

## PHOTOGRAPHING THE RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW

WITH FOUR PHOTOS

By ROGER SIMPSON

ON May 4, 1924, while in the Berkeley hills, just east of the new Claremont sub-station, I happened upon this opportunity of photographing an uncommon bird, which like so many others was just a matter of luck. I was making the rounds of several birds' nests that I had under observation to photograph, and while crossing over a rather bare ridge my attention was attracted by the hungry calls of young birds. Following up these calls I located four fledglings scattered over a radius of about twenty feet. Although the grass was short they were very difficult to see on account of their protective coloration, which is so perfect in the juvenile plumage. Soon the parent birds arrived and I could then identify them as Rufous-crowned Sparrows (*Aimophila ruficeps ruficeps*). The field mark of identification which distinguishes them most readily from the Chipping Sparrow is the dark stripe running from the base of the bill down each side of the throat. This can be seen in figures 23 and 26 of the accompanying set of photographs.



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Fig. 23. ADULT RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW WITH FOOD FOR THE YOUNG.

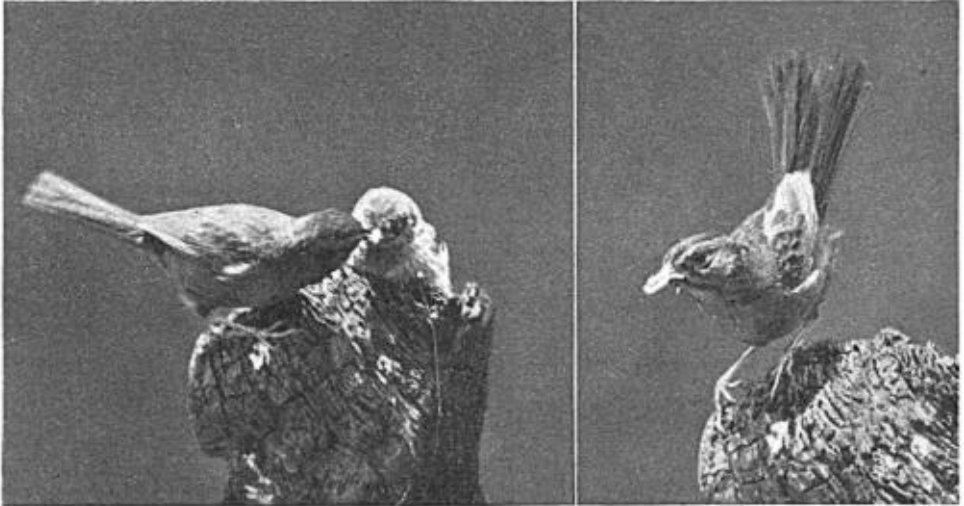
Fig. 24. YOUNG RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW JUST OUT OF THE NEST.

Having caught the young, I decided to use them to decoy the old birds to some convenient perch where I could photograph them. To do this I fashioned a bag out of a handkerchief, put the fledglings in this and hung it on the selected stump upon which I focused the camera. The next step was to wait at the end of a thread attached to the shutter release. Attracted by protests from within the handkerchief, the parents were soon upon the scene with food, scolding with all the epithets of bird-dom and vociferously attacking the camera. It was during this scolding that figure 26 was snapped.

The adult birds looked very much alike. It was only by the difference in their actions that they could be told apart. One of them was of a quieter disposition and was much less concerned at my intrusion. This bird I took to be the male. Their

most characteristic call was a very loud, clear *r-r-rup, chur, chur chur chur*. This had good carrying qualities and could be heard for quite a distance. Even the presence of food in the bill did not interfere, as they were scolding constantly while bringing food to the young.

After taking several exposures I put one of the fledglings on the stump and within a few seconds the female was there with food. After making sure that he was unharmed she shoved a white grub down his throat (figure 25). As nearly as I



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Fig. 25. MRS. RUFIOUS-CROWN SHOVING A WHITE GRUB DOWN HER NESTLING'S THROAT.  
Fig. 26. EVEN FOOD IN HER BILL DID NOT INTERFERE WITH SCOLDING. THE PECULIAR POSITION OF THE TAIL IS DUE TO A GUST OF WIND.

could make out, the food consisted mostly of white grubs and small caterpillars, with an occasional black insect or tiny butterfly.

Thus, by playing upon the parental instincts I was able to get pictures of an elusive and somewhat uncommon bird, such as otherwise would not have been possible.

*Berkeley, California, December 18, 1924.*

## NESTING OF THE ALLEN HUMMINGBIRD IN GOLDEN GATE PARK

WITH FOUR PHOTOS BY YNES MEXIA

By HAROLD C. BRYANT

**H**ERETOFORE I have believed along with others (see Bowles, CONDOR, XIV, 1912, p. 77, and Dawson, *The Birds of California*, II, 1923, p. 927) that the favorite nesting place of the Allen Hummingbird (*Selasphorus alleni*) is the tangle of berry vines along a stream. But a recent experience in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, has led me to alter my view. A University Extension class in 1923, at my suggestion, spent considerable time searching berry vines for hummingbirds' nests in the Chain of Lakes district in this park, but was rewarded with only two nests—one located high in a cypress tree and the other in a eucalyptus tree.