

BIRDS RECORDED IN THE FEDERAL DISTRICT AND
STATES OF PUEBLA AND MEXICO BY THE
1939 SEMPLE EXPEDITION¹

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THE John B. Semple Mexican Expedition of 1939 collected a few specimens in the Federal District and in the States of Mexico and Puebla while *en route* to and from Las Vigas, Veracruz. Near the village of Tizayuca, on the main highway forty miles north of Mexico City, they spent half an hour on March 30. At Mexico City proper, where they spent the night of March 30, and April 5, 6 and 7, they were able to do but little bird work. But on the pine-covered mountains between Mexico City and Puebla they spent several hours on March 31, centering their activities at a point five miles west of the village of Rio Frio at an elevation of about 11,000 feet; and on April 6 they motored thirty miles southwest of Mexico City, collecting for two hours about the marshes at Lerma, and pausing for a brief reconnaissance of the spruce forest near the village of Las Cruces, at about 10,000 feet elevation, on their return that afternoon.

In the State of Puebla only three brief stops were made—one at the city of Puebla, March 31, where few birds were seen because of a sudden dust storm; and two near the Veracruz state-line, in the vicinity of the Laguna Alchichica and town of the same name, April 5.

The following list of forty-six forms is primarily of birds actually collected at the above-mentioned localities; but there are also a few sight records of readily identifiable species.

MARSH HAWK, *Circus cyaneus* (Linnaeus).—One seen several times circling over the marshes at Lerma, April 6.

SPARROW HAWK, *Falco sparverius* Linnaeus.—Noted repeatedly in open country about Mexico City. Seen also at considerable elevations along the highway between Mexico City and Puebla, notably in the vicinity of the village of Rio Frio, presumably at between 8000 and 11,000 feet, March 31 and April 5.

NORTHERN BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD, *Selasphorus platycercus platycercus* (Swainson).—Noted in the rough, dry hills near Alchichica, Puebla, April 5, when a breeding male was taken (Sutton). Recorded also in the vicinity of Las Cruces, April 6.

RIVOLI'S HUMMINGBIRD, *Eugenes fulgens fulgens* (Swainson).—

¹ Sixth, and last, of a series of papers on the 1939 John B. Semple Expedition to Mexico.

² The authors are grateful to Mr. James Lee Peters, Dr. Harry C. Oberholser, and Dr. Josselyn Van Tyne for their assistance in the preparation of this paper.

Identified with certainty only at a point five miles west of the village of Rio Frio, at about 11,000 feet, March 31, where an adult female was taken at a blossoming air-plant (Semple).

RED-SHAFTED FLICKER, *Colaptes cafer* (Gmelin).—Noted only in the vicinity of Las Cruces where, among spruce trees at about 10,000 feet elevation, two were seen April 6.

ANT-EATING WOODPECKER, *Balanosphyra formicivora formicivora* (Swainson).—Noted only in the rough hills near Alchichica, Puebla, where a female (laying eggs) was taken by Sutton, April 5.

STRICKLAND'S WOODPECKER, *Dryobates stricklandi* (Malherbe).—Noted only among the pines in the vicinity of Rio Frio, where a breeding male and female (the former with distinct brood-patch and badly worn rectrices) were taken March 31.

GRAY FLYCATCHER, *Empidonax griseus* Brewster.—Identified with certainty only in the vicinity of Tizayuca, forty miles north of Mexico City, where males in rather poor plumage were taken in a thin stand of mesquite, March 30.

RUDDY FLYCATCHER, *Empidonax fulvifrons rubicundus* (Cabanis and Heine).—Recorded only in the vicinity of Rio Frio, where females (each with somewhat enlarged ovary) were taken among the pines, March 31.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER, *Pyrocephalus rubinus mexicanus* Sclater.—Common at Lerma, where males (with greatly enlarged gonads) were taken April 6.

TAMAULIPAS HORNED LARK, *Otocoris alpestris diaphora* Oberholser.—Horned Larks were seen repeatedly along the highway in the more open parts of Puebla. Our only specimen, a male taken by Burleigh near the Laguna Alchichica, not far from the Veracruz State-line, April 5, is clearly *diaphora* rather than *chrysolaeama*, the hind neck being noticeably 'paler vinaceous' than in several Veracruz *chrysolaeama* at hand.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW, *Tachycineta thalassina* (Swainson).—Several mixed flocks of swallows were seen at Lerma, April 6. The Violet-green Swallow was perhaps the commonest species in these flocks.

BARN SWALLOW, *Hirundo rustica* Linnaeus.—Noted at Lerma, April 6, in mixed companies of swallows. These were thought to be on their way northward.

CLIFF SWALLOW, *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* (Vieillot).—Several seen at Lerma, April 6.

SUMICHRAST'S JAY, *Aphelocoma coerulescens sumichrasti* (Baird and

Ridgway).—Noted only in the rough, scrub-covered hill country near Alchichica, Puebla, where a male (with considerably enlarged testes) was taken by Sutton from a loose flock of four birds, April 5. Though moving about together, these may well have been two mated pairs.

MEXICAN CHICKADEE, *Parus sclateri sclateri* Kleinschmidt.—Noted only at a point five miles west of Rio Frio, where it was fairly common among the pines March 31. Breeding male and female taken.

BLACK-EARED BUSH-TIT, *Psaltriparus melanotis* (Hartlaub).—Noted only in the pine woods about Rio Frio. Family group seen in shrubbery there, March 31.

MEXICAN WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, *Sitta carolinensis mexicana* Nelson and Palmer.—Noted only in the pine woods of the Rio Frio district where, on March 31, Semple took a breeding male.

CHIHUAHUAN PYGMY NUTHATCH, *Sitta pygmaea chihuahuae* van Rossem.—Fairly common in the Rio Frio district, where a breeding female was taken by Burleigh on March 31. This specimen has the dark upper parts, stoutish bill, and long wing (65 mm.) of this southward ranging subspecies.

EAST MEXICAN CREEPER, *Certhia familiaris alticola* G. S. Miller.—Recorded repeatedly in the pine country about Rio Frio (where worn breeding males were taken March 31); and at Las Cruces, in the spruce woods, April 6.

HARTLAUB'S WREN, *Thryomanes bewickii murinus* (Hartlaub).—Female specimen (ovary slightly enlarged) taken near Tizayuca, forty miles north of Mexico City, March 30 (Sutton).

BROWN-THROATED WREN, *Troglodytes brunneicollis* Sclater.—Noted repeatedly March 31, along the highway between Mexico City and Rio Frio at from 9,000 to about 11,000 feet.

CANYON WREN, *Catherpes mexicanus* (Swainson).—A pair of Canyon Wrens had a nestful of young in the wall of a building near the tourist court where we stayed in Mexico City, April 5–7. We heard the parent birds and saw them carrying food to the nest several times.

ROBIN, *Turdus migratorius* Linnaeus.—Seen only at Las Cruces, where small flocks were noted among the spruces, April 6.

OLIVE NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH, *Catharus occidentalis olivascens* (Nelson).—We recorded *Catharus occidentalis* in the vicinity of Rio Frio, in thickets where pines had not shadowed out the undergrowth; and at Las Cruces, among the conifers there. Sutton took a specimen at each locality, a female with somewhat enlarged ovary at the former, March 31; and a male with much enlarged testes at the latter,

April 6. Fervent singing, chasing, and sparring gave us the impression that all these birds were breeding or preparing to do so.

Our two specimens both resemble the type of *olivascens* (from Chihuahua) more closely than they do that of *fulvescens*, being too pale both above and below for the latter, and paler below and about the face than any of the three *olivascens* (including the type) at hand. The Las Cruces bird is slightly the darker of the two dorsally, indicating a tendency toward *fulvescens*; but below, it is the paler, the throat being practically immaculate. Obviously, unless these two specimens represent a wintering or transient population (which we believe they do not), the current concept of the range of *olivascens*¹ will have to be considerably revised.

MEXICAN GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, *Regulus regulus aztecus* Lawrence.—The Golden-crowned Kinglet we found to be fairly common among the spruces at Las Cruces where, on April 6, breeding specimens were taken. We are not, at present, in a position to say whether Mexican and Guatemalan breeding birds are the same, but we do not agree with Nelson in calling Lawrence's type of *aztecus* merely a winter specimen of the western United States subspecies, *olivaceus*, and feel that breeding birds of the Mexico City district should bear Lawrence's name.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, *Corythylus calendula* (Linnaeus).—Several noted in pine woods near Rio Frio, March 31.

MEXICAN PTILOGONYS, *Ptilogonys cinereus cinereus* Swainson.—Noted in the vicinity of Rio Frio, where a male was taken by Burleigh, March 31; and at Las Cruces, where one was seen along the highway, April 6.

HUTTON'S VIREO, *Vireo huttoni* Cassin.—Identified with certainty only in the vicinity of Rio Frio, March 31, where it appeared to be fairly common.

OLIVE WARBLER, *Peucedramus olivaceus olivaceus* (Giraud).—Common in the big pines five miles west of Rio Frio, where males with much enlarged testes were taken March 31.

DUGÉS'S YELLOW WARBLER, *Dendroica aestiva dugesi* Coale.—Yellow Warblers were abundant and noticeable at Lerma, April 6. Males were singing incessantly. Our only specimen, a male with much enlarged testes taken that day by Burleigh, is of the present subspecies.

HERMIT WARBLER, *Dendroica occidentalis* (Townsend).—Noted only at Las Cruces, April 6, when Semple took a male.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN AUDUBON'S WARBLER, *Dendroica auduboni me-*

¹ According to R. Ridgway, *Birds of North and Middle America*, Part IV, 1907, p. 27, "northwestern Mexico in the State of Chihuahua."

morabilis Oberholser.—Identified with certainty only near Alchichica, Puebla, where a male was taken by Burleigh, April 5. The measurements of this specimen are: wing, 82 mm., tail 61.

YELLOW-THROAT, *Geothlypis trichas* (Linnaeus).—Common at Lerma, April 6. Two males taken there by Burleigh were molting extensively and it seems advisable not to attempt subspecific identification of them at present.

RED-BELLIED REDSTART, *Myioborus miniatus miniatus* (Swainson).—Noted only in the pine woods near Rio Frio, where a male (with much enlarged testes) was taken by Sutton, March 31.

RED WARBLER, *Ergaticus ruber ruber* (Swainson).—Noted several times in the vicinity of Rio Frio, where a male was taken by Burleigh, March 31. Noted also at Las Cruces, where it was fairly common among the spruces, April 6.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD, *Agelaius phoeniceus* (Linnaeus).—Seen repeatedly about the marshes at Lerma, April 6, though not certainly nesting there.

MEXICAN HOUSE FINCH, *Carpodacus mexicanus mexicanus* (Müller).—Noted frequently in more open country, especially in the vicinity of Tizayuca, where a male was taken by Burleigh, March 30; about Mexico City and along the highway near Puebla, March 31 and April 5; and at Lerma, where it was abundant, April 6.

PINE SISKIN, *Spinus pinus* (Wilson).—Noted high in the pines near Rio Frio, March 31; and at Las Cruces, in the spruces, April 6.

RED CROSSBILL, *Loxia curvirostra* Linnaeus.—Fair-sized flock seen near Rio Frio, in pines and on wires along the highway, April 5.

BLUE GROSBEAK, *Guiraca caerulea* (Linnaeus).—Several seen in cottonwoods at Lerma, April 6.

SWAINSON'S TOWHEE, *Pipilo macronyx macronyx* Swainson.—*P. macronyx* we recorded at Rio Frio and at Las Cruces, and we were fortunate enough to take a breeding male at each locality. The Rio Frio bird (Burleigh, March 31), which represents the present race, differs markedly from the other in several particulars, notably the well-defined wing-bars, pronounced scapular streaking, and distinct thumb-marking of the three outer pairs of rectrices.

HARTLAUB'S TOWHEE, *Pipilo macronyx virescens* (Hartlaub).—A breeding male of this race was taken by Sutton at Las Cruces, April 6. It has no wing-bars, nor streaks on the scapulars; the thumb-marks on the outer rectrices are indistinct; and the whole head is black.

BROWN TOWHEE, *Pipilo fuscus fuscus* Swainson.—A few seen at Lerma, April 6, where a breeding female was taken (Sutton).

MEXICAN JUNCO, *Junco phaeonotus phaeonotus* Wagler.—Noted at Rio Frio, where a male was taken by Burleigh, March 31; and at Las Cruces, where several mated pairs were seen, April 6.

MEXICAN BLACK-CHINNED SPARROW, *Spizella atrogularis atrogularis* (Cabanis).—Identified with certainty only in the immediate vicinity of Mexico City where, on March 30, Burleigh took a male from a small flock.

MEXICAN SONG SPARROW, *Melospiza melodia mexicana* Ridgway.—Fairly common at Mexico City, where a young bird just out of the nest was taken April 5. Abundant about Lerma, where breeding males and females were collected April 6.

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