

**Townsend Solitaire Raises Two Broods.**—Late in August, 1933, a nest of the Townsend Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) was located in the vicinity of Echo Lake, El Dorado County, California, with three newly hatched young. Because of the late date and the apparent immaturity of the young the writer felt reasonably sure that this was a second nesting.

This year (1934), although the above area was searched quite thoroughly, the solitaires were not noted. Another pair was located about a mile from this spot, however. On June 24 their nest was located on a small rocky ledge above a rushing waterfall. It contained four almost fully grown young. Another visit to this nest a week later disclosed the fact that the young had left, although they were still in the vicinity. The parents were observed attempting to teach their family to feed and care for themselves.

On July 13, while passing this region and less than fifty feet from the exact site of the first nest, a female solitaire was flushed from a relatively small nest on a rock shelf three feet above the then tiny stream. Upon examination it was found to contain three eggs, incubation under way. The nest, as usual, was constructed primarily of tamarack needles and twigs, and lined with grasses. It was perhaps smaller than average and more loosely and carelessly constructed.

There is no doubt in the writer's mind that this was a second nest of the same pair of birds, thus bearing out the conclusion reached in the summer of 1933 that the solitaire is another Sierran form which, at least occasionally if not generally, raises two broods in a season.—DUDLEY S. DEGROOT, *State College, San Jose, California, August 28, 1934.*

**The San Jose Say Phoebe at San Diego, California.**—On October 22, 1933, while I was collecting near Chula Vista, San Diego County, California, with J. C. LaForce, we obtained a Say Phoebe, which I made up. Recently, while working over the skins and cataloguing them for the collection, I was struck by the pale coloration of this bird. It was sent to George Willett for identification as a possible specimen of *Sayornis saya quiescens*. It has been identified by him as a typical specimen of the San Jose Phoebe. He states that, to the best of his knowledge, it is the first record of the bird on the Pacific slope of California, and suggested that this note be placed in the Condor.—IRA N. GABRIELSON, *Portland, Oregon, September 5, 1934.*

**The Western Lark Sparrow and the Dwarf Cowbird.**—There seem to be but few records of the Western Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus strigatus*) being a victim of the Dwarf Cowbird (*Molothrus ater obscurus*). It was thus interesting for me to see a nest in a local orange grove on May 31, 1934, which had suffered from this pest. The nest had been located a couple of days earlier by Oscar Clark but had been deserted when I saw it, although it contained one perfectly fresh egg of each species.

Our fellow member, Mr. J. Stuart Rowley, has authorized me to state that he collected a set of five eggs of the Western Lark Sparrow with one egg of the Dwarf Cowbird on May 6, 1934, at Gorman, Los Angeles County, California.—WILSON C. HANNA, *Colton, California, August 30, 1934.*

**Singing of the Mountain Bluebird and the Western Bluebird.**—Since my notes on the song of the Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) (Condor, 36, 1934, p. 164) were written, more interesting observations on the singing of this species have come to light. It may not be amiss to mention them here for the benefit of interested persons.

In the Murrelet for May, 1934 (pp. 49-50), appears a much more comprehensive description of the song of this species as noted at Great Falls, Montana, by Ellsworth Lumley, a careful observer. Mr. Lumley writes in part: "The song itself is comparatively simple, consisting chiefly of descending warbles, although occasionally a short ascending warble is given. The warbles invariably begin on the same note, and this note might be given singly before the warble." In a letter to the present writer, Mr. Lumley remarks that he also noticed the resemblance of the song to that of the Western Robin; and states that "to me the song is a distinct warble."

In a recent letter, Mr. Francis H. Allen informs me that he once heard the

Mountain Bluebird sing in the mountains of Colorado: "As I heard it on Long's Peak above timberline, September 25, 1919, it was 'a beautiful clear short warble, higher-pitched than that of *S. sialis* and hardly suggesting it.' I heard it once or twice after that during my stay at Long's Peak Inn."

The observations of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln Ellison, made at Melrose, Montana, and communicated to me by letter, to the effect that a Mountain Bluebird sang so late in the morning as between 8:00 and 9:00, are interesting as indicating a possible individual or local variation in the hours of song on the part of this species. It may be well to add that during the past summer, my eighth consecutive season of observation on the song at Fortine, I again found the Mountain Bluebird to sing only during the early morning hours, before and soon after daylight. Mr. Lumley, in the article referred to above, tells of finding the birds at Great Falls to sing very early in the morning; all his observations were made in "total darkness."

The vocal accomplishments of the Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana occidentalis*) seem also to be little known. Early writers credit the species with a song, but their descriptions seem to be given scant credence by most present observers. Thus Dawson, in "The Birds of California" (p. 776), after quoting descriptions of the singing of the Western Bluebird by Townsend, Nuttall, and Cooper, and by the more recent writers, Lord and Mrs. Bailey, disposes of their statements in the following manner.

"... Someone has been dreaming!

"It is always interesting and sometimes amusing thus to trace the early struggles of truth. Preconceptions die hard. The Eastern Bluebird warbles delightfully; therefore, the Western Bluebird *ought* to—but it doesn't! In an experience of some thirty-nine years, the author has never heard from the Western Bluebird's beak an utterance which deserves the name of song, or anything more musical than the threefold *miu*."

To this it might be appropriate to reply that "truth crushed to earth will rise again." The fact that experienced observers in some localities find a species to be songless does not necessarily prove that other competent observers who describe the bird's singing have been "dreaming." It seems probable that, like its relative *S. currucoides*, the Western Bluebird in its powers of song shows individual or geographical variation.

Without attempting a description of the song of the Western Bluebird as a species, I would like to relate my observations on the singing of two male birds which with their mates nested in bird houses at my home near Fortine, Montana, during the past summer.

During previous years I had heard Western Bluebirds singing, but had paid no particular attention to details, not being aware that the species was classed as songless. During the summer of 1934, however, I frequently recorded the notes and songs of two male birds that nested on our farm. Throughout the season I slept at night between the two nests, 50 feet from one, 155 feet from the other, and often in the twilight hours of morning I listened to the singing of one or both of the males.

The first attempt at singing was noted at 4:40 a. m. (in full darkness) on April 19. For several minutes without pause one of the birds from a perch rendered an endless song consisting of the common call note, *few*, repeated over and over, regularly but with varying inflection. On succeeding mornings the notes gradually became more varied. The following description was jotted down on the morning of April 26: "Bluebird from perch began singing at 4:35 (quite dark), sang for about 40 minutes. Sang without pause for about fifteen minutes first; later snatches of song successively shorter, intervening pauses longer. Song a succession of call notes (3 different phrases); notes same as given separately in daytime, but connected in a series to form a typical 'song.' Song louder and more energetic than that of Mountain Bluebird, just as the call notes are louder and more vigorous. Tempo much like that of Robin's song. *F-few, few, f-few, f-few, eh-eh, few, f-few, eh-eh, few, eh-eh, few, f-few* . . . The *eh-eh* is a common phrase given with the call note *few* (or *tew*) during the day. It resembles the short catch notes of Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Cassin Vireo."

Three days later, on April 29, I awoke in the darkness at 4:20 a. m. to find a bluebird already singing. I wrote down its song thus: "*Ic-ic té, téw, ic-ic téw,*

*ic-ic towée, towée* (often *two-lée, two-lée*—more musical), *ic-ic, téw, ic-ic towée, towée . . .*” These songs, with minor variations, were given throughout the season.

As the days lengthened, the bluebirds began their morning singing at earlier hours, about two and one-half hours before sunrise, always well before daylight. At the time of the summer solstice, on the night of June 21-22, I remained awake until the first song was given, at 3:29 a. m., Mountain Standard Time. (As Fortine is less than 50 miles from the western border of the Mountain time zone, the corrected local time would be much earlier.) Generally the Western Bluebird was the second species to begin singing, being preceded only by the Tree Swallow, and being followed closely by the Mountain Bluebird. Singing usually continued for thirty to sixty minutes, but shorter series of song were sometimes given as late as 7 a. m. Frequently, but not regularly, the birds sang spasmodically during the twilight hours of evening. Singing ceased about July 15, soon after the second broods of young had hatched.

The singing of these birds resembled the usual song of the Western Robin even more closely than does the song of the Mountain Bluebird as observed in this locality. In the darkness I often found it difficult to tell whether a song was given by a Western Bluebird a few hundred feet away or by a Western Robin at a greater distance. To me the Western Bluebird's singing, from a musical standpoint, is less enjoyable than that of its quieter relative, the song of the Mountain Bluebird being softer, more subdued, and more pleasingly modulated.

During the early part of the season, in April, while the Western Bluebirds were pairing and selecting houses, the males during the day frequently gave a double note that was not heard later in the season. This was a musical *pa-wée*, much resembling a goldfinch's call. This was also coupled with the common call note to form a series of phrases which perhaps constituted a “mating song”: *Pa-wée, few few. Few few fa-wée. Fa-wée. Few few fa-wée. Pa-wée. Pa-wée, few, few . . .* Another phrase sometimes given at this season I noted as *etherick tée*, the first double note resembling a common phrase of the Western Robin's song.—WINTON WEYDEMEYER, *Fortine, Montana, September 4, 1934.*

**Another Cross-billed Blackbird.**—In reading the Condor (35, 1933, p. 234) the note “A Cross-billed Blackbird”, by E. A. Stoner, reminded me of a like experience which I had here at Florence Lake.

On September 26, 1926, I trapped a female Brewer Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) with crossed mandibles. It did not occur to me to sketch this deformity, but if I remember correctly the lower mandible was bent slightly to the left, the upper more sharply to the right. I do not recall a bluntness of either mandible or that there was any bump such as Mr. Stoner found on the upper mandible of the blackbird he sketched. In other words there was no abnormal feature other than the peculiar crossing of the bill.

So far as I could see, the bird was healthy and in good condition. After placing band number 258272, I released her. Shortly after this our Brewer Blackbirds migrated and though I watched especially for the cross-bill, the next and succeeding seasons, to my knowledge she never returned.—LILA M. LOFBERG, *Florence Lake, Big Creek, California, April 23, 1934.*

**The New Mexico Race of Plain Titmouse.**—Major Allan Brooks has placed at my disposal eight specimens of Plain Titmouse collected by himself in the vicinity of Silver City, New Mexico. These form the prime basis of the description now offered, of a new subspecies the existence of which has long been suspected by both Major Brooks and myself. The bird I select as type has been presented by him to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

*Baeolophus inornatus plumbescens*, new subspecies. Lead-colored Plain Titmouse.

*Type.*—Male, no. 65010, Mus. Vert. Zool.; Silver City, Grant County, New Mexico; March 29, 1933; collected by Allan Brooks, orig. no. 7373.

*Diagnosis.*—As compared with *Baeolophus inornatus griseus*, from the eastern part of the Great Basin region, north of the Colorado River: similar in general fea-