

Davie's "Nests and Eggs" and Bendire's "Life Histories" both make only one description of the eggs of the Bi-color; namely, light blue or bluish white, marked around the larger end with waving lines of dark brown, lighter in shade than the markings on the eggs of the common Red-wing (Davie). "The eggs are two to four in number (very rarely more), and resemble those of the Red-wing Blackbird excepting that they are a trifle smaller and perhaps on an average less heavily marked, but otherwise the same description will answer for both" (Bendire); also only two types given on Plate VI.

I have in my collection a set which is typical of the Bi-colored Blackbird. Also a set of four eggs, which are not marked at all, only plain ground color showing, and another with plain ground color, at larger end quite a bit darker, and with only one or two very faint and small dark lines showing. On the whole I think that this blackbird is a very interesting subject of study, and tho it is somewhat common much can be learned by studying the common birds, as well as those that are less familiar.

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NOTES ON THE PALLID WREN-TIT

By WRIGHT M. PIERCE

THE Pallid Wren-Tit (*Chamaea fasciata henshawi*), a little bird with a brown-colored back and wings, and a buffy colored breast, lightly streaked with gray, so common on the brush-covered slopes below the foot-hills and even well up into the mountainous districts about here, has always seemed a very interesting little subject of bird life to me. With his long tail, common to members of the tit family, and his wren-shaped body, he is unique, showing some characteristics of both wren and tit families. The lower foot-hills and the mesa regions are the favorite haunts of this bird, altho we meet with him at higher altitudes but with somewhat less frequency the farther up we go. But even tho the lower haunts of this bird are very accessible, this little fellow seldom appears to the casual observer of bird life, for usually the moment you approach he hops off into the surrounding sombre-colored sage which is in exact harmony with his plumage. Then very likely in a moment, from some bush or tree not far away, you hear again his call; but on drawing near to the latest retreat of this unobtrusive little bird, the song suddenly ceases and by the time you have arrived the source has likely disappeared again. However I do not wish to have it understood by these remarks that this bird is especially wild or wary; quite the opposite, for he seems to slip away in no hurry and in such a matter of fact way, simply going slowly from branch to branch of some bush, diligently seeking small insects, seeds and grubs that are his food. Then by a short quick flight he is away to the next bush. He, without doubt, relies upon the protective color of his plumage for his escape from his enemies, and incidentally from those who wish to observe his actions.

Chamaea fasciata henshawi, as the scientist calls him, must nest commonly about here, for the birds are met with as frequently during the nesting season as at other times of the year; in fact, they are more in evidence during the mating season than at other times because of their distinctive whistle-like song, which is uttered then with more frequency. This song or whistle, tho perhaps not very musical, seems very fitting and appropriate with the surroundings, from which it is uttered: the lonely chaparral-covered canyons and gulches of our foot-hills and lower ranges, or the broad expanse of brown-colored brush, or, perhaps, farther up in the higher

and thicker brush and buckthorn on the steeper ridges of the rugged mountains. These birds are not like the Western Mockingbird and some of our other birds which are silent for several months during the year, for their call can be heard at intervals by the bird student on a calm cloudy day in winter as well as on a bright warm sunlit morning in spring, but not with such frequency.

But to return to the nesting habits, of which I feel that I really know very little as I have never found many of their nests. The few that I have discovered were back in the mountains north of here. The notes that I have of one found last year are interesting. On May 15, while on a fishing trip near Dell's Camp (altitude about 4500 feet) in San Antonio Canyon (and I might say that I caught thirty-five beauties that day), I came across a nest of this little bird. It was situated among thick branches and near the top of a scrub oak bush perhaps two and a half feet up, and is a gem of bird workmanship, composed, as it is, of bleached weed fibres such as fine grasses, an abundance of soft plant down, a little weed bark, and fine hairy threads of bark of the yucca plant, with a few wider blades of grass intermixed and woven about thru the whole thick-walled structure. A thick mat of horse hair makes the lining. To more firmly bind and hold together the nest, which even without would have been unusually strong and serviceable, these ingenious little birds used cobwebs as an outer covering to make their house doubly strong. The dimensions of the nest are: Depth, outside, five inches; inside, two inches. Diameter, outside, four inches; inside, two inches.

As the bird flushed from her three fresh eggs she fell to the ground where she remained for a few moments fluttering about and uttering a hissing sound intermingled with sharp croaks. Then seeing that I could not be enticed from her home she flew up into a small bush and gave forth her whistle call, and very soon Mr. Wren-tit joined his mate in her song. Since on the next morning when I approached the nest again the bird went thru these same actions I feel that I am safe in saying that they are very characteristic of the nesting Wren-Tit.

On every spring day that I have been in the haunts of this bird, I have been looking for a chance to observe more of its home life; but, so far, I have not been very successful in locating the nests, probably because of the skill with which the birds conceal them among the thick bushes. But as I wander about, even tho I do not find any of the Pallid Wren-Tit's nests, I am able to observe and study one or another of the numerous nature subjects which are found so abundantly in our Southern California fields—the sweet voiced birds, with their peculiar habits and different songs, the many colored and shaped insects, and the brilliant and sweet-scented flowers; so that for any time that I spend in such pursuits I always feel well repaid.

Claremont, California.

SOME BIRDS OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO

By M. FRENCH GILMAN

HAVING spent a little more than a year in southwest Colorado—to be exact, from December 23, 1905, to January 31, 1907—I contribute to THE CONDOR what few bird observations I was able to make. My base of operations was Fort Lewis, an Indian school located in La Plata County at an altitude of about 7,500 feet. Unless otherwise stated, all records refer to this place.

Mr. E. R. Warren of Colorado Springs kindly furnished me with some data