

Arizona Records of the Thick-billed Parrot.—Since the extinction of the Carolina and Louisiana paroquets leaves the continental United States without any native species of the order of parrots save sporadic visitors from Mexico, a peculiar interest attaches to the occurrence of the Thick-billed Parrot (*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*) within our borders. As I have some data on an important unrecorded occurrence of the species it seems desirable to sum up the known facts.

Swarth's List (Pacific Coast Avifauna, no. 10, p. 32, says, "Status—known only as an irregular, occasionally abundant, mid-summer visitant to the Chiricahua Mountains," and cites Lusk and Smith.

R. D. Lusk (Condor, 2, 1900, p. 129) reported that "about the middle of June" (1900) a small flight of 9 or 10 of these birds appeared in the Chiricahua Mountains. They were soon attacked by pole-cutters in a lumber camp, and two were collected by the recorder of the occurrence, only a remnant of the little band being presumed to have escaped. Stomachs of these birds contained only immature pinyon nuts wrested from the hard, green cones. Beaks and bellies were besmeared with pine resin.

A. P. Smith in 1907 (Condor, 9, 1907, p. 104) reported upon the occurrence of a large flock of Thick-billed Parrots in the Chiricahua Mountains in August, 1904. This time there was a large flock "estimated at from 700 to 1000," which remained four days, and was noted to be feeding on pinyon nuts. Seven were killed by one man, and several more by other men. This author inclined to the belief that "*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha* may be looked for every few years or so, and is not nearly as casual as supposed." This prediction of a quarter century ago seems not borne out by available data.

The next occurrence of these parrots, and the last of definite record, extended through the *winter* of 1917-18. I first heard of these birds in the spring of 1918, and finally in May of that year I found an opportunity to visit Pinery Canyon in the hope of seeing them.

I was disappointed to learn that the birds had not been seen for some time. However, my disappointment was somewhat tempered by the pleasure of making the acquaintance of the Hands brothers, with one of whom I had previously corresponded about the parrots, and also by an opportunity to see a living specimen of the Thick-billed Parrot. This individual had been slightly crippled and captured and was a pet in the home of a resident of Pinery Canyon. I was unable to secure the bird for the University, but later its owner sent word of her regret that she had not let us have it, as it had escaped from her.

Under date of April 7, 1918, Mr. Percy Hands wrote me as follows concerning the 1917-18 incursion of parrots.

"The Mexican Thick-billed Parrots were first noticed on my ranch in lower Pinery Canyon in mid-September. About 250—counted over 200—in one flock. They have been on my ranch at irregular intervals since then up to March 27. They roosted here seven times during late October and early November. The longest period they were away was about three weeks before they appeared March 27. There were about 70, rough count, at that appearance. Three were shot at that time and sent to the Biological Survey, Washington.

"October 2 and 3 there were large numbers at Monte Vista and Rucker Canyon. My ranch is the farthest north they go on the west side of the Chiricahuas and Upper Wood Canyon on the east side. These points are practically the northerly limits of the large timber upon the forest."

Neither did they remain in winter in 1900, which occurrence of the species was apparently unknown to Mr. Hands. This is not surprising in view of the small number and their early massacre and retreat. In the Report of the National Zoological Park for the fiscal year 1918 (Ann. Rept. Smith. Inst. for 1918, pp. 66-81) is recorded the acquisition by purchase of a pair of Thick-billed Parrots from Arizona. These birds were secured "in January in the pine-forested Chiricahuas, when the ground in the higher altitudes where the birds occur was covered with snow." Evidently these were from the flock observed by Mr. Hands.

Since 1918 I have constantly hoped for a reinvasion of these interesting parrots, and have by recommendations to state game wardens arranged for better protection for the birds (should they reappear) in so far as regulations may give protection. Now, after fifteen years with no report of their reappearance, it seems best to record

what is known to date. In preparation for this note I wrote Mr. F. H. Hands concerning any possible recent occurrences. He replies that he has no personal knowledge of their occurring since 1917-18, but that a number of summers ago he "heard an unconfirmed rumor that a few were on top of the mountains, but it wasn't allowed to leak out in order to protect them." With this desire I can heartily sympathize.

The fourth edition of the A. O. U. Check-list gives the range of the Thick-billed Parrot as follows, "Mountains bordering the Mexican tableland, northward sporadically to the Chiricahua Mountains, Arizona, and casually to the *Dragoon, Galiuro, and Graham ranges*" (italics mine). I can find in the literature only suggestions that they *may* occur in ranges other than the Chiricahuas; including in other ranges the Huachuclas. Yet I can find no *record* whatever of occurrence elsewhere than in the Chiricahuas.—CHARLES T. VORHIES, *University of Arizona, December 1, 1933.*

NOTES AND NEWS

The annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union will be held this year in Chicago during the week beginning October 22. Headquarters will be at the Field Museum of Natural History where Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood will receive the Union as Chairman of the Local Committee. Dr. Osgood was the first President of the Cooper Ornithological Club, back in '93; and for this reason as well as others C. O. C. members will be warmly inclined to attend this Chicago meeting. A large general attendance from the West is likely also because the Century of Progress Exposition will still be open, with attractive railroad rates available. This factor will appeal especially to bird students in California, whence there should be a good-sized delegation. Further information can be obtained from Dr. Osgood, addressed as above, concerning this, the most important ornithological event of the year in America.—J.G.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Audubon Societies the following statement of policies with relation to the protection of hawks and owls was approved. We are confident that well-nigh every member of the Cooper Ornithological Club will find himself ready to endorse this

admirable statement in all its sections and will thenceforth be ready at every opportunity to aid the Audubon Societies in carrying out their aim, as here expressed, to save these commonly misunder-



Fig. 30. Clinton G. Abbott, Director, Natural History Museum, San Diego, and President, Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club.