

yielded to treatment, and the best of physicians were within call. But they perversely refused to seek aid until there came along a quack selling eye-salve. In this all of them invested, used it, and soon could see. Their appreciation was such, that totally unmindful of the true benefactors of our race, they began a clamor for the establishment of a national monument for their quack.

National, via McGregor, Iowa.

FIFTEEN ARIZONA VERDINS' NESTS

By FLORENCE MERRIAM BAILEY

THE SMALL gray Verdins (*Auriparus flaviceps*) were more often seen than the large spotted-breasted Cactus Wrens in the mesquite near our winter camp at the foot of the Santa Rita Mountains, perhaps partly because the Wrens were very shy and the Verdins not at all so, for in the territory examined the Verdins' nests were not nearly so abundant as those of the Wrens.* On the fifty-three acre patch where twenty-seven Cactus Wrens' nests in good repair were listed, only three good Verdins' nests were found. On two sides of the fifty-three acres, however, twelve Verdins' nests were listed within a short distance and a little farther away a number of others were noted in passing.

Local conditions of tree and shrub growth may have been one of the determining factors explaining the presence or absence of the nests. For of the fifteen examined all but one, which was in a catsclaw (the locally favorite site with the Wren), were in zizyphus bushes, and nearly all of these bushes stood under good-sized, more or less isolated mesquite trees. Whether this selection of nesting site was on the protective principle that two thorn trees are better than one, or whether the shading and extra, thorn-supplying mesquite, which seemed to me such a happy addition, was quite irrelevant to the Verdin, an easily accessible long-thorned zizyphus being its only requirement, must remain a matter for speculation. Suffice it to say, the globular nest, while smaller than that of the Cactus Wren, is large enough to be fairly conspicuous, readily discerned by eyes much less keen than those of marauding hawk or owl, and every extra safeguard would seem that much to the good.

In location, the nests examined averaged decidedly lower than those of the Cactus Wrens, varying from 4 feet, 3 inches, to 7 feet above the ground, seven of these being from 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet; one, 4 feet, 8 inches; and two, 5 feet, 3 inches; while only two were 6 feet, and three, 6 feet, 9 inches, to 7 feet; none being over 7 feet. In the case of the Cactus Wrens, 24 out of 64 were between 7 and 9 feet from the ground.

The Verdins nest, while roofed and having a covered entrance like that of the Cactus Wren, is approximately spherical instead of retort shaped, and its entrance is overhanging, slanting down from the side instead of extending up at an angle from the nest chamber. While much shorter than that of the

*See "Cactus Wrens' Nests in Southern Arizona", *Condor*, XXIV, September, 1922, pp. 163-168.

Cactus Wren, the entrance is quite long enough to hide the doorway and cloak the comings and goings of the little Verdin. The largest nest examined was 10 inches long by 6 high, and another large one measured 9 by 7 inches and was 5 inches high.

In 9 of the 15 nests in which the position of the entrance was noted, 3 were on the north side; 4, on the northwest, west, or north-by-west; 1, southwest, and 1, southwest. The discrepancy between these directions and those faced by the Cactus Wrens' nests may possibly be explained by the fact that the Wrens' nests were largely hidden in protecting balls of mistletoe while those of the Verdins were unprotected and might be more easily affected by the severe winds from the Gulf of California on the southwest.

The nests were mainly the inconspicuous greenish gray of the zizyphus, but one seen on the Range Reserve about two miles from camp was, to quote from my notes, "a dishevelled looking mass, largely straw-color, of dead mesquite leaves, leaf stems, and thorny twigs, well supported with mesquite twigs." Two disused nests brought to camp and examined carefully showed a three-fold structure made with great skill. The outside shell of the handsome ball was made of thorny zizyphus, or zizyphus and catsclaw twiglets; while the inner nest was made of mesquite or catsclaw leaves, leaf stems, and sometimes catkin stems, remarkably felted throughout with spider web; the nest chamber in turn being lined thickly with feathers, in one case mainly quail but some chicken, making in all a large handful.

Of 10 nests showing signs of occupation, 9 were found to contain roosting birds, the birds being flushed at intervals from 4:28 P. M. until after sunset, on various dates, from December 9, 1920, to March 13, 1921. Two birds seen going to their nests went earlier than the Cactus Wrens, half an hour or more before sunset, which considering the fact that their nests are largely under trees rather than on top of them can be done with less danger from prowling Sharp-shinned Hawks and other too observant neighbors.

It should be said that what little work was done on the Verdins' nests was quite incidental to that done on the Cactus Wrens' nests, and that many of the interesting questions which suggest themselves now must be left for others to answer.

Washington, D. C., October 28, 1922.

MIGRATIONS OF THE GOLDEN AND BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS IN ALBERTA

By WILLIAM ROWAN

CURRENT literature on the subject of the migrations of the Golden Plover (*Charadrius dominicus dominicus*) must surely be modified when the ornithology of this province has received a little more of the attention that it deserves. During three years observations on the same spot on one of the larger lakes in the vicinity of Edmonton, I have been struck with the regular southward migration of this species in the fall. The birds generally asso-