

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Townsend Solitaire Singing in the Autumn.—On the morning of October 14, 1925, I happened to be walking up the old road in the bottom of Granger Canyon, on the east side of the Warner Mountains, near Cedarville, Modoc County, California, when my attention was attracted by the clear notes of a bird song, a song that was familiar, and yet one that seemed to be too loud for that of the species suspected of giving it voice.

The morning was clear and beautiful. Not a breath of air was stirring, and what few sounds there were in this near-desert canyon carried remarkably far. Yet the singer seemed near, and some time was spent in trying to locate it. The road there led up the bottom of the canyon, which runs nearly east and west, and the singer was on the warmer hillside of the southern exposure. Not being able to catch a glimpse of the bird from my position, I sent my assistant up the hillside toward the source of the sound, and, after he had gone some distance, the bird flushed from a small juniper among the rocks and much farther away than seemed possible from the volume of sound that had reached us. My provisional identification was correct, for the bird proved to be a Townsend Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*).

The altitude of that spot was possibly 5,500 feet above sea level. As we continued up the steep road grade, some ten to twelve more of these birds were seen in the hour that it took us in a leisurely fashion to attain another thousand feet of elevation, and in that time four or five other Solitaires were heard and located in full song. A few of them must have been nearly half a mile away and all were above us, some at an altitude where patches of snow still remained from a fall of several days before.

While I have come across this species many times and in many places in the fall of the year, it had never before been my good fortune to hear it in song except in the spring and early summer, and considerable search on my part has failed to reveal many records of fall or winter song. Most of such records as I have so far come across distinctly state, or else give the impression, that the song during autumn and winter is soft and subdued.

Charles F. Batchelder (Auk, vol. 2, 1885, p. 128) states that he noted this species in New Mexico in December, 1882, and says that its song is "not loud and striking, but is clear, sweetly modulated, and full of expression, and is long sustained. . . . It sounds as if it came from a distance even when the singer is quite near." Again, to quote from "A List of Birds from the Vicinity of Golden, Colorado", by R. B. Rockwell and Alexander Wetmore (Auk, vol. 31, 1914, p. 332), on November 7, Solitaires "were found in sunny hollows on the side slopes and were singing a low, warbling song." At Colledgeville, Minnesota, December 20, 1909, "its melodious warble broke the monotony of a winter day" (Severin Gertken, Auk, vol. 33, 1916, p. 327). There is nothing here to indicate an impression of vigor or volume.

On the other hand, Grinnell and Storer ("Animal Life in the Yosemite", 1924, p. 596) say: "The song season is not, as with many birds, restricted to the spring and early summer; but the autumn and early winter witnesses occasional outbursts of song, fully as melodious as those of summer and more impressive in the prevailing chill and silence." And again, on page 599, writing of early October: "Just as the sun came up over the rocky ridges to the east and touched the tips of the junipers, the solitaires would break forth into song nearly or quite as ecstatic as that of early summer, excelling in both quality and volume all other voices in the Glen. . . . No other bird of the Yosemite, except perhaps the American Dipper, seems to have quite such a revival of song in the fall as does the solitaire."

My own experience herein described merely corroborates that of Messrs. Grinnell and Storer in this matter of the vigor with which the Solitaire voices its feelings on fine, crisp days in autumn. It seems strange, however, that there has been so little reference made, in the published experiences of other observers, to this pleasant trait. Possibly the Solitaire feels the more cheerful the farther west it lives.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California, February 1, 1926.*

English Aviaries.—Having read Dr. Casey Wood's article on English aviaries (Condor, vol. 38, 1926, pp. 3-30) with great interest, I feel impelled to add a few remarks. While on a visit to England during the winter of 1920-21 I had the privilege of meeting the late Mrs. Dalton-Burgess, who was kind enough to show me her aviaries

at Helston House, Clifton, a most delightful experience. The greater number of her birds were strange to me, being mostly tropical or Australian, if I remember rightly, and there were hardly any from North America. Of them all, perhaps, what struck me most was a pair of Horned Larks, seemingly quite happy, running about the floor of one of the cages. After associating the Horned Lark with the open prairie it seemed extraordinary that these birds could be content within such a circumscribed area. I remember Mrs. Burgess telling me that she had given up trying to keep indigenous birds. It seemed to her that the latter were ever mindful of their lost liberty, and did not thrive in consequence.

It was of particular interest to me to hear of Mr. Whitley, whom I have not met since I was at school with him in the nineties.—L. B. POTTER, *Eastend, Saskatchewan, Canada, March 10, 1926.*

Ruby-throated Hummingbird near St. Michael, Alaska.*—The United States National Museum has recently received a mummied specimen of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) from Mr. Oscar C. Hall, of St. Michael, who states that it was picked up by a native on the beach among the rocks at a place called Klukatauck, about eighteen miles from St. Michael. Mr. Hall's letter was dated December 31, 1925, but failed to indicate just when the bird was discovered. There seems to be no record for this species for British Columbia, and perhaps the most northern previous record is the very uncertain one quoted by Preble (North American Fauna, no. 27, 1908, p. 390) for Lake Athabaska, Alberta, or vicinity. The specimen from Alaska has been recorded in the National Museum as no. 306,051.—BRADSHAW H. SWALES, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C., March 2, 1926.*

Casualties among Birds.—As a continuation of my observations in 1924, on the casualties in the nest due to natural causes (Condor, vol. 27, 1925, p. 114) the following interesting results were obtained during the nesting season of 1925.

The observations covered 39 nests of 17 species of birds. Of a total of 168 eggs laid, only 104, or 62 per cent of the eggs hatched; and of these only 68 birds, or 65 per cent of the young, lived long enough to leave the nest. The percentage of eggs which produced adults was 40.5, giving a total casualty record of 59.5 per cent.

This final percentage is very interesting when compared with that of 1924, which gave a total casualty of 59.4 per cent, or almost an identical figure for the two years. This was surprising to me, as I expected to find a much higher percentage in 1925, due to the heavy rains during the early part of the nesting season, which destroyed many nests. This, however, seems to have been equalized by other outside agencies during the season of 1924.—ERNEST D. CLABAUGH, *Berkeley, California, February 17, 1926.*

Another New Race of Quail from Lower California.—Mr. James Lee Peters has recently well characterized (Proc. New England Zool. Club, VIII, May 16, 1923, pp. 79-80) the subspecies of California Quail inhabiting the Cape region of Lower California; and he names it *Lophortyx californica achrustera*. He, as well as each other recent author, considers the quail of the northern part of Lower California to belong to the race *L. c. vallicola* (Ridgway). The present accumulation of material in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology brings out the fact, however, that the California Quail of the northern section of the Lower Californian peninsula have distinguishing characters warranting the application of a separate name to them. This I now do.

Lophortyx californica plumbea, new subspecies. San Quintin California Quail.

Type locality.—San José, 2500 feet altitude, latitude close to 31°, about 45 miles northeast of San Quintin, Lower California, Mexico.

Type.—Male, in full fresh annual plumage; no. 46206, Mus. Vert. Zool.; September 27, 1925; collected by J. Grinnell, orig. no. 6344.

Diagnosis.—In general characters similar to *Lophortyx californica vallicola* and *L. c. achrustera*, but tone of coloration clearer, less buffy or brownish; gray or lead-color on dorsum, foreparts and sides, and remiges, more slaty than in either.

Measurements.—While the new form obviously averages smaller than near-topotypes of *vallicola* (from the upper Sacramento Valley), there is so much variation in size elsewhere, throughout the general range of *vallicola*, as to make such difference

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