

with the "corner of her mouth". Although forced to secure her food by this abnormal method, she does not appear to be at any disadvantage in obtaining her share of seed placed on the feed table.

It seems rather remarkable that a bird, when its bill becomes unfitted to pick up its food in the manner common to its kind, should be able to invent a method of securing its food so at variance with the way taught it by instinct. Instead of starving to death it succeeded in adapting itself to the requirements of the situation.

For the attention of those interested in the migration of birds, I will state that the first Golden-crowned Sparrow to return from the far north to Diablo, appeared at my feed table September 19. This is four days earlier than last year.—FRANK A. LEACH, *Diablo, California, September 20, 1926.*

Shrike Attacking Snake.—The Raptores and perhaps some other birds, the Road-runner for example, are known to eat snakes. I had never ascribed this habit (if it in fact be a habit) to Shrikes. It was somewhat of a surprise to actually see a Shrike assailing a snake, about fifteen inches long, at the edge of a road about a mile southwest of Terra Bella, Tulare County, California, on October 15, 1925.

I assume this Shrike was of the race *Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides*, but a Shrike it certainly was. I was driving northwardly in an automobile. The wheel of this car is on the left side. I was driving rather slowly (as I always do) and noticed a bird ahead of me springing about in the most energetic manner at the left edge of the road. When I was less than a car-length away, the bird flushed and I pulled off to the right in order to examine the spot from which the bird had risen, after first watching the bird in flight so as to be sure of its identification. The bird flew off a few yards and came to rest in a small tree. I had a very good look at it and know it was a Shrike.

I then investigated the place at the side of the road, where I found a small snake writhing about in extremis. Two inches from the head, on the under part, was a small, fresh, irregular and bleeding incision. No other injury was visible, but the snake seemed clearly done for. It was unable to crawl off the road, although I urged it with a weed stalk. There seems no doubt but that I had disturbed a Shrike while it was securing a meal, or a supply for several meals, although the performance had not reached its denouement.—CLAUDE GIGNOUX, *73 The Tunnel Road, Berkeley, California, November 22, 1926.*

A New Race of Sclater Oriole.¹—The following comments serve as a synopsis of the conclusions reached in identifying a series of *Icterus sclateri* Cassin, recently collected by the writer in Salvador, for Mr. Donald R. Dickey.

Seasonal and individual variation are the factors governing the amount of black present in the backs of adults. Individual variation is by far the more important. There appears to be no correlation between altitude and the relative amounts of black and yellow present, for the extremes were encountered practically wherever the species occurred. Indeed, the only bird with back practically solid black is a breeding male from Lake Olomega at an altitude of 200 feet, while the yellowest backed extreme is also from the same locality. Nor are birds from San Salvador (altitude 2100 feet) in any respect different from the lowland individuals. Seasonal variation results from the wearing away of the yellowish tips and edgings to the feathers, thereby increasing the relative amount of black present. No association of size with altitude is apparent. The two largest males (wing 111.5-112.5 mm.) are from Divisadero, altitude 800 feet; and males with wings varying from 105.0 to 109.0 are at hand from Lake Olomega and San Salvador. The two large males from Divisadero are of average coloration, in other words with a considerable amount of yellow streaking in the back. The very smallest male examined is from "Guatemala" (wing 101.0) and has only a trace of yellow in the back. It is without date, but in fresh plumage, and its back with a slight amount of abrasion would have become practically solid black. From the above it is evident that birds with black backs and of large size are not confined to altitudes above 2000 feet; that small birds with spotted backs are not confined to the lowlands, nor do black backs go with large size and spotted backs with small size, as was indicated by the material examined by Miller and Griscom when they described *Icterus sclateri alticola*. (See Amer. Museum Novitates, no. 184, September 24, 1925, p. 4.)

¹ Contribution from the California Institute of Technology.

Birds from Volcan San Miguel seem to represent a well marked race differing radically from *sclateri* in coloration. Its characters are designated as follows:

Icterus sclateri pustuloides, subsp. nov.

Type.—Male adult, no. 17,652, collection of Donald R. Dickey; Volcan San Miguel (3000 feet), Salvador; March 22, 1926; collected by A. J. van Rossem; original no. 10,727.

Subspecific characters.—Similar to *Icterus sclateri sclateri* Cassin in pattern of coloration, but yellow or orange-yellow areas of adult males replaced by intense orange, orange-red or flame-orange. In this respect some individuals are of almost the exact shade of *Icterus pustulatus* (Wagler), save that *pustuloides* averages less red (more orange) on auricular region and sides of throat.

Range.—2,500 to 3,000 feet on Volcan San Miguel, Salvador; occurring as a migrant in the lowlands (Lake Olomega, altitude 200 feet, September 11, and Divisadero, altitude 800 feet, September 30).

Remarks.—*Icterus sclateri* is only a summer resident in Salvador, and both forms disappear completely after the breeding season. The last fall record is October 14 and the first spring arrival was taken March 7. *Pustuloides* is therefore apt to be encountered in other regions.

Pustulatus and *sclateri* are obviously geographic representatives of a common stock and it is my strong impression that they should be regarded as specifically identical. However, I do not care to propose definitely such treatment until more birds have been examined. I am indebted to Mr. Dickey, and to Mr. Outram Bangs of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, for the loan of pertinent material.

Specimens examined.—*Icterus sclateri sclateri*: Costa Rica: Bolson, 1; Salitral de Miravalles, 1; Salvador: Lake Olomega, 5; Divisadero, 5; Sitio del Niño, 1; San Salvador, 8; "Guatemala", 3; "West Coast of Mexico", 1. *Icterus sclateri pustuloides*: Salvador: Volcan San Miguel, 8; Divisadero, 1; Lake Olomega, 1. *Icterus pustulatus*: Mexico: Sonora, 5.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, 514 Lester Avenue, Pasadena, California, August 28, 1926.

Poor-wills Attracted by Arc Light.—Throughout a fairly long and diversified experience in the field, I have often speculated upon the fact that our higher vertebrates of nocturnal habits and insectivorous propensities are loath to take advantage of the banquets ready spread for them about any and every street lamp during summer evenings. Perhaps others have been more fortunate; but of such occurrences, all that I have observed in many years have consisted of a few bats and very occasional night-hawks (*Chordeiles*) flitting within the outermost periphery of the illumination cast by an arc light—an act casually indulged in by the birds and evidently without thought of repetition.

August 28, 1926, I was sitting, near midnight, on the observation platform of the California Limited as it stopped at Needles, California. It was with much interest that I then noted at least three Poor-wills (*Phalaenoptilus nuttalli nitidus* ?) hawking about a powerful arc light in the railway yards close by. The observation point of one of these was upon the top of a board fence well within the circle of illumination; of the others, some point out of my direct vision and just beyond the fence. One after the other, until my train left ten minutes later, they would flutter up in their quest for insects, not just somewhere near the light but apparently right against the glass globe which inclosed the arc, returning each time to their respective stations for observation.

Other observers have undoubtedly seen similar occurrences; but if the facts have been published I have failed to note them, and any change in the habits of a species, especially when it involves the use of some man-made contrivance, should be put on record.—A. BRAZIER HOWELL, U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C., November 15, 1926.

A Proposed Summation of Lower Californian Ornithology.—BE IT KNOWN, that work is in progress by the undersigned on a "Distributional List of the Birds of Lower California". I am doing everything I feasibly can to bring into this list, before publication of it, every species known to have occurred in Baja California, or ever reported from that territory, even upon the slenderest evidence. A good part of my work naturally consists in the ransacking of literature; and I plan to give a bibliography of