

The swallows are quite capable of retaining possession of a nesting box against the sparrows after they have seriously started nesting, but this does not take place until early June when the sparrows are well established. Though the swallows take up their territory soon after their arrival in March, and there is always a fight for it, for the next two months they visit the site irregularly and it seems then that the sparrows are able to get ahead and cannot be ejected.—THEED PEARSE, *Courtenay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, December 30, 1939.*

**Townsend Solitaire at Benicia, California.**—Townsend Solitaires (*Myadestes townsendi*) have not often been observed near Benicia, and therefore three observations of this species in the winter of 1938-1939 I deem of interest to record.

On December 26, 1938, five miles northeast of Benicia, I observed one feeding with Western Bluebirds (*Sialia mexicana*) on toyon berries on a brushy hillside.

On March 5, 1939, in my yard in Benicia a cat caused some commotion among the birds. A Hermit Thrush and a Robin scolded, attracting a Solitaire which came down from a large pepper tree to within ten feet of me, eyeing the cat but making no utterance of any kind.

On March 9, 1939, what was probably this same individual was in my yard. It was interesting to note the similarity in the wing pattern of this bird to a Mockingbird in rather poor plumage. This individual was probably attracted to my yard by the abundance of pepper berries.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, March 22, 1939.*

**An Early Record of the Dickcissel in Arizona.**—The Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) is a bird typical of the Mississippi Valley and the plains east of the Rocky Mountains. It is a straggler as far west as New Mexico (F. M. Bailey, *Birds of New Mexico*, 1928, p. 681). Arizona records are few, and apparently there has been none since 1884. Swarth (*Pac. Coast Avif. No. 10, 1914, p. 61*) summarizes the status of the species as follows: "Only known to occur in Arizona as observed by Henshaw . . . , who found it in small numbers and secured specimens [5] on the San Pedro River, at Fort Crittenden and at Fort Lowell, in August and September, 1873 and 1874; . . . specimen taken by Brown at Tucson, September 11, 1884 . . ."

Among some small bird bones from Indian dwellings that were sent to me for identification by Mr. J. C. McGregor of the Museum of Northern Arizona is a maxilla of *Spiza americana*. The bill of this fringillid is so well set off structurally from that of other North American types that no doubt arises concerning its identity. The maxilla of *Spiza* is distinguished from that of others of somewhat similar proportions particularly by the depth of the internarial bridge which bears a ventral keel. The maxilla from the Indian dwellings, no. A. O. 486, Mus. N. Ariz., was taken at Ridge Ruin, locality NA 1785, two and one-half miles east of Winona Village, Upper Sonoran Zone, Coconino County, Arizona. The room in which it was found was used during the twelfth century, A. D.

One does not expect to find the bones of distinctly rare species in Indian dwellings. The record here reported, the first for northern Arizona, and the nineteenth century records for southern Arizona lead one to suspect that the Dickcissel at least migrated through this part of the Southwest in moderate numbers in past times. In the Atlantic coast area the species has diminished in the last century. May not there have been a similar retreat on the western frontier of the bird's range?—ALDEN H. MILLER, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, January 21, 1940.*

**Mountain Plover at San Diego, California.**—An encouraging note in connection with a bird usually feared to be growing rarer, is the fair size of two flocks of the Mountain Plover (*Eupoda montana*) which have been observed in the vicinity of San Diego within the past couple of years. On November 18, 1939, L. W. Walker, of the San Diego Natural History Museum staff, found a flock of some 75 individuals on the U. S. Navy flying field, Kearny Mesa. They remained there for a number of days and he saw them more than once. Always, he said, there seemed to be two component parts to the group. Each part, about half of the whole, would usually keep to itself, but should all the birds happen to be together and there was any disturbance, the two halves would instantly separate and maneuver as units. He described the plovers as absurdly "dumb." Not only would they permit easy approach, but when two specimens were collected for the San Diego Society of Natural History, their companions, he said, would come running up to gaze at each dead bird. He considered the birds hardly smart enough to escape the airplanes and thought there might be some fatalities from this cause.

The other flock of Mountain Plover, which was also reported by Walker, was found on January 1, 1938, at Coronado Heights, near the south end of San Diego Bay. It contained about 35 individuals, of which a few were collected. Beside these two records, specimens in the collection of the San Diego Society of Natural History show the following localities and dates on their labels: San Jacinto Valley,