

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

A Hummingbird Entangled in a Spider's Web.—In accounts of tropical explorations we read of spiders' webs capable of ensnaring small birds, but one hardly expects to happen upon anything of that sort right at home. Recently encountering an object hanging by two strands of a nearly demolished web, I did not at once recognize its nature, but closer inspection showed it to be a hummingbird, evidently a female or immature male Costa (*Calypte costae*), suspended head downward with folded wings. The bird looked dead, but when taken in hand it opened its bill and struggled feebly, so I undertook to remove the web, which was well wrapped around its wings. The strands were so tough and viscid that this was accomplished only with difficulty and, apparently, at some risk of pulling out the feathers. When released, the bird was too exhausted to fly, so it was placed inside a room. A few minutes later it was found clinging to the window screen, and when taken to the doorway it flew away with fully restored strength.

The web in question was that of our largest common orb weaver, a dull-colored, heavy-bodied, sluggish spider which spins a particularly coarse thread and often spans a space of ten feet or more. Doubtless a hummingbird in full flight would break through the web without harm, but if it should blunder into it while hovering, the beating of its wings might easily wrap about it a large portion of the web; and such is the strength of the fabric that it seems capable of holding a bird of considerably larger size. Evidently the rarity of such occurrences is due to the vigilance of the hummingbirds in avoiding the snares rather than to any lack of potential danger.—ROBERT S. WOODS, *Azusa, California, July 31, 1934.*

Nesting of the Orange-crowned Warbler in Oregon.—During the summer months this rather elusive species is sparingly distributed over some of the higher mountains of eastern Oregon. It can not be called common in this State but summer records of its occurrence have been noted on Hart Mountain in Lake County, the Steins Mountains in Harney County, on Lookout Mountain in Baker County, and in the Wallowa Mountains of northeastern Oregon. I have found these birds in groves of aspen, willow, and alder, in preference to other cover, usually above 5,000 feet altitude. Unless the males are heard singing they can be overlooked easily in any locality. The series in my collection from Oregon is typical of the Rocky Mountain form, *Vermivora celata orestera* Oberholser, but this form is not recognized as a valid race in the A. O. U. Check-list of 1931.

On June 18, 1934, a nest of this species was found at 6,600 feet altitude on Hart Mountain, Lake County, Oregon. The location was a rather dense mixed grove of aspen, alder, willow, and yellow pine. The female was on the nest, which was placed on the ground well under a small leaning willow stump, about five inches in diameter, that had been cut off about a foot above the ground, leaving the stump leaning at an angle of about 45 degrees. Weeds had grown over the stump forming a loose canopy of vegetation which protected the nest and sitting bird from being easily seen. The nest was composed of coarse dry strips of willow bark, lined with porcupine hairs. It measured, inside, 50 mm. in width and 33 mm. in depth. It held four eggs, resembling the eggs of *V. c. lutescens* in markings and color, but distinctly smaller. Incubation was well advanced. On flushing the female, she protested with low chirps, and was soon joined by the male. Both parents were very shy and kept well under cover while I was near the nest.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, July 19, 1934.*

Pelagic Birds near Shore.—My fondness for boating carries me frequently to the ocean near San Diego, but never before have I seen so many pelagic birds close to shore as were recently observed en route to and from the regatta at Santa Monica. On August 3, between San Diego and San Clemente Island, I definitely counted fourteen Black-footed Albatrosses (*Diomedea nigripes*) and there may have been more. Five individuals were counted in one group and three in another, in both cases resting on the water. On August 12, between Catalina and San Clemente islands, I saw petrels in flocks "thick as blackbirds." There were three separate flocks which I estimated as containing from 200 to 500 birds each. They would be seen resting on

the water, would arise and settle on the water in a different place. In addition to the flocks, there were hundreds of scattered individuals, all headed north. I am unable to name the species, as I had no facilities for collecting, but can state that by far the majority of the petrels were all black, probably Socorro Petrels (*Oceanodroma socorroensis*) or Black Petrels (*Oceanodroma melania*) or both. A few of the birds, perhaps not one in a hundred, showed white on the rump, and still fewer seemed to be gray with white on the rump.—J. W. SEFTON, JR., *San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, August 21, 1934.*

A Race of *Porzana flaviventer* from Central America.—This tiny rail has long been known from the Guianas, from the larger Antillean islands, and has recently been detected in the Magdalena district of Colombia. It remains one of the rarest of birds in collections and certainly has never been detected before anywhere on the mainland north of Colombia.

On August 19, 1925, at Lake Olomega in eastern El Salvador, one of these rails was shot when it fluttered from under foot as I was working an area of foot-deep water covered with a mat of floating water hyacinth and dotted with clumps of mimosa. Several others were seen from time to time, usually only for brief moments, but it was not until I revisited the lake in April, 1926, that I succeeded in collecting another specimen. Both of the birds taken are males; the one collected on August 19 was evidently breeding, while the spring bird (April 8) was sexually dormant.

These two specimens had never been studied critically until the present time. That they would prove to be a distinct race was almost a foregone conclusion in view of the geographic variations already known and the remoteness of El Salvador from the other areas inhabited by the species. This race, which is named for Dr. Casey A. Wood, may be known as:

Porzana flaviventer woodi, new subspecies.

Type.—Male adult in breeding condition, no. 15513 Dickey collection; Lake Olomega, Department of San Miguel, El Salvador, August 19, 1925; collected by A. J. van Rossem, original number 8583.

Subspecific characters.—Size small as in *Porzana flaviventer hendersoni* Bartsch of Hispaniola and Porto Rico; color nearest to the Antillean races (*hendersoni* and *gossii*), but crown (in males at least) paler, pectoral region whiter, median upper parts browner (less blackish), dorsal white markings narrower and less extensive, and black loreal streak only 1 mm. wide instead of (as in all other races) 2 mm. Measurements of the type are: wing, 60.5 mm.; exposed culmen, 15.8; tarsus, 20.4; middle toe without claw, 27.0.

Range.—Known only from Lake Olomega, El Salvador.

Remarks.—The El Salvador race is certainly closer in color to the Antillean than to the two South American races, *flaviventer* Boddaert and *bangsi* Darlington. South American birds are predominantly black and white dorsally, while the Antillean races are brown and black with rather prominent white streaking. The brown extreme (of *gossii* and *hendersoni*) is close to *woodi* in the reduction of black, but no specimen examined is as narrowly streaked as are the two from El Salvador, in which dorsal white streaking is reduced to thread-like lines.

As regards the color of soft parts, the tarsi and feet of *hendersoni* are, according to a field tag by Dr. W. L. Abbott attached to a specimen (U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 251398) from Haiti, "pale brownish green." The tarsi and feet of *gossii* are recorded on the field tags of several Jamaican specimens taken by J. E. Sherlock as "brown" in six cases and "greenish yellow" in one case. Chubb (*Birds of British Guiana*) records the tarsi and feet of *flaviventer* as "yellowish." The colors of soft parts of the two El Salvador specimens were noted by myself in the field as follows: tarsi and feet pale dull yellow in both; bill blackish olive in one, dark olive in the other; iris dark red in one. It would appear, therefore, that the colors of soft parts in this species may be of subspecific value. Because of the apparent agreement in the color of the feet and legs of *flaviventer* and *woodi*, it is not at all certain that the relationships of the Central American colony lie as near to the Antillean races as the general plumage coloration might lead one to infer.

In the assembled series of this species there is a slight difference in color between