

ments, based on 35 specimens of *brunnei-nucha* and 132 of *frontalis*, clearly shows that the bill of the latter race averages longer.

Traylor reported that he could see no correlation between geography and the variation in relative amount of white on the underparts. I found this surprising, since this had seemed to me to be the most striking difference between *brunnei-nucha* and *frontalis*. Recalling that I had noted that the Peruvian examples of *frontalis* that I had seen averaged grayer below than those from elsewhere in South America, the possibility occurred to me that study of additional Peruvian specimens might indicate that the name *frontalis* would have to be restricted to the Peruvian population and *xanthogenys* Cabanis (type locality Caracas, Venezuela) revived for the birds of Venezuela, Colombia, eastern Panamá, and Ecuador. Mr. Traylor was good enough to send for my examination the Chicago Natural History Museum's entire South American series (18 specimens) of this species.

Examination of the Peruvian series described by Traylor showed that in evaluating the individual variation in amount of white on the underparts he was misled by the fact that no less than 5 of his 10 Peruvian specimens are young birds which still bear on the underparts many of the grayish-olive feathers of the juvenal plumage. Adults from Perú bear out my original statement (Parkes, *op. cit.*: 136): "Even the grayest of the Peruvian specimens has a greater extent of white ventrally than any Mexican specimen of *A. b. brunnei-nucha*." Extreme examples of the latter race (such as Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. no. 41042, Jalapa, Veracruz) may have the ventral white restricted to a small, poorly-defined dirty white spot on the lower abdomen.

If the only South American populations of *Atlapetes brunnei-nucha* were those of coastal Venezuela and Perú, there would be no hesitation in recognizing the former as a separate subspecies under the name *xanthogenys* Cabanis. Venezuelan examples are whiter below than Peruvian and have bills which are longer and more slender. The Peruvian specimens are dorsally of a deeper, more golden green, and tend to have a slight brownish wash on the outer margins of the remiges. In the large series examined from Colombia and Ecuador, however, are examples which completely bridge all of these differences, and no plausible geographic separation can be defined. Examination of the new material from the Chicago Natural History Museum supports my original conclusion that all of the South American populations of *Atlapetes brunnei-nucha* (except *inornatus* and *allinornatus*, isolated races which lack the pectoral band) are best considered as belonging to a single somewhat variable subspecies to which the name *frontalis* Tschudi may be applied.—KENNETH C. PARKES, *Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, August 11, 1958.*

**Starlings Nesting in Central California.**—On May 13, 1958, adult European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) were observed feeding young at an abandoned woodpecker hole in a blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) in the Palo Prieta Canyon, seven miles east of Shandon, San Luis Obispo County, California. On May 26 this nest site was revisited at which time six young starlings were collected from the nest; two of these were prepared as scientific study skins.

The lower five inches of the nest cavity was filled with oak bark fibers. This nesting material was moist, warm, and contained many maggots of a species of fly. The young when taken were well developed, being able to hop about but not to fly. Grasshoppers were fed to the young exclusively while they were under observation.—EBEN McMILLAN, *Cholame, California, July 21, 1958.*

**Red-tailed Hawk Killing a Lamb.**—Observations of hawks killing domestic lambs are so unusual it seems worthwhile to report a recent case involving a Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). The incident occurred in Humboldt County, California, on the Joseph Russ sheep ranch, located about five miles south of Capetown and approximately three miles from the coast.

On January 30, 1958, Predatory Animal Hunter, Darrel Cussins, left the Russ Ranch at 7:00 a.m. with two hounds to hunt bobcats. About three miles southeast of the ranch house in the high country on open grassland, he saw a Red-tailed Hawk eating on a dead lamb. As Darrel approached, the hawk picked up the remains of the small lamb and flew off down the hill with it. Darrel proceeded on up the mountain with his dogs. On his return approximately one hour later, he stopped to look over the sheep to see if there were any more dead lambs. About 200 yards below him he saw a Red-tailed Hawk dive several times at a newborn lamb. The ewe would butt at the hawk as the hawk would try to hit the lamb. He then saw the hawk hit the lamb knocking it to the ground. It did not get up. While all of this was taking place Darrel was trying to get a shot at the hawk with his 25-20 rifle, but he was