tucson about seven or eight years ago. But where they came from, and how they came the writer does not know, but he does know that they did not come in from the west. They breed continuously from early spring to late midsummer. March 23 the writer saw young birds as large as their parents and to the writer's knowledge they are still (July 12) breeding. Nest-making appears to be going on much of the time, both male and females being engaged in the work, but the number of times they breed the writer has no means of knowing. One curious phase of the business is their scarcity in winter. In summer they are so numerous as to be seldom out of sight, but in the winter a drive over the town will not discover a half dozen. In Tucson it rarely snows, but if such thing should happen it instantly melts on touching the ground. Occasionally when a cold wind blows from the mountains freezing point will be reached, but seldom more. Cold weather can therefore be no motive for their scarcity. It is possible they scatter over the desert, but I am much in the country and do not often see them. April 16 last, the writer saw one, a male, at Oracle, a small town in the western foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains,

¹ Norton, Auk, XXVI, pp. 307, 308.

² Auk, XXVII, p. 341.

40 miles north of Tucson. Undoubtedly there were others, but they were not noticed, and none were seen along the road. In the immediate vicinity of the town a few can occasionally be seen, but not one in ten in proportion to the other sparrows. Word has been received here that they have reached the Colorado, 250 miles west of here, but the report lacks confirmation by authority. Most certainly they were not there four years ago.

The almost universal complaint that they drive away other birds will not hold good hereabouts. During the past four years, while under the observation of the writer, but two disagreements have been noted and in each case it was among themselves. In no single instance has trouble with native birds been seen, although the town is full of them. The Inca Dove is a common resident at all times, and during the so-called winter months are more common on the streets than the English Sparrow. There is scarcely an hour in the day when one or more of them cannot be heard calling in the trees, but never on the ground. Frequently during the early spring mornings, a number of them will be calling at the same time and each one apparently angry with the other. The Mexicans interpret the call as "Pobre Cruz, pobre Cruz," *Poor cross, poor cross*, and because of this apparently reverential sentiment they are frequently used as cage birds. They nest in the town and are much more demonstrative so far as noise is concerned than all the sparrows in the country. The House Finch is likewise a common resident and breeds by the score within the limits of the town. Occasionally I have seen them feeding with the sparrows without interference in either direction. Bullock's and Hooded Orioles, Arkansas Flycatchers, Phainopeplas, Vermilion Flycatchers, Wrens and two species of Hummingbirds are known to nest in the town, and almost every other kind of bird in the country can occasionally be heard or seen in the trees. Twice the writer saw a female Bullock's Oriole scatter a bunch of sparrows that were feeding on the street. Each time it struck and knocked over a sparrow in the center of the bunch, and on each occasion the sparrows were, or appeared to be, badly frightened. Probably there had been previous attacks as my attention was called to the matter by the outcries of the sparrows. I do not know what had been done to incur the fighting displeasure of lady Oriole, but instead of resenting the insult they flew into a tree on one side of the street and the Oriole returned to her tree on the opposite side. On another occasion I saw a young male Cowbird busy with a piece of bread in the street. It was soon joined by a female English Sparrow which seemed anxious to get a share of the bread, but did not venture the attempt. It hopped entirely around the diner at a distance of about two feet, although the other bird paid no attention to it. Although I am frequently in the University grounds, about a mile from the business center of the town, I have thus far not seen one of the objectional sparrows, but the other birds of the country are there in great numbers. The same can be said of the Santa Cruz Valley, a portion of which is covered by the residential portion of the town. Throughout the winter months the vacant weed-growing lots about town

are patronized by hundreds of sparrows. Gambel's, White-crowned and Chipping Sparrows make up the numerous small flocks, but so far as I know I have never seen an English Sparrow among them.—HERBERT BROWN, *Tucson, Arizona.*

White-crowned Sparrow in Cuba.— I beg to report having secured on March 22, 1911, a female White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys*) on the San Carlos estate at Guantanamo. The bird was in fine plumage and not at all shy. This seems interesting to me, as Dr. Gundlach in his long experience on this island never met this species.—CHARLES T. RAMSDEN, *Guantanamo, Cuba.*

The Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga erythromelas*) on the Coast of South Carolina.— On April 16, 1911, Mr. J. H. Riley observed, while *en route* to my house, accompanied by Dr. Mearns and Mr. E. J. Brown, a male of this exquisite bird about five miles from Mount Pleasant, and on May 4 I secured a superb male while in company with Dr. Mearns. During all the years I have spent observing birds on the coast this specimen makes the third that I have seen, the migration being more than one hundred miles away from the coast, as it is known to be rare a few miles south of Columbia.—ARTHUR T. WAYNE, *Mount Pleasant, S. C.*

Rare Swallows in Georgia.— It is with pleasure that I report the capture of two Bank Swallows (*Riparia riparia*) on Sept. 1, 1911. This being the second record for the State.

On Aug. 20, 1911, I saw three Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon lunifrons*) on a telephone wire and to-day (Sept. 1) Mr. W. J. Hoxie observed 10 or 12 flying about in a vacant lot in the city of Savannah. The Cliff Swallow is a rare migrant here.—G. R. ROSSIGNOL, JR., *Savannah, Ga.*

A Peculiar Variation in the Louisiana Water-Thrush (*Seiurus motacilla*).— Of an adult female taken by the writer on March 29, 1911, near Mount Pleasant, the outermost rectrices on each side are narrowly tipped with white on the inner webs, while the next rectrix, as well as its fellow, is broadly blotched with white; the third pair have a streak of white extending along the shaft. Mr. W. F. McAtee has recorded¹ a similar case in *Seiurus noveboracensis notabilis*.

In almost all the spring specimens that I have taken in South Carolina there is a *conspicuous* median stripe of buffy white on the pileum extending past the eye. This median stripe is also present in autumnal specimens, but concealed, and its conspicuousness in spring examples is due to the wearing away of the tips of the feathers of the pileum, as there is no spring moult in this species. The presence of this median stripe is not mentioned by Mr. Ridgway.²—ARTHUR T. WAYNE, *Mount Pleasant, S. C.*

¹ Auk, Vol. XXI, 1904, pp. 488, 489.

² Birds of North and Middle America, Part II, 1902, p. 639.