

eat. Its body was very much emaciated and in dissecting and making up the skin into a specimen, I found a No. 4 shot in one of its legs and the radius of one wing broken but healed again; also one of its eyes was injured.

Its plumage had a very strong skunk odor, but whether this skunk or the owl was the aggressor was the mystery.

It seems strange that so large and conspicuous an object should escape observation all summer on an open and well settled prairie, for it had been seen but once by another farmer the day before and near the place of its capture. No doubt it was a winter visitant of the winter before, wounded by an ignorant and thoughtless hunter, for it could not have traveled very far in its helpless condition.—ALBERT LANO, *Fayetteville, Ark.*

**Notes on the Food of the Guacharo (*Steatornis caripensis*).**—Some material illustrating the food habits of the Guacharo, collected in a cave in Huevos Island, May 5, 1893 by Dr. F. M. Chapman<sup>1</sup>, was turned over to the writer who has attempted to identify its components. It is not the purpose of this article to discuss the abode and mode of life of this most interesting bird which have claimed the attention of several noted explorers and writers. But the best of the previous accounts of the Oil-bird's food may well be cited for the sake of comparison and in order to point out uncertainties due to changes in nomenclature of the plants concerned.

The Guacharo is vegetarian "quite in contradistinction" as Dr. L. Stejneger remarks,<sup>2</sup> "to the other Caprimulgoid birds, which are exclusively insectivorous, an interesting analogy to the two groups of frugivorous and insectivorous bats." The most detailed of the earlier statements relative to the food of this species is that of N. Funck published in 1845. He says<sup>3</sup>:

"Their food consists of various fruits in their seasons; I found in their stomachs palm fruits as large as the egg of a pigeon<sup>4</sup>; the fruits of *Aiphanas praga* (of Humboldt, Syn. Plant.); of the arboreal *Psychotria* of Caripé, as well as the seeds of *Laurus* and of *Achras*. After having digested the fleshy portion of these fruits, the birds regurgitate the stones." (pp. 373-4.)

It was chiefly these fruit pits that composed the material collected by Dr. Chapman, whose brief visit to the guacharo cave unfortunately was in total darkness due to drowning of his light, but Hornaday is quoted<sup>5</sup> as saying that at the time of his exploration of the same cave, the "rocks were covered with guano to a depth of several inches" and that the nests of the

<sup>1</sup> See Bul. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. VI, 1894, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Standard Nat. Hist. IV, 1885, pp. 386-7.

<sup>3</sup> Bull. Acad. Bruxelles, XI, Nos. 11-12, 1844 (1845), pp. 371-7.

<sup>4</sup> Authors comment on the capacious nature of the entire alimentary tract of *Steatornis*.

<sup>5</sup> Stand. Nat. Hist. IV, 1885, p. 386.

Diabliton's as the species is also called were "formed of a brownish, spongy mass of considerable solidity, which apparently consisted of the undigested seeds and skins of fruits ejected from the mouth and mixed with the droppings of the birds."

Samples of the recent litter and of a consolidated almost cement-like deposit no doubt the same as that alluded to by Hornaday are at hand. The most numerous seeds in the collection are those of a palm of the genus *Euterpe*,<sup>1</sup> a species of which the Assai palm (*E. edulis*) is an important human food in Brazil. Several other palm seeds of the genus *Bactris* (tucum palm) also are present. Next in abundance to the palm pits are those of Lauraceae, the family including our familiar sassafras and spice bush. It is difficult to identify these seeds in their thoroughly desiccated condition, but it seems certain that both the general *Nectandra* and *Ocotea* are represented. Large pits of the tallow nutmeg (*Virola sebifera*) are prominent and it is remains of their hard shells (pericarp with its invaginations which traverse the endosperm) that almost exclusively make up the conglomerate referred to above. This may indicate a customary preponderance of this fruit in the diet of the Oil-bird, but possibly also may result from superior hardness and durability of the thick and re-enforced walls of these seeds.

Of the items mentioned by Funck *Aiphanes* is a palm that occurs in the region, but *Laurus*, now restricted to Old World plants, can be taken only as indicating the family, represented in the present material by the genera *Ocotea* and *Nectandra* previously mentioned. No fruits of *Achras*, one of the Sapotaceae, were included in Dr. Chapman's collection and as for *Psychotria*, unless the name was then applied to a very different plant from that now bearing the name, it is doubtful that Funck's reference to it is correct, for the fruits are very much smaller than the others habitually consumed by the bird. In view of the characteristic obesity of the Oil-bird it is not surprising that several of the fruits which are prominent in its regimen are noted for the unusual quantities of oleaginous substances they yield.—W. L. McATEE, *U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora forficata*) in Northampton County, Virginia.**—A fine male Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was secured on April 21, 1919, at Capeville, Northampton County, Virginia. This specimen was sent in to the Biological Survey by Mr. Fred Wall and is now number 270,322 U. S. N. M. (Biological Survey collection); this appears to be the third record for Virginia. I am indebted to the courtesy of Dr. E. W. Nelson, Chief of the Survey, for permission to publish this record.—B. H. SWALES, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to W. E. Safford of the U. S. Bureau of Plant Industry for help in naming the seeds.