

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

A Note on the Color of the Eye of the Bush-tit.—During the past several years attention has been called to the two types of eye coloration in *Psaltriparus minimus*. It has been supposed by one writer that dark eyes and light eyes occur independently of age, sex, or season, by another that the eyes of adults are light and those of young dark. Still a third believes the opposite to be true, namely, that juveniles are light eyed and the adults dark. My own experience has been so uniformly different from all of these that the following note is submitted.

All male Bush-tits collected and prepared by myself since 1914 (I believe without exception) have had dark eyes regardless of age or season. Similarly, all females, regardless of age or season, have had light eyes. I do not for a moment contradict the direct statements of the very competent observers who have already published notes on this subject, but in the hundred-odd specimens which have been prepared since I first noticed the sex differences (in the subspecies *plumbeus*) in 1914, there have been no exceptions that I can recall. This experience includes the subspecies *californicus*, *plumbeus*, and *cecaumenorum*. Differing opinions are offered by Grinnell and Storer (Animal Life in the Yosemite, 1924, p. 580), the Micheners (Condor, 30, 1928, p. 133), and Swarth (Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., ser. 4, 18, 1929, p. 344).—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, June 25, 1935.*

Some Observations on the Feeding Habits and Eye-shine of the Poor-will.—If one climbs to the summit of Ben Lomond in the Santa Cruz Mountains, California, and looks off toward Monterey Bay he can trace the outlines of an ancient inlet by the line of sand dunes which lie between the mountain top and the bay. These dunes are partly clothed by oaks and knob-cone pines, yellow pines, manzanita, spiraea and bush-poppy. They form a marked contrast with the valleys filled with redwoods, Douglas fir and madrones and also with the mountains which rise above the dunes and are densely wooded with these same trees of the humid coast belt.

Through these sandy hills a road was cut a few winters ago to serve as a detour during the construction of a bridge over the San Lorenzo River on the line of the main highway which runs from Santa Cruz to the Big Basin. With the completion of the bridge, the sandhill road became a fairly unfrequented road of the kind so useful to the bird watcher.

On the evening of August 12, 1934, my husband and I were enjoying an evening drive over this pleasant by-road when a bird fluttered up just in front of the car. A few rods farther on a bird perched on the ground at the side of the road and remained there quietly while we passed. When we reached the bottom of the hill we turned back to try to get another look at what I thought must be a Poor-will (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii californicus*). Almost immediately our attention was attracted to a brilliant spot of light a hundred yards ahead. We stopped and I advanced with a flashlight to ascertain the source of the light which was the color of a red-hot coal. When I was about fifteen feet away a bird flew up from the spot, circled over the adjacent meadow and alighted on an electric pole just above my head. After a few seconds it flew again and disappeared in the distance.

Using this eye-shine as a clue and adjusting our lights for distance, we drove slowly up the hill and soon spotted the red-hot coal again. This time we proceeded slowly and stopped twenty feet from the bird. To our surprise the Poor-will began to catch moths in the area lighted by the car. Even after the bird became invisible as it left the roadway we could still see the eye-shine.

A quarter of a mile farther on, the telltale light appeared again, and when we stopped, the bird came so close that the hood of the car prevented us from seeing it. Once it remained at the side of the road while we passed and once it allowed me to approach on foot to within six feet.

The next evening we went out "poor-willing" again. No birds were seen during early twilight, but when it was almost dark the light appeared at the side of the road as before. If we turned out the headlights and I approached with a flashlight the Poor-will refused to allow me to come nearer than ten feet. But if we remained in the car with the headlights turned on, it continued to feed as long as we cared to remain. We could not determine whether it was always the same bird which re-