

with the various genera of American, eastern Asiatic and Polynesian thrushes. While I agree with Stejneger that the two groups are now sufficiently distinct to make it preferable to keep them in separate genera, there would seem to be little doubt that he also was correct in concluding that *Phaeornis* is a derivative of *Myadestes* stock. Neither genus is closely related to *Turdus*.—DEAN AMADON, *American Museum of Natural History, New York, September 7, 1942.*

Bathing of Young Wren-tit by Parent.—On the afternoon of August 31, 1942, three Wren-tits (*Chamaea fasciata*) came to a feeding tray situated at the edge of some chaparral near Cragmont Rock in Berkeley, California. One of the three appeared to be a young bird, the other two adults, probably parents. The former was indistinguishable from the latter, except for behavior, from the point of observation some twenty feet away. The young bird, begging for food by voice and fluttering wings, was fed bread crumbs from the tray by both parents.

After a few minutes one of the adults left the tray; the other hopped into the drinking dish. Following several quick dips under the water the parent returned to the side of the young. By shaking its plumage vigorously the parent splattered water on the young which responded by similarly shaking its feathers. Then by short anteroposterior stroking movements the parent worked its breast over the sides and then neck and dorsum of the young. During this act of grooming the young remained quiet and in a squatting position.

Although Erickson (Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., 42, 1938:308) states that "not infrequently members of a pair or family preen one another," apparently the behavior pattern described above has not been recorded heretofore.—RICHARD M. EAKIN, *Department of Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, September 15, 1942.*

The Summer Food of Burrowing Owls in Costilla County, Colorado.—Pellets of Burrowing Owls (*Speotyto cunicularia*) collected from July 20 to August 21, 1941, near Blanca in the San Luis Valley, Costilla County, Colorado, give a good indication of the birds' summer food habits. The pellets collected at this time represented the food eaten by young and adults for the last few days that the young remained at the nest burrow and for about a month after the young had dispersed to burrows of their own. Abandoned burrows of prairie dogs (*Cynomys g. gunnisoni*) were occupied in all instances.

At the time the collection was started some of the older pellets about the nest burrows had been somewhat disintegrated by the frequent summer rains so that the exact number of pellets involved in this study could not be absolutely determined. However, as nearly as could be estimated the material collected represented about 81 pellets.

In the following table the presence of food items in the pellets is indicated by per cent of frequency of their occurrence.

As has been noted by Neff (Condor, 43, 1941: 197-198) and Sperry (Wilson Bull., 53, 1941: 45), these pellets indicate that Burrowing Owls usually are opportunists, taking most frequently the kind of food most readily available. On the other hand, Hamilton (Condor, 43, 1941:74) observed them traveling over a mile to bring crayfish to their young when an abundance of other food was available much closer to their nest burrows.

It was of interest to note that those pellets collected about the nest holes where the parents had brought food to the young contained a greater variety of food items than those collected later in the season representing food captured by individuals. Only in three instances when the small pocket mice, *Perognathus flavus*, were taken were the complete remains of a single mammal found in one pellet. Animals the size of a deer mouse or larger appeared to be more than a stomach full for an owl. However, Dr. A. A. Allen of the Department of Ornithology of Cornell University has reported to me that a captive Florida Burrowing Owl which he kept frequently regurgitated more than one pellet from a single meal, depending upon the amount of undigestible material it contained.

Certain of the food items listed in the table were probably accidental. The ants possibly were eaten as they clung to some other bit of food that the owl was devouring. Likewise most of the pellets contained considerable foreign material such as seeds, burrs, and other fragments of plant matter, as well as pebbles and sand. These in all probability were taken in when they adhered to the carcasses the owls tore apart on the ground.

While this method of studying the food habits of burrowing owls gives an approximation of their food habits, it should be remembered that only those food items which contain hard parts resistant to digestion will appear in the pellets.

I wish to express appreciation to Dr. Woodrow Middlekauf, formerly of the Department of Entomology of Cornell University, for his aid in identifying a number of the insects.