

adversely by limiting the extent of their appropriate habitats; the egrets are one group so affected. Plume-hunters decimated these birds before they were extended legal protection. Now, even under adverse environmental conditions, it would seem as though the larger egret is increasing somewhat.—TRACY I. STORER, *University of California, Davis, California, October 27, 1930.*

Early Record of Birds in Arizona and New Mexico.—In a translation¹ of an account of the Espejo expedition of 1582-1583, which has been brought to my attention by Mr. Neil M. Judd, there is mention (p. 106) of an occurrence of parrots that is of some interest to ornithologists. In May, 1583, the Espejo party was in the Flagstaff region in Arizona and on May 5 descended a rough ravine "to a fine large river which runs from northwest to southeast. At this place the river is surrounded by an abundance of grape-vines, many walnut and other trees. It is a warm land in which there are parrots." The translators suppose the stream was Sycamore Creek (though it seems possible also that it may have been Oak Creek).

Accepting the identification of "parrots" as correct, which is borne out by the fact that they seem to have been an unusual sight as there is no mention of them elsewhere in the narrative, then it seems reasonable to suppose that we may have here early reference to the Thick-billed Parrot (*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*) at a point much farther north than it has been known in more recent years.

There is interest also in the frequent mention of turkeys brought to the party by the Indians, note of this beginning February 1, 1582, on the Rio Grande in the general region of San Marcial and continuing through their travels to Acoma, Zuñi, the Flagstaff region, and back again into New Mexico. North of Albuquerque at the Pueblo of "Ziaquebos", said to be Sia, the journal speaks of blankets of turkey feathers worn by women. In April there is casual mention of women and children tending flocks in the mountains which the translators suppose to mean flocks of turkeys.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *United States National Museum, Washington, D. C., September 11, 1930.*

Concerning some Western Races of *Polioptila melanura*.—In connection with recent work on Sonora birds it has been necessary to examine critically series of black-tailed gnatcatchers from practically all sections of the range of this species. The results of such examination have indicated the desirability of reconsidering the Lower California forms and of discriminating a western race as distinct from that occurring in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas and northeastern Mexico.

Dr. Joseph Grinnell has recently (Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., 4th ser., 15, 1926, pp. 493-500) reviewed the gnatcatchers of the Californias. He has shown the necessity for reducing *Polioptila californica* Brewster to subspecific status because of the presence of a transitional form connecting *californica* with the race found in the Cape Region, which latter is clearly a subspecies of *Polioptila melanura*. While I agree absolutely with Dr. Grinnell in the number of races to be found in Lower California and in the characters which he gives for distinguishing them, I most emphatically do not agree on certain details of ranges. Unfortunately a change of names thereby becomes necessary. The situation focuses on the Magdalena Bay birds which Ridgway (Birds of North and Middle America, pt. 3, 1909, p. 733, footnote) named *Polioptila margaritae*. The two specimens on which the name was based were, as Grinnell has pointed out, skinned from alcohol and the colors thereby rendered unreliable for subspecific comparison. The measurements, of course, were not affected.

I have recently had the opportunity of collecting small but representative series of gnatcatchers at various points along both coasts of Lower California, including the all-important Margarita Island in Magdalena Bay. The six specimens secured at Margarita Island by myself and other members of the party I am unable to distinguish on any basis from specimens from Cape San Lucas, La Paz and Espiritu Santo Island, while all of them differ decidedly from the gnatcatchers of the middle

¹ Expedition into New Mexico made by Antonio de Espejo 1582-1583 as revealed in the Journal of Diego Pérez de Luxán, a member of the Party. Translated by George Peter Hammond and Agapito Rey, The Quivira Society, Los Angeles, 1929.

² Contribution from the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena.