

know, no male has ever been taken in Arizona. The authorities of the National Museum have kindly lent me the type, now no. 153886, U. S. National Museum; and, through the kindness of Mr. Joseph Grinnell, the other specimen, now no. 10299, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, is also before me.

The series of *Atthis heloisa heloisa* in the Museum of Comparative Zoology and in the collection of John E. Thayer, number, together, forty-one skins, and they include specimens from Vera Cruz, Nuevo Leon, San Luis Potosi and Tamaulipas. Of these, thirty-two are adult males, five are immature males, but unfortunately only four are females.

The characters given by Ridgway in "The Birds of North and Middle America" (Part v, 1911, p. 595), to distinguish the female of *morcomi* from that of the wide-ranging Mexican *A. heloisa heloisa*, are: "smaller (except bill); paler below with bronzy spots on chin and throat much smaller, sides less extensively cinnamon rufous, and under tail coverts pure white." In his original description of the form, Ridgway said that the second specimen had the under tail coverts more cinnamomeous than in the type, and the spots on the throat still smaller.

The Arizona specimens are not small, nor have they larger bills; Ridgway's own measurements show this. All the color characters claimed for the form fall within the range of individual variation shown by even so small a series as four females of *heloisa*, except that one Arizona bird, no. 10299 Mus. Vert. Zool., has smaller spots on the middle throat and chin than in any of the other specimens examined.

One adult female, no. 28285, coll. John E. Thayer, from Alvarez, San Luis Potosi, taken August 6, 1926, by W. W. Brown, exactly matches the type of *morcomi* in every respect, having very small spots on the chin and throat, being very pale below with little cinnamon on sides, and having white under tail coverts. Two other Mexican females have large spots on the chin and throat, are much suffused with cinnamon below, and have cinnamomeous under tail coverts. A fourth is intermediate. Young males are all nearer the dark females with heavy spotting on the throat.

The other Arizona specimen, no. 10299 Mus. Vert. Zool., is not pale below, but has the sides and under tail coverts quite as strongly cinnamomeous as in the darker Mexican birds. The bronzy spots on the sides of the neck are large, but in front on the chin and throat the spots are very small—mere dots.

Thus: there is no difference in size between *heloisa* and *morcomi*; the color of the under parts and under tail coverts is equally variable in both and is not diagnostic; the spotting of the throat, whether large or small, is also variable and probably dependent upon age, the females with small spots representing the fully adult plumage, and the heavily spotted birds being immature.

This bird is not of regular occurrence in southern Arizona, and the two or three individuals that have been taken there are in all probability mere stragglers from the very wide-spread range in Mexico, of *heloisa*.

Under the circumstances I can see no course but to relegate *morcomi* to synonymy, and to recognize the bird that occasionally occurs in Arizona as *Atthis heloisa heloisa* (Lesson and Delattre).—OUTRAM BANGS, *Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, January 27, 1927.*

Fearlessness of Shearwaters.—The Sooty Shearwater was rather commonly seen close in at Hermosa Beach during the spring and summer months of 1926. Although I have been at Hermosa during August for some years past I have never before noticed this bird. However, the most interesting fact was that on walking along the beach, especially early in the morning after a high tide, one would almost invariably find on the strand from six to ten bodies of the Sooty (*Puffinus griseus*) and usually two or three of the Black-vented Shearwater (*Puffinus opisthomelas*). These bodies were rather bedraggled and in some cases the necks were twisted; none was covered with oil. I could do no more than speculate at the reason for the death of so many of these birds.

Being much interested in fishing, I went often to the barge which was anchored about half a mile off-shore. This offered opportunities to study various species of water birds. On about half of the ten or twelve trips which I made to the barge the shearwaters were quite abundant. They nearly all came about the barge for the purpose of feeding on the refuse and bait thrown away; their audacity was surprising. In many cases the birds would come up to the very edge of the boat and dive eagerly

for the salted anchovies and sardines used for bait. Before a fisherman could jerk his hook out of the way the bird would seize it and, although usually detaching the bait from the hook, would sometimes be snagged about the head. In one such case a bird was brought up on deck and taken from the hook which had caught in the loose skin under the mandible. A small boy, much interested in the catch, offered the Sooty Shearwater some fresh sardines, and these, much to my surprise, it quickly snapped up. We both fed it, and during this procedure it stood calmly; but tiring of this it began to waddle along the deck and I tossed it back into the water.

Afterward, I saw many shearwaters caught thus and usually their necks were promptly wrung. They would also dive after a snag sinker which I drew in front of them. In swimming under water they used both wings and feet. They would also swim fearlessly to the side of the barge and dive for small fish hiding under it, which they would usually be successful in capturing. Some fishermen brought guns along with them and apparently took great pleasure in shooting these birds, which could in but an insignificant manner harm the fishing. The dead birds on the beach were thus traced. I wondered that these birds, which have doubtless been persecuted for many years, had not learned more fear of man. We can but hope that enforced protection may be given them before they are exterminated.—JOSEPH H. WALES, *Pasadena, California, November 19, 1926.*

The Olive-sided Flycatcher and Coniferous Trees.—The associating of *Nuttallornis borealis* with cone-bearing trees has been such a definite concept with me that it has never occurred to me to look for their nests elsewhere. The species has been noted frequently, in the Santa Cruz Mountains, during the past three seasons; but each time a bird has been observed, I have merely glanced around to look for a large redwood or spruce, wondering if this or that might be the nesting tree. My time was always deemed too precious to waste looking for such impossible treasures, impossible because of course beyond my reach and luck. Indeed, Barlow's photo (*Osprey*, II, 1897, p. 13) of "Price after the flycatcher's nest" usually comes to my mind when I meet this bird.

That collectors, generally, have not been taking generous series of sets of our boreal "Contopus" is evidenced by the fact that I locate just one record of such a "find" in the first fifteen volumes of *The Oologist*. This record accounts for a nest on the horizontal limb of a lone spruce, about twenty feet from the ground. This was at Westbrook, Maine (*Oologist*, VII, 1890, p. 224). H. B. Kaeding (*Nidologist*, IV, 1896, p. 20) records a nest on the horizontal limb of a small white fir, fifty feet above the ground, building on June 1, holding three eggs on June 20; Sierras at 4600 feet altitude. Chester Barlow (*Osprey*, II, 1897, p. 47) reports two nests; one seventy-one feet up, in a silver fir, June 9, the other seventy feet up, on drooping limb of a spruce, June 14; these in the Sierras. Anna Head (*Bird-Lore*, V, 1903, p. 153) records two nests; one only twenty feet up, in a fir, containing well-feathered young on July 22, the other judged by her to be nearly two hundred feet up, also in a fir; Lake Tahoe. And Joseph Dixon's recent record (*Condor*, XXII, 1920, p. 200) concerns a nest in a Monterey cypress, placed fifty-seven feet above the ground, June 12; Berkeley; the first record for the Bay Region and almost at sea level.

F. M. Chapman (*Birds of Eastern North America*, 1899, p. 247) says that the nest is placed in coniferous trees, about twenty-five feet up. Major Bendire (*Life Histories of North American Birds*, II, 1895, p. 284) says that nest building rarely begins anywhere throughout their range before June 1, usually not before June 10, and in some seasons not before July. Oliver Davie (*Nest and Eggs of North American Birds*, 5th ed., 1898, p. 245) states that the nest is usually built in evergreen trees. Elliott Coues (*Key to North American Birds*, 5th ed., I, 1903, p. 524) notes the nest as usually high, thirty to forty feet, on a horizontal bough of a tree (generally coniferous). And Robert Ridgway (*Birds of North and Middle America*, IV, 1907, p. 505) writes: nest on horizontal branch (usually of a coniferous tree).

The above gleanings from the literature at my elbow make me wonder why certain writers imply that *Nuttallornis* sometimes leaves the conifers to build its nest in other kinds of trees; but I have no time to investigate the case now. Enough to say that I was very much surprised when, about the middle of last May, Miss Emily Smith, of Los Gatos, a member of the Cooper Club, reported to me her finding of a pair of Olive-sided Flycatchers nest-building on May 8, the site a drooping limb of an alder, *Alnus rhombifolia*, the distance from the ground about fifty feet, the locality a canyon