

American Diving Birds, 1919:82), he reports eggs from arctic areas from May 10 to July 25. The nesting period at the much lower latitude of Vancouver Island would appear to be similar, as indicated by the extreme dates May 8–July 31 when loons were observed on nests.—THEED PEARSE, *Comox, British Columbia, February 2, 1954.*

**Multiple Use of Cliff Swallows' Nests by Bird Species.**—While studying the relationships of birds to equine encephalitis, the senior writer on a number of occasions has found English Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) making use of Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon albifrons*) nests, as recorded by Bent (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 179, 1942:478-479). Occasionally Cliff Swallows and English Sparrows have been noted nesting as close as in adjacent nests. On a few occasions Cliff Swallows, Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*), and English Sparrows have been found nesting fairly close together under the same bridge and with Barn Swallow nests at times attached to points where old Cliff Swallow nests had been in previous years. English Sparrows have been commonly found making use of Cliff Swallow nests in winter in Weld County, Colorado. When one considers the shelter that can be afforded to other small birds in winter by the Cliff Swallow nest structures, it is not surprising that the writers have found three other species using these for night roosting places in the northern part of Larimer County, Colorado. While collecting specimens from Cliff Swallow nests and birds inhabiting these nests, the writers recorded the Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis littoralis* and *L. t. tephrocotis*), the Black Rosy Finch (*L. atrata*), and the Canyon Wren (*Catherpes mexicanus conspersus*) using these nests located on cliffs in canyons about 25 miles north of Fort Collins. Daniels has noted finches on many occasions using Cliff Swallow nests in the mentioned areas over a period of 10 years during the winter months. This interesting use of swallow nests by several species is felt worthy of note also in considering the parasites infesting these structures. The writers have found Cliff Swallow bed bugs, ticks, blood-sucking diptera, and fleas to be very common in these nests. One wonders how much exchange of parasites among the different birds occurs under these conditions.

While this note was in press, an additional record of interest was obtained. On May 25, 1954, Bennington found a Say Phoebe nesting in an old Cliff Swallow nest at the same locality, where in the winter months, Canyon Wrens and Rosy Finches made use of them.—CLARENCE A. SOOTER, E. E. BENNINGTON, and LESLIE B. DANIELS, *Public Health Service, Greeley, Colorado, and Colorado A. and M. College, Fort Collins, Colorado, April 28, 1954.*

**Status of the Wood Ibis in San Diego County, California.**—During the summer months in 1948, and from 1950 to 1953 (no observations were made in 1949), the Wood Ibis (*Mycteria americana*) was noted in some coastal sloughs and estuaries of San Diego County. The number of individuals frequenting the area in 1953 showed a marked increase over those seen in the previous years listed or indicated by published records. In the San Dieguito River mouth eight were seen on several occasions in July, 1948; a few were present in 1950 and 1951; sixteen occupied the area during the summer of 1952; on July 24, 1953, in contrast, seventy-eight were observed at dusk in flight from San Elijo Lagoon, at Cardiff-by-the-Sea, to an area about two miles east of Del Mar, in the San Dieguito River drainage. What appeared to be the same birds were repeatedly observed during July, August and September feeding by day on the flats and in the shallow waters of San Elijo Lagoon and retiring at night to the San Dieguito River area. While feeding they frequently churned the mud by vigorous stomping. Flights of the Wood Ibis over Solano Beach were seen daily at sundown and were also heard during the early hours of darkness as the birds continued to move to the resting area. Communication between the birds during night flight was often maintained by a continued chorus of hoarse croaks each answered by a high-pitched peep. The progression of flight during darkness was accomplished by circular soaring with gradual movement in the desired direction. Daylight flights were ordinarily more direct, although the soaring was observed on one occasion. In the absence of moonlight, observations of night flights were often possible by city light reflected from low overcast.

A flock of approximately 300 Wood Ibises was noted during July and August, 1953, just south of Oceanside in the Buena Vista Lagoon, which is being vigorously supported as a bird sanctuary. Local observers stated that this was the first occurrence of Wood Ibis on this lagoon since 1948. A few stragglers were also noted in Sorrento Slough and in Mission Bay. Over the Sorrento Slough six birds were observed soaring to a height of approximately 2000 feet only to climax the affair by plummeting to about 200 feet from the ground. The birds did not repeat this but settled down in shallow water.

This large migratory influx of Wood Ibis in 1953, presumably from the west coast of Mexico, is heartening to ornithologists who have watched with much anxiety the encroachment of commercial, recreational and flood control development in the slough, lagoon and shallow bay areas of southern California during recent years. As the available feeding grounds face severe reduction due to such development, we may be on the eve of seeing fewer, instead of more, of these American storks.—ANDREAS B. RECHNITZER, *Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, La Jolla, California, March 17, 1954.*

**A Further Record of the Slaty Finch in México.**—The Slaty Finch (*Spodiornis rusticus*) is a distinctly rare bird in Central America and southern México. Until 1939 only the male type of the Mexican form (Veracruz), *Spodiornis rusticus uniformis*, was known. In 1943 Brodtkorb (Auk, 60, 1943:281) recorded a female *Spodiornis* taken on Volcán Tacaná in Chiapas and referred it to *uniformis*, treating the latter as a species. Some uncertainty about the identification was expressed since the adult female of the Central American and Mexican forms were unknown and comparison perforce was made with an Ecuadorian example of *S. rusticus*. Another specimen of *Spodiornis* from Chiapas is contained in the Moore Collection, where it was tentatively identified by Moore as to genus some years ago. It is a female taken on Volcán Tacaná on May 1, 1943, by M. del Toro Aviles. The elevation is recorded as 3000 meters, but this is probably only an approximation. Some of the same problems that confronted Brodtkorb still face us in identifying such a female, as no pair of *Spodiornis* has been taken in association north of South America. The specimen of 1943 has, however, been compared minutely with respect to bill structure, feet, wing, and tail with males and adult, laying females of *S. rusticus* from Colombia (Norte de Santander) and with the type of *S. r. barrilesensis* from Panamá. There seems to be no doubt that the Chiapas specimen belongs to this genus and we can see no structural or color characters of a magnitude to suggest that the three disjunct forms of México, Costa Rica-Panamá, and South America should be treated as anything but subspecies, as Hellmayr (Cat. Birds Amer., pt. 11, 1938:369-370) has already done. The real question seems to be whether all the forms are separable racially.

The type of *barrilesensis* was differentiated from *jardinii* (= *rusticus*) by Davidson (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., 45, 1932:167-168) only on the basis of form and size of the bill, which was said to be longer and basally broader and deeper, the mandible being quite tumid. Our recent examination of this type, a male, reveals that its bill is distinctly abnormal if we may judge from experience with bills of other finches. This possibility apparently was not appreciated by the describer. The tip of the bill is attenuated and overgrown and the lower mandible is checked and irregular as though it had once been broken or had had some sort of injury. Much of the claimed character of the bill must therefore be doubted. However, it apparently was a bill somewhat more massive at the base than that of *S. rusticus* and the Chiapas specimen now before us indicates the same type of difference. For example the width of the bill at the nostril, although difficult to measure, is 4.7 mm. whereas it is 4.2 in all four *S. rusticus* at hand. Hellmayr (*op. cit.*) in his apparent comparison of the type of *S. r. uniformis* with specimens of *barrilesensis* prior to 1938 reports that it is similar to *barrilesensis* except for size of wing and tail and Brodtkorb comments on the larger, stouter bill of his specimen from Chiapas. There seems to be little doubt, therefore, that the representatives of the species in the highlands north of the Isthmus of Panamá are less slender-billed than are those to the south; the difference is of an order commonly seen in subspecies, as for example among the northern races of *Passerculus sandwichensis*.

The problem still remaining is whether *barrilesensis* and *uniformis* are racially separable. The one character claimed to date is greater size of *uniformis*. The wing and tail of the type of the latter as measured by us are 74.5 and 50 mm., respectively. The males of four *rusticus* before us from the United States National Museum are as follows: ♂♂ 71.4, 47.0, and (younger ♂) 68.2 and 43.0; ♀♀ 67.0, 45.3, and 64.0, 44.0. The type of *barrilesensis*, a male, is 72.1, 47.8; wings of two males in the American Museum from Costa Rica are 72.2 and 73.8 mm. The Chiapas female was reported by Brodtkorb to have a wing of 69 mm. and a tail of 46.5 mm. The later Chiapas female measures 64.7 and 44.2. Thus the size of one Chiapas female suggests a somewhat larger form but the second specimen does not. It is quite likely that no statistically significant differences exist in wing and tail length and that the small samples of this rare type of finch have been misleading with respect to these size characters.