

narrow streamcourse. From a steep slope I watched the male drop to the level creekbed below me and walk away from the female in an exaggerated manner that reminded me of Tinbergen's (1939, Trans. Linnaean Soc. New York, 5, fig. 17) sketch of the display of the Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) male before the newly arrived female. After his single promenade the male flew southward, and then back to the north of the creekbed, singing as though visiting the outposts of his territory. After the male's departure the female flew downstream and inspected some yucca blossoms. Subsequent activity of a pair of orioles (not certainly these individuals) was centered some 200 yards to the north of this site.—  
KERTH L. DIXON, *Department of Zoology, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.*

**A Record of *Pipilo erythrophthalmus arcticus* in North Carolina.**—An additional specimen of the Rufous-sided (Spotted) Towhee, now in the North Carolina State Museum in Raleigh, North Carolina, may further modify the distributional status of this species as now recorded in the A.O.U. Check-list (1957), and amplified by P. A. Buckley's report of New York specimens.

The bird, a male, first visited my Fayetteville feeder on 10 February 1957, and was seen many times each day until I trapped it on 14 February. I called on Mr. Henry Rankin for assistance in properly identifying the bird before banding and releasing it, but it did not survive overnight captivity. The bird was taken to the State Museum for skinning and sent to the United States National Museum for species identification. The following report was sent to Harry T. Davis, Director, North Carolina State Museum.

"Dr. Aldrich examined the towhee specimen and identified it as *Pipilo erythrophthalmus arcticus*, although showing a tendency toward intergradation with *erythrophthalmus*; the back is darker than that of *arcticus* and so approaches that of *erythrophthalmus*. The amount of white in the tail is variable in all races, but in your specimen it approaches that of *erythrophthalmus* more closely than *arcticus*. It has the spotting of the back and wings of the western races, and therefore in general appearance is more like them than the non-spotted eastern races. . . ."  
—DORIS C. HAUSER, 309 *Sylvan Road, Fayetteville, North Carolina.*

**Song Sparrow Feeds on Dandelion by Unusual Method.**—On 19 April 1959, I watched a previously color-banded male Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) foraging along the garden at my home in Norfolk, Virginia. He approached a dandelion plant having three stems, all of which possessed heads with some seeds. Stretching up very high on his legs, he pecked a seed from the lowest head and repeated the action. Then he looked up at the seed head of the highest stem, which he could not have reached without jumping. The sparrow immediately hopped to the base of the plant and placed one foot on the stem about three-quarters of an inch from the ground. The stem was originally at an angle of about 50° from the vertical, and the bird placed his foot on the "top" side of the stem, an action that pushed the stem farther toward the ground in the same direction it had been bent. He then hopped on the stem, which bent to the ground under his weight, and inched his way up the stalk with "side-steps." When reaching the head at the end of the stalk, he ate five or six seeds, then hopped off the stem where he had stood throughout the feeding, and hopped back to the base of the plant. This time he stepped on the stem of the remaining seed head, but suddenly flew off before bending the stem all the way to the ground.

There are many accounts of emberizines jumping to or hovering by food out of reach, and pulling down seed heads with the bill, but I know of none involving a

seemingly insightful action. Miller (Condor, 41: 255-256, 1939) watched a Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*) seize grass heads in its bill and pull them down to a fence wire, where they were held with the feet while feeding; but this behavior is actually quite similar to pulling the seed head to the ground with the bill, and is an extension of the normal feeding behavior. Thorpe ("Learning and Instinct in Animals," 1956, p. 100) defines insight-learning as "the sudden production of a new adaptive response not arrived at by trial behaviour or the solution of a problem by the sudden adaptive reorganisation of experience." It is possible that the Song Sparrow's behavior is an example of true insight, but to assume so without full knowledge of the individual's previous perceptual experience is unwarranted.—JACK P. HAILMAN, 4401 Gladwyne Drive, Bethesda, Maryland.

**Notes on the Systematics of the Tanager Genus *Conothraupis*.**—In 1939 Berlioz (Bull. Brit. Ornith. Club, 59: 102) described *Rhynchothraupis mesoleuca*, a new genus and species of tanager from Juruena, northeast of Cuyaba, Mato Grosso, Brazil, and in 1946 published Barruel's attractive colored plate (Oiseau, n. ser., 16: opp. p. 1) with a further account of the species. Zimmer (Amer. Mus. Novit. No. 1367: 20, 1947), after comparing Barruel's plate with specimens of the rare Peruvian species, *Conothraupis speculigera*, concluded that the differences between the two forms "can be no more than subspecific."

Subsequent to 1946, Professor Berlioz acquired a male of *speculigera*, and in 1954 kindly permitted me to compare it with the type of *mesoleuca*. The two forms are quite clearly congeneric; however, I prefer to consider them full species. The tail is relatively shorter in *mesoleuca* (81 per cent of the wing length, as against 88 per cent in *speculigera*). In addition to the black (versus gray) rump and flanks, largely black (versus white) under tail coverts, and greatly reduced speculum, *mesoleuca* has a greenish sheen to the black of the plumage whereas *speculigera* has a purplish sheen. Both species inhabit arid forest or scrub (cf. Berlioz, Oiseau, n. ser., 16: 3, 1946, and Carriker, Auk, 51: 497, 1934), but the known ranges of the two species are separated by approximately 1,500 miles, much of the intervening country consisting of humid, tropical lowlands. This suggests that the two populations have been geographically isolated from each other long enough for speciation to have occurred.

Hellmayr (Field Mus. Nat. Hist. Publ., Zool. Ser., 13: pt. 9, 433, 1936) credits the genus *Conothraupis* to Taczanowski (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, pl. 21, p. 198, 1880 [read 16 March 1880]) but remarks in a footnote that the name "should probably be credited to Sclater, for it seems unlikely that Taczanowski's paper was actually published before the appearance of the April number of 'The Ibis.'" Inasmuch as Taczanowski's paper contains a page reference (footnote, p. 198) to Sclater's description (Ibis [4], 4: 252, 1880), it is quite clear that Sclater's description was published first. The nomenclature of the genus should thus stand as follows:

Genus *Conothraupis* Sclater  
*Conothraupis speculigera* (Gould)  
*Conothraupis mesoleuca* (Berlioz)

The systematic position of *Conothraupis* remains to be determined. Although Berlioz (Oiseau, n. ser., 16: 2, 1946) placed *mesoleuca* among the tanagers, he pointed out the possibility that in spite of the differences in bill form, it might turn out to be a finch allied to *Sporophila*. This possibility is supported by the