

SUMMER NOTES FROM AN ARIZONA CAMP

By AUSTIN PAUL SMITH

WHETSTONE Mountains, Arizona, August 20, 1907.—This being a very dry year and most of the Thrasher species enjoying aridity, I ascribe as a reason for *Toxostoma crissale* ranging up to 6000 feet in numbers, and even breeding at that altitude, having found nestlings at 5500 feet in the latter part of May. At Benson, Arizona, 3500 feet, full-fledged juveniles were found April 20, and eggs May 2 and 3. But one Palmer Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre palmeri*) has ventured into the mountains, and this one really only into the foothills at 4000 feet. The Bendire Thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*) seems to have a defined limit where the oaks begin. However, in the San Pedro River region, it is my opinion that it outnumbers both its relatives. It may be germane to the subject to note that two adults of *T. bendirei*, shot while leaving their nests containing eggs, proved females.

When I reached the mountains on May 6th, the Scott Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) was to be seen or heard everywhere. A month later an occasional Arizona Hooded Oriole (*Icterus cucullatus nelsoni*) was to be seen in the canyons; but not until July 1, and the advent of the agave blossoms, was it prominent. Only one Bullock Oriole (*Icterus bullocki*) has been noted up here, a female on July 2. On August 15 both *nelsoni* and *parisorum* were still abundant in the oak region.

Of the Tanager trio, May 10 marked the first arrival of *Piranga ludoviciana*. From that date until June 2, it was quite well distributed, mostly above 5000 feet, and in mixed flocks of Scott Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeaks and Lazuli Buntings. They reappeared August 12, at 4500 feet elevation. *Piranga rubra cooperi* never came up higher than the outlying live oaks, and then but occasionally. Yet only eight miles away in the San Pedro Valley it is in summer as common as the Vermillion Flycatcher. *Piranga hepatica* was first observed May 17. All those seen for the first month or more, in fact some taken in July, show very little red in the males. They are evenly distributed over this range, quite as abundant at 4500 feet as at 6500 feet.

I have had the pleasure of observing four members of the Caprimulgidæ about my camp at 4500 feet. Western (*Chordeiles virginianus henryi*) and Texas (*Chordeiles acutipennis texensis*) Nighthawks were both abundant at intervals, as were also the Poorwill (*Phalænoptilus nuttallii*) and Stevens Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferus macromystax*). This last seems quite numerous, much more so than in the Huachuca Mountains. Among the examples secured one ♂ shows no trace of buff on the throat. (No. 5451, elev. 4500 ft., June 26, 1907; L. 9.85, W. 6.43, T. 5.) My Stevens Whip-poor-wills (4 in all) were obtained near the same spot—a ravine in which runs a narrow rivulet of water over a sandy bed. When the required degree of darkness had arrived *macromystax* would come flying down from the higher elevations and alight parallel with the stream, and by a queer lateral movement of the neck, proceed to drink, often remaining in such a position several minutes.

In August a female Scaled Partridge (*Callipepla squamata*) was taken with an egg ready to be laid. However, at that date, almost full-grown birds are the rule. Between 4000 and 4500 feet three species of Partridge may be found at times. *Callipepla squamata*, Mearns Quail (*Cyrtonyx montezumæ mearnsi*), and Gambel Partridge (*Lophortyx gambeli*), and in wet years undoubtedly the Masked Bobwhite (*Colinus ridgwayi*). The latest record for this rare bird was in August,

1906, when Mr. F. E. Trask, City Marshall of Benson, secured five birds near Lone Mountain, between the altitudes above indicated. *C. m. mearnsi* is quite in evidence—at times. The first young I met with was on August 6. They must be very irregular breeders, for even now, in the latter half of August the adult birds are still to be seen in pairs. Acorns or mast and ladybeetles, is the prevailing fare hereabouts. The Scaled Partridge sticks to the Mexican Poppy (*Argemone mexicana*) almost entirely at this season. While the Gambel Partridge haunts the canyons where certain crossworts (Crucifers) grow.

I was surprised to find the Elf Owl (*Micropallas whitneyi*) so abundant, and up to 5000 feet, too. They furnish a good share of the night sounds here. On a moonlight evening you may observe them, little flocks of five or ten, often in a single tree. Moths (which during June were very numerous) form a substantial food supply. They catch the moths much in the manner of a flycatcher, returning to their original perch. One bird I shot had an immense sphinx, almost the wing dimension of the bird, in his bill. They also secure quantities of Longicornes (beetles), but I have found no evidence of their preying on birds.

About camp we have twenty White-winged Doves (*Melopelia leucoptera*) to one Mourning Dove. The former species is another bird very fond of Argemone seed and its distribution is no doubt affected by it.

The Coues Flycatcher (*Contopus pertinax pallidiventris*) is very rare in these mountains, at least this year. I secured a bird of this species in the Rio San Pedro valley on April 18, last.

Benson, Arizona.