

The bright tropical sun was now high in the heavens, and most of the birds had sought shady retreats to pass the stifling heat of midday in silence. We heard only the harsh notes of chachalacas, and the soft cooing of wood pigeons on the hillside, as we started on our return. Space is lacking to mention in detail the many incidents of our walk back to Juan Vinas, or the wealth of tropical verdure and insect life on which our eyes feasted.

Great, superb *Morpho* butterflies, with wings of iridescent blue, often came flapping by in the narrow trail, only to immediately disappear in the jungle. When followed, tantalizing flashes of blue would lead me far back into densest thickets, where my phantom would disappear completely, and unless I chanced to see the dark outline, and large owl-like eye spots of the under wings against the lichen-covered tree trunk to which the insect clung, it was rare indeed that I gathered one into the folds of my net.

In the darkest shades, where the rays of sunlight seldom penetrated the leafy mantle overhead, hundreds of *Heliconians*—butterflies with transparent wings, varied with shades of brown, red, black, white and blue—danced about in the soft light presenting a most mystifying appearance when seen for the first time. Here, also, two large *Caligo* butterflies were met with, even larger than the *Morpho*; the upper wings, instead of bright blue, a dark brown or plumbeous color—modified to harmonize with the perpetual shades of their environment.

But I have wandered far from my subject and taken up too much valuable space. Suffice it to say that for two weeks each day was a repetition of the first days of unalloyed pleasure.

Among our pleasant memories of Juan Vinas, and the one which will without doubt be the most lasting, was a midnight serenade accorded us by the two *Gatos* (cats), wandering Indian musicians of the Tuecirici tribe. Neither of the Indians had ever seen a musical note, yet they played the guitar with a remarkable depth of tone, and produced the most ravishing strains of music—strains which could have their origin only in the soul of one in complete harmony with Nature's music.

Nesting Habits of the Shufeldt Junco

BY HERMAN T. BOHLMAN

A SHORT description of the nesting habits of two Shufeldt juncos (*Junco oregonus shufeldti*) which came under my observation in the spring of 1901, may be of interest to fellow students of bird-lore.

I have found the junco in the vicinity of Portland to be very partial in the selection of a nesting site, to the cuts or embankments which exist along the railroad, electric lines and country roads which wind through the hills south of town. It has been my habit, when the first of May comes around each year, and later as well, to make short expeditions along these lines, and 'switch the cuts' as we termed it. On arriving at the field of operation a light, green sapling, twelve to fifteen feet long was cut, and as I nearly always have a companion in the field, we would walk up the track, diligently applying our switches to the embankments, until we were rewarded by the flushing of a junco from its nest, while the rush and roar of the passing train never disturbed the occupant.

On May 14, 1901, two nests were discovered in this way not 200 yards apart, that were peculiar in the marked difference of their lining. In other respects the

nests were identical. Both were constructed of an outer layer of coarse grasses, then a thick layer of finer grasses, and a lining of cow hair. The inner cavity measures two and one-fourth inches across and one and one-fourth inches deep, while the outer measurements are two, and two and one-half inches in depth respectively. The contour is elliptical, in each case being four by five inches. Both nests were placed within a foot of the upper edge of a steep embankment in a shallow cavity, and the nest wall where it rested against the earth in the rear, was made of double thickness, or fully as thick as the bottom, being one and three-quarters inches in thickness, while the front and side walls were one inch or less, this doubtless being a provision to keep out the dampness resulting from contact with the earth.

The lining of these two nests is an interesting matter for speculation, as the one bird chose only pure white cow's hair without a dark one to mar its beauty,



PHOTO BY H. T. BOHLMAN

NEST OF SHUFELDT JUNCO

while its neighbor chose the same kind of hair, but of the most intense jet black, and as the two nests are before me, the contrast is very marked, but does not show to good advantage in the accompanying illustrations.

The interesting point is, did each of the birds possess an eye for color, and an individual taste and preference for a certain color, or was it merely a matter of circumstance which found a quantity of white or black hair convenient to each nesting site?

The eggs in each case were four in number, the usual complement. Those in the light nest were fresh, while the other set was advanced in incubation. The set in the black-lined nest has a ground color decidedly bluish, with distinct chocolate markings, mainly at the larger end, and are strong and decided in their spotting, while those in the white lined nest have a very pale pinkish ground color, profusely marked with reddish, and deeper pale lavender shell markings which give them a very delicate appearance, in perfect harmony with the color of the nest lining.