

seems to come by way of the steel-trap, when the species becomes too familiar in the farmers' poultry yards. When skins are desired a good method of killing the trapped owls employed by two young farmers is that of smothering the birds in the oat-bin.—ALTHEA R. SHERMAN, *National, Iowa.*

**Status of the Picidæ in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.**— Personally, I have, to the date of writing, found five forms of Woodpecker in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, within the limits of Cameron county, they are:

1. *Dryobates scalaris symplectus*. Abundant resident.
2. *Sphyrapicus varius varius*. Common migrant and occasional winter sojourner.
3. *Centurus aurifrons*. Abundant resident.
4. *Colaptes auratus luteus*. Fall and winter visitant.
5. *Colaptes cafer collaris*. One record, ♂ Jan. 8, 1912, collected by myself, and now in collection of Dr. J. Dwight, Jr.

Possibly *Melanerpes erythrocephalus* occurs as a winter straggler, though I have not yet found it.

Indications point to the presence of another Woodpecker, as yet unrecorded by ornithologists. It is known to a number of the native Mexican hunters, who designate it as "carpentera grande"; and describe it as much over a foot in length; black, with scarlet crest: generally occurring during the warm season, and confined to the heaviest growth bordering the river. Totally absent some years. The season of occurrence would at once eliminate the possibility of it being *Asyndesmus lewisi*; and the only other Woodpecker that seems to fit, even in fair degree, the description and conditions is *Phlæotomus scapularis*. This Mexican species ranges well up into the state of Tamaulipas, so it might furnish us stragglers now and then, as in the case with *Amizilis tzacatl*, *Ceryle torquata*, *Trogon ambiguus*, etc.—AUSTIN PAUL SMITH, *Brownsville, Texas.*

**Differences due to Sex in the Black Swift.**—In the treatment accorded *Nephæcetes niger borealis* by Ridgway in the volume last published of his "Birds of North and Middle America" (vol. 5, 1911, pp. 703. 707), the sexes are declared to be different in markings, the adult male uniformly sooty underneath, the adult female with the feathers of the posterior underparts always more or less distinctly tipped with whitish. A different conclusion had been arrived at by Mr. Frank M. Drew (Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, VII, 1882, 182, 183), who declared that the fully mature female was indistinguishable in color from the male, four years being assumed to be the length of time required to attain this plumage. Mr. Ridgway cites Drew's plumage description in full, with the following comment: "Mr. Drew is undoubtedly mistaken, however, in assuming that the sexes are alike in coloration, for all the sexed specimens examined by me from whatever locality, show that all those with white-tipped feathers on posterior underparts are females and all those without these white-tipped feathers