

workings were also found on other *Bourrerias* that were not made while Powell was there, so the bird had been present more than once.—R. M. BOND, *Kingshill, St. Croix, U. S. Virgin Islands, December 3, 1956.*

A Further Observation on Torpidity in the Poor-will.—Few instances of torpidity in wild Poor-wills (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) have been reported (see Marshall, Condor, 57, 1955:134). Thus it seems desirable to set forth information on a torpid individual found in the Berkeley Hills in Tilden Regional Park, Contra Costa County, California.

On March 11, 1956, at 4:00 p.m. I flushed a Poor-will from a hillside in Big Springs Canyon. On the 14th, at 10:50 a.m., what may have been the same individual was found at the same place basking in full sunlight on a small platform of earth at the entrance to a gopher burrow. I had excavated the burrow on March 9 in an attempt to capture a lizard that had taken refuge there. The enlarged opening was of adequate size to accommodate the bird and was probably the place from which the Poor-will had been flushed three days before. The bird had its back to the sun, the long axis of its body in line with the sun's rays. Its eyes were closed and its wings slightly extended. At 11:45 a.m., nearly an hour later, I returned in expectation of obtaining a motion picture of the bird in the act of leaving the burrow and found it had moved some eight inches forward into the hole. Only its tail and a portion of one wing were still in the sun. As I photographed the Poor-will, my wife probed it several times with her finger, attempting to cause it to take flight. Failing in this, she took it in hand and discovered that it was inert, although it hissed briefly when first seized. She placed it on the ground but it did not fly.

After a few minutes the bird was returned to the hole. Once again it hissed, this time more strongly than before. In a few minutes it was removed again and placed on a rock in the sun where it rested quietly, showing no sign of life. As my wife attempted to pick it up again, it opened its mouth. In order to get additional pictures of the mouth movements, the bird's throat was tapped repeatedly. This stimulated it to open its eyes and mouth several times. The bird was then returned to the hole while I changed the position of the camera. When placed on the ground again, it fluffed out its feathers, extended its wings slightly, and once more opened its eyes briefly. It was picked up and placed on the rock in the sun and its throat probed to elicit the mouth movements. It responded by opening its mouth once, but it would not do so again. It then took flight, over 15 minutes having elapsed since it was first touched.

The burrow was checked on subsequent days but the bird was not found. However, on October 16, 1956, at 9:15 a.m., a Poor-will was flushed within 30 feet of the same burrow. This individual (possibly the same bird) was fully alert, taking flight when I was at a distance of 15 feet. It made a single cat-like meowing note as it left the ground. It had been sitting in a small depression among rocks at the base of a clump of California sagebrush in mixed light and shade.

The site of these observations was on the crest of a gentle knoll on the south-facing slope of Big Springs Canyon, about 50 yards up slope from the canyon bottom. The angle of the slope is about 30°. The substratum consists of mixed soil and small rocks, with patches of open bare soil interspersed with grass. There are scattered clumps of California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), coyote bush (*Baccharis pilularis*), and sticky monkey flower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*). A group of conifers borders a fire road some 30 feet up slope. The area is fully illuminated all day and is somewhat sheltered from wind by the conifers and a willow thicket. It is one of the warmest slopes in the area.

The alertness of the bird when it was flushed in the late afternoon on March 11 and the torpidity of presumably the same individual in the morning on March 14 suggest the possibility that it was foraging in the evening and returning to the hole with falling temperatures in the course of the night; torpor then followed and persisted into the next day until eliminated by rising temperatures. It is of interest that in the period of basking the bird had moved into the hole and yet seemed incapable of activity when first handled.—ROBERT C. STEBBINS, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, November 8, 1956.*

Rough-winged Swallows of the race stuarti in Chiapas and British Honduras.—On September 13 and 15, 1952, a short distance from Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, México, and on September 20 at Ocozacoautla, about 30 kilometers west of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, single specimens of Rough-winged

Swallows (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) were collected from flocks feeding over fields. The three birds are of the race *stuarti*, which is similar to, but considerably darker than, *S. r. ridgwayi* of the Yucatán Peninsula. *S. r. stuarti* does not seem to have been recorded heretofore from Chiapas. However, it was to be expected there since it breeds in Alta Vera Paz, Guatemala, the type area, and has been found wintering in Veracruz (Motzorongo, February 11 and 15; M.C.Z. nos. 233622-3), in Tabasco (Brodkorb, Misc. Publ. Univ. Mich. Mus. Zool. No. 55, 1943:70) and on the Yucatán Peninsula (Paynter, Peabody Mus. Bull., 9, 1955:210). The specimens displayed no signs of breeding. All were molting.

In the summer of 1954, at El Real, a ranch 40 kilometers east of Ocosingo, Chiapas, several samples of Rough-winged Swallows were taken from the large flocks which appeared over the pastures each evening. On July 12 seven specimens were obtained, six of which were adults in early stages of molt and which exhibited no indications of breeding; the seventh was a juvenile. The birds are referable to *S. r. fulvipennis*, the resident race of Chiapas (Brodkorb, Condor, 44, 1942:216). Previously I believed *S. r. fulvipennis* to be doubtfully distinct from *S. r. serripennis* (Paynter, *op. cit.*: 209), but since that time I have examined larger series of the species and find that the rufous chin (an approach toward the rufous-throated races farther south), the dark shafts of the under tail coverts, and the darker spotting of the crissum are good characters distinguishing *S. r. fulvipennis* from *S. r. serripennis*, as noted by Brodkorb (*loc. cit.*).

Between August 22 and 25, again at El Real, 25 additional swallows were collected at random from the flocks about the fields. Thirteen proved to be *S. r. fulvipennis* and twelve were *S. r. stuarti*. Both subspecies were in well-advanced molt.

From these data it appears that *S. r. stuarti* occurs in Chiapas as a migrant, or visitant, arriving sometime between mid-July and the third week in August. Molt appears to take place either after the birds have reached their winter quarters or while they are en route, which agrees with Dwight's observations on *S. r. serripennis* (Annals N. Y. Acad. Sci., 13, 1900:230).

In the Museum of Comparative Zoology there are two specimens of Rough-winged Swallows which were collected at Augustine, Cayo District, British Honduras, on April 23 and 25, 1928. These were identified by Austin (Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., 69, 1929:384) as *S. r. ridgwayi*, although he mentioned that one bird was atypical, in that it had an unmarked crissum. The birds were said to be taken from a small colony which was thought to be nesting in a cavern. Examination of these birds indicates that one, a female, collected on April 23, is typical of *S. r. stuarti*, a subspecies not previously known from British Honduras, while the other, a male taken on April 25, is a good example of *S. r. serripennis*. Unfortunately, the labels bear no notations relative to the condition of the gonads of the specimens, but it would seem that the female was one of the flock thought to be breeding and that the male was a visitant or migrant. April 25 is rather late for *S. r. serripennis* to be so far south, but there are records from Chiapas even as late as May 3 (Brodkorb, *op. cit.*:215).—RAYMOND A. PAYNTER, JR., *Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, November 9, 1956.*

Birds Mobbing a Snake Skin.—Mobbing behavior of birds, especially that directed toward avian predators, has frequently been reported. Less common are reports of birds mobbing non-avian predators or remains of them.

On July 14, 1956, two and one-half miles north of Orinda, Contra Costa County, California, I observed a group of about 20 birds which were obviously excited about something on or near the ground. Four species were present: Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*), both adults and young, Wren-tit (*Chamaea fasciata*), Bewick Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), and Plain Titmouse (*Parus inornatus*). All were scolding, but the wrens and titmice were by far the loudest. The birds moved rapidly about in a small patch of brush, approximately four feet from the ground, occasionally diving at an object below them. On my approach most of them flew, but two Bewick Wrens remained active until I was within a few feet. From this new position I could see that they were diving at something on the ground. They were directing their attention to a shed skin of a large snake, partly exposed and partly extending into a hole beneath a stump. The skin was later identified by James D. Anderson as that of a rattlesnake, *Crotalus viridis*.—RICHARD C. BANKS, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, February 2, 1957.*