

Grackle Kills Warbler.—Mr. E. A. McIlhenny (Auk, 54, 1937:186-187) has remarked on the bird-killing propensities of the Boat-tailed Grackle (*Cassidix mexicanus major*) in Louisiana. From the following incident it seems that the closely related Great-tailed Grackle (*Cassidix m. mexicanus*) in Mexico is equally guilty.

Just outside a wide upper window in my study a large avocado tree grows, some parts spreading over the roof. On the afternoon of May 9, I was looking out the window, attracted by the song of a Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva*). I saw the male and female, who presently voiced alarm. Trying to ascertain the reason for this I soon saw two male grackles concealed in the inner heavy foliage. On looking more closely among the upper branches I saw the nest of the warblers. At just about the same time a grackle spotted the nest, hopped over to it and looked in. At this instant the female warbler dashed into its face whereupon the grackle, by a quick thrust of its bill, seized the unfortunate bird. At this point I gave a shout, causing the grackle to release the bird, but I was too late to save its life. Its skull had been crushed. The grackles flew away.

The warbler's nest I later found to contain two eggs, and the female had a fully formed soft egg in the oviduct.—CHESTER C. LAMB, *Irapuato, Guanajuato, Mexico, May 9, 1944.*

The Santa Cruz Island Flicker.—The Red-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes cafer*) has long been known to be a resident, though in limited numbers, on Santa Cruz Island. Little effort has been made to collect specimens, on the general assumption, probably, that they were similar to the widely distributed race *collaris* of the mainland, although as early as 1887, E. W. Blake, Jr. (Auk, 4, 1887:329), reported one of the distinguishing characters. Up to the present time I have been able to locate only twelve specimens of the resident form, all, so far as I know, which exist in American collections, institutional or private. There are two in the United States National Museum, taken July 16, 1892, and June 8, 1895, by C. P. Streater and R. H. Beck, respectively; one (in post-juvinal molt) in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, taken September 2, 1903, by Joseph Grinnell; five in the Los Angeles Museum, four of which are full-plumaged winter birds taken by John Hornung in November and December, 1917, and one juvenile taken by J. C. von Bloeker on August 15, 1939; and four in the Dickey Collection taken by A. J. van Rossem in late March, 1920.

It had been my hope to revisit Santa Cruz Island and obtain more specimens but transportation difficulties make this out of the question for some time to come. On the basis of the material now available I propose recognition of the island flickers as a distinct race to be known as

***Colaptes cafer sedentarius*, new subspecies**

Santa Cruz Island Flicker

Type.—Male, presumably adult, number H-476, Dickey Collection; Prisoners' Harbor, Santa Cruz Island, California, March 23, 1920; collected by A. J. van Rossem, original number 5139.

Subspecific characters.—Wing and tail average distinctly shorter than in *Colaptes cafer collaris* (Vigors) of the Pacific slope of California. General coloration about intermediate between *C. c. collaris* and *C. c. cafer* of the Pacific Northwest, but with crown brighter and more rusty red and hind neck browner (less grayish) than either. Eight males measure: wing, 152-165 (159.1); tail, 102-115 (108.5) mm.

Range.—Santa Cruz Island, California.

Remarks.—Individual and seasonal variations common to all races of this species are apparent in the present case. Fall and winter specimens are of course the darkest and worn specimens the palest. Among flickers from other geographic areas, the closest approaches in general coloration are seen in a good series of *cafer* from western Oregon (Dickey Coll.), which average paler than *cafer* from the Puget Sound region and also tend to brownish, rather than vinaceous or pinkish tones on the lateral underparts, and in *Colaptes cafer rufipileus* Ridgway of Guadalupe Island. Individual variation in the crown of *sedentarius* ranges from slightly duller than the average for *collaris* and *cafer* to a redness fully equal to that of *rufipileus*. Indeed were it not for their larger size it would be rather difficult to distinguish five of the Santa Cruz birds from the last named.

Mainland flickers, both red- and yellow-shafted (specimens of the former in Los Angeles Museum), occur in winter and spring on Santa Cruz, sometimes in large numbers. During my own visits in 1910 and 1920, yellow birds were vastly in the majority on the first occasion and red birds on the second. All of these were extremely wild and no specimens were taken, although it must be admitted that no special effort was made in that direction. On the other hand the two (probably mated) pairs collected in 1920, were remarkably tame and stayed at all times in groves of trees near my camp. It may be recalled that I once (Condor, 25, 1923:127) stated that these individuals were typical of *collaris*. This comment referred specifically to the wing and tail coloring (as opposed to the yellow-colored birds of the 1910 visit) although such is not entirely clear in the preceding text.

A single winter male from Santa Catalina Island is small (wing, 157; tail, 107) and slightly darker dorsally than comparable *collaris* but does not differ otherwise. I do not attempt to place it definitely at this time.

In conclusion I wish to thank Dr. Alexander Wetmore for color notes and other data concerning the two specimens in the United States National Museum.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Dickey Collections, University of California, Los Angeles, July 12, 1944.*

Winter Record of Mourning Dove in South-central Oregon.—On January 6, 1944, a Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*) was recorded near Merrill, Oregon. It was approximately one-half mile north of town and was first noted when it flushed from a bare spot on an ice- and snow-covered pavement. It then alighted on a barbed wire fence at the edge of the road where it was observed further by the writer. The bird was apparently in good condition and flight was normal.

Mr. Robert Handley, of the Tule Lake Refuge, also observed a Mourning Dove the same day near the California border and approximately three miles southeast of Merrill.

These observations were deemed unusual in view of the snow and cold weather and the scarcity of records for this species from south-central Oregon at this season.—CLARENCE A. SOOTER, *Fort Wayne, Indiana, July 8, 1944.*

Bill Distortion in Mountain Chickadee Due to Bone Tumor.—In January, 1944, Mrs. Frederick A. Bushee of Boulder reported as a regular visitor at her bird-feeding station a Mountain Chickadee (*Penthestes gambeli*) with an abnormal bill. I saw the bird at her home and observed that the upper mandible was excessively long and decurved. During the second week in February the bird was missed for several days from the feeding station, and on February 14 was found dead on the ground not far from the porch on which food had been placed. Mrs. Bushee reported that for some time previous to its death it had had great difficulty in feeding. While feeding it had turned its head to one side—necessarily the right side, judging by subsequent examination of the dead bird. Other chickadees drove it away from the feeding station except when under Mrs. Bushee's supervision the others were kept at a distance while the handicapped bird fed.

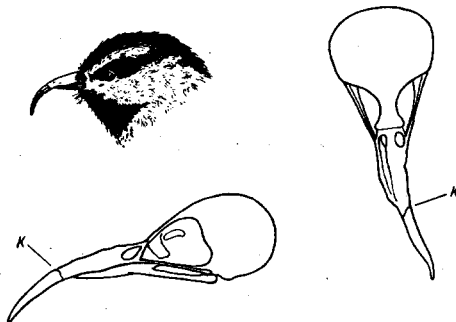


Fig. 41. Mountain Chickadee with bill distortion due to bone tumor. External view, $\times \frac{1}{2}$; skull outlines, $\times 1$.

When I first saw the dead bird I was struck by the fact that the bill was even longer and more decurved than when I had seen the live bird several weeks before. A sketch of the head of the dead bird was made the day after it was found (fig. 41). The distortion of the bill was evidently enough to account for death by starvation. Subsequently the skull was cleaned, but in the washing and drying process the upper mandible, presumably in losing moisture, became somewhat straightened.

Although I have on several occasions collected birds with distorted bills, this was such an extreme case that it seemed to merit careful examination. The increase in length proved to have been due to a tumorous growth of bone which seems to have been initiated at the front margin of the right nostril. Growth was more active on the right side near the culmen than elsewhere, carrying the bill forward with a downward curvature and a twist to the left. At the same time, growth of the tumor was not regular; hence its surface was not smoothly curved. The keratinized area of the normal upper mandible was carried forward by the tumorous growth as if it were pushed ahead of it, and the surface of the bill from the posterior margin of the nostrils forward to the line marked K (fig. 41) was uncovered bone. The bone of the tumorous area was hard on the surface, but in part spongy within. No other portion of the skull appeared to be abnormal.—GORDON ALEXANDER, *University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, June 3, 1944.*