

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Unusual Nesting Site of the Cactus Wren.—A ten years' experience with the cactus wren (*Heleodytes b. brunneicapillus*) has left a memory of fleeting glimpses and hard approaches that characterized the attempts to get better acquainted with this wary bird. They have a way of sliding out of the nest just before one gets a glimpse of it, then appearing momentarily as they dive out of sight behind some clump of brush or tangle of cactus. If followed persistently it becomes a case of hide and seek in which the observer gets little satisfaction. I found a remarkable exception on June 27th this year (1903) when taking a camping trip into the San Gabriel canyon. The road, which crosses the San Gabriel River wash, near Azusa, is bordered by a row of poles carrying high power wires. The two cross arms, carrying twelve wires, are about thirty feet from the ground. A cactus wren had selected the lower of the arms and built a typical nest on the north or shady side of the pole, filling the whole space between it and the large insulator. The beginning of such a nest on the smooth arm would be possible only in a country remarkably free from winds, but after completion, the insulator acted as a set screw to hold it in place.

The road which this line of poles borders is the main travelled road to Pomona, San Bernardino and Redlands, and probably used more than any other long distance road in southern California. In some cases, for instance, a driver on a load of hay would be brought about face to face with this shy bird. While we haulted under the wires to investigate, the female alighted on the cross arm, with food in her bill for the young, which the nest contained.

Often birds are forced to adapt themselves to new conditions by the settlement of a country, which may destroy their natural nesting sites, but in this case there was no apparent reason, as the wash for miles contained hundreds of perfect nesting places, in cactus such as is usually chosen by the cactus wren.

That the bird sometimes does the unusual was noted in another instance, when I found a nest located in an apricot tree. It was the corner tree of an orchard which projected into a large wash, where the cactus and brush for some distance had been cleared. —FRANK S. DAGGETT, Pasadena, Cal.

Records of the Black-throated Sparrow.—So far as published records go the black-throated sparrow, *Amphispiza bilineata deserticola*, is only an accidental visitor to the Pacific slope of Los Angeles county. Joseph Grinnell records, in "Birds of the Pacific Slope of Los Angeles County," a specimen taken in the Arroyo Seco wash near Pasadena, Cal., April 10, 1897, and I learn today of an unrecorded specimen taken by Harry Swarth, in the spring of 1898 in the San Fernando Valley.

On September 12, 1903, while camped by an irrigation ditch on the road between two olive orchards, near Pacoima, a station on the S. P. R. R., a mile north of the Big Tejunga Wash in the San Fernando valley. I noticed a small sparrow moving about among the weeds on the roadside. It darted into the grove as I approached, playing hide and seek behind the low spreading olive branches. It proved to be a young male of the year, with black throat patch still incomplete. —FRANK S. DAGGETT, Pasadena, Cal.

Records from the Vicinity of Watsonville, California.—The following more or less rare birds were taken or seen in the region about Watsonville, California, during the summer and autumn of 1903:

Aythya collaris, Oct. 19, shot; seen several times.

Gymnogyps californianus, seen several times in mountains on north side of Pajaro Valley.

Elanus leucurus, seen, but not shot, Oct. 23.

Archibuteo ferrugineus, observed quite often during fall.

Falco anatum, Oct. 3, shot.

Coccyzus americanus occidentalis, observed in May and June along Pajaro River.

Cotaptes auratus luteus, shot Nov. 15.

Phalacroptilus nuttalli californicus, observed Oct. 25.

Chætura vauxi, Aug. 14, shot.

Aeronautes melanoleucus, observed in mountains on north side of valley.

Tyrannus verticalis, June 1, shot.

Pica nuttalli, Sept. 27, shot.

Corvus americanus hesperis, Oct. 21, shot.

Spinus pinus, quite abundant in September; many shot.

Melospiza lincolni, abundant in September and October; many shot.

Dendroica townsendi, common in fall; many shot.

Geothlypis tolmiei, fairly common in early September.

Wilsonia pusilla pileolata, abundant in early fall; many shot.

Mniotilta varia, Sept. 24, shot.

Mimus polyglottos leucopterus, Sept. 17, shot.

Certhia familiaris occidentalis, Aug. 31, Sept. 3.—J. S. HUNTER, Berkeley, Cal.

Aythya collaris in San Mateo Co., California.—The recorded occurrences of this duck in California are scarce enough to make new stations worthy of publication. An adult male was shot on the summit of the ridge north of Black Mountain (Monte Bello), about nine miles west of Stanford University, by Mr. Ernest Dudley, Nov. 26, 1903. There is yet little of the chestnut collar present.—WALTER K. FISHER.

Record of the Monterey Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla guttata slevini*).—While collecting on the Butano Creek, San Mateo Co., Calif., June 20, 1903, I came across two of these little thrushes, a male and a female adult, described by Mr. Joseph Grinnell in the *Auk* for July, 1901.

The Butano Basin is part of an untouched portion of the humid coast forest lying between the Big Basin and Pescadero creek. Its sides which slope rather evenly but quite steeply from the creek to the ridges are covered for the most part with Douglas spruces (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*), redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), tan-bark oaks (*Quercus densiflora*), madrones (*Arbutus menziesii*), and considerable underbrush such as wild lilac (*Ceanothus thyrsifloris*), live oak (*Quercus wislizeni*), azalea (*Rhododendron occidentale*), poison oak (*Rhus diversiloba*) and huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), so that with the exception of a few rocky places grown with chaparral, the sun touches the ground but in spots. Bird life is rather scarce here and although quite a number of species exist in the Basin there are but comparatively few individuals.

The first thrush captured was seen sitting on a low twig of a wild lilac bush about half way up the side of the canyon. The ground was covered with dead oak leaves and the pale-colored bird was quite inconspicuous against the background. It was uttering its low *chuck chuck* call note and seemed preparing to fly when taken. The other bird was found a few hundred yards up the slope. It slipped noiselessly along behind the fallen logs and over dead leaves and did not stop or attempt to hide but only moved rapidly on with one eye fixed keenly on the pursuer, as is characteristic with the hermit thrushes.

These were the only thrushes seen above the main creek, where the russet-back (*Hylocichla u. ustulata*) was found keeping strictly to the bed of the creek.—HUBERT O. JENKINS.

Occurrence of Scott Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) in Los Angeles Co.—At the outing meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Club, held on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1-2, 1903, in the San Fernando Valley, a number of birds were collected by the various members present, the most interesting of which was a male Scott Oriole shot by W. B. Judson on Nov. 2, and now in my collection. The bird is an adult and differs from spring males from Arizona only in that the yellow markings generally are of a darker, more greenish hue than is the case with any of the latter in my possession. Aside from the unusual locality the capture is of interest from the late date at which it occurred.—H. S. SWARTH.

The Ashy Kinglet

BY JOSEPH GRINNELL

Regulus calendula cineraceus new subspecies.

CHARACTERS—Similar to *Regulus calendula calendula* but larger; coloration throughout paler and grayer, less yellowish.

TYPE—♂ ad.; No. 1039, Coll. J. G.; Strain's Camp, Mt. Wilson, Los Angeles County, California; May 9, 1896; collected by J. Grinnell.

MEASUREMENTS OF TYPE (in inches)—Length 4.62; extent 7.25; wing 2.40; tail 1.96, tarsus .75; culmen .35; bill from nostril .26.

COLORATION OF TYPE.—Above pale ashy olive, becoming slightly greenish on rump; wings and tail sepia, edged with whitish; crown-patch flame-scarlet; beneath ashy-white faintly tinged with olive-buff, the latter being most evident posteriorly.

REMARKS—The two breeding birds in my collection, from the high mountains of Los Angeles county, are matched by a considerable number of winter specimens from various parts of southern California. These appear to indicate an arid mountain race of the Southwest, characterized by large size and gray coloration. Parallel geographic variants are exhibited in such genera as *Hylocichla*, *Passerella* and *Empidonax*.