

THE NEST AND EGGS OF THE SLATY VIREO

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What is presently known as the Slaty Vireo (*Neochloe brevipennis*) was described by Sclater in 1857 from a specimen collected at Orizaba in Veracruz, México. In the next 87 years a total of six specimens, all from that state, were recorded. In 1944, Miller and Ray (Condor, 46:41-45) described *Neochloe brevipennis browni* on the basis of a single specimen taken near Chilpancingo, Guerrero. Since that time 23 more specimens, all belonging to the nominate race, have been recorded and the range of the species has been extended from Veracruz and Guerrero to Oaxaca. The published records are summarized by Moore and Medina (Condor, 58, 1956:442-444). It is interesting to note that only one of the thirty specimens recorded is known to have been a female. This specimen, secured at Amatepec, Oaxaca, is considered by Briggs (Condor, 55, 1953:157) to be of the race *brevipennis* and is indistinguishable, as far as plumage and measurements are concerned, from males taken at the same locality.

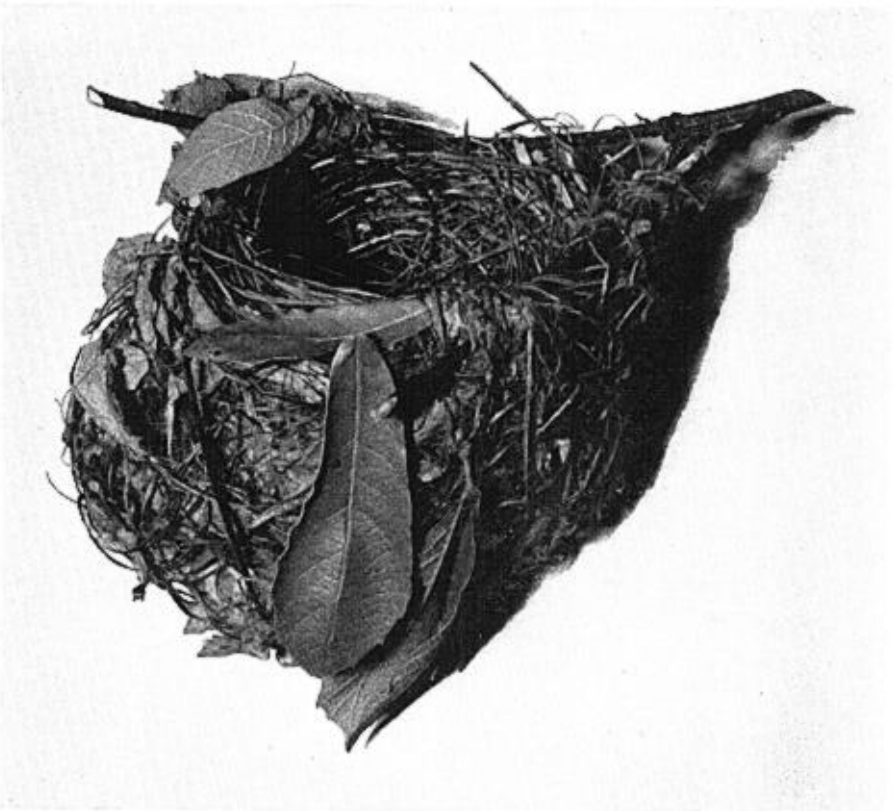


Fig. 1. Nest of the Slaty Vireo (*Neochloe brevipennis*).

On June 13, 1958, one of us (Rowley) had the good fortune to obtain a second female as well as what is believed to be the first nest and set of eggs of this species, in

the state of Morelos. The exact locality was in a pine-oak association three miles east of Cuernavaca, at an elevation of approximately 6000 feet, on the western slope of the Sierra Madre Occidental.

The nest, which was situated at about eye level on an oak limb, was discovered accidentally. During an intense storm a Slaty Vireo was seen moving nervously from branch to branch in an oak. On attempting to approach this bird another individual of this species flushed from a nest several feet from the observer. The second bird, a female, was secured as were the nest and eggs. The first vireo that was seen was presumed to be the mate of this female, but because of the heavy rain and strong wind prevailing at the time, it was not taken.

The nest is made entirely of plant material. The outside is covered with dried leaves and plant down, and the cup is lined with fine fibers. The external diameter is 75 mm. and the depth 65 mm. The cup measures 45 mm. in diameter and 45 mm. in depth.

The nest contained one egg of a Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) in addition to three fresh vireo eggs. The latter, as is evident from the accompanying illustra-

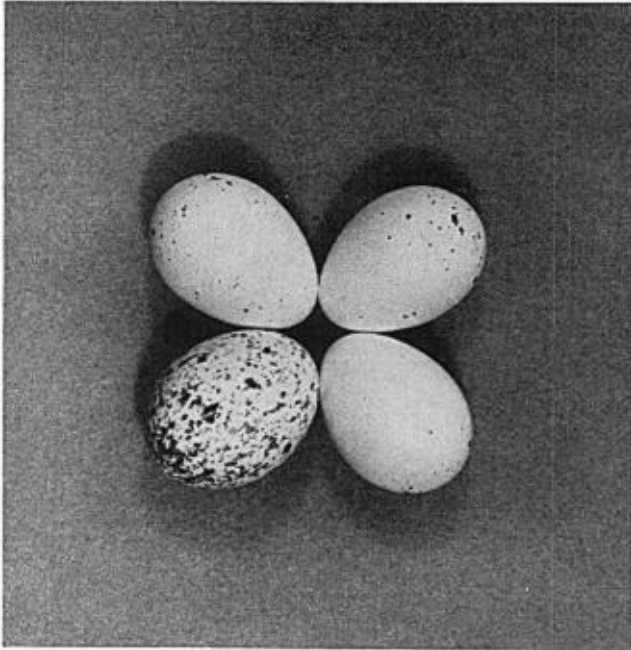


Fig. 2. Eggs of the Slaty Vireo (*Neochloe brevipennis*) and an egg (lower left) of the Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) which was also present in the nest.

tion, resemble those of most North American vireos in appearance. Their ground color is white and they are sparingly spotted, principally near the large end, with light and dark brown. They measure, in millimeters, as follows: 19.6×14.3 , 18.8×14.1 and 18.8×14.0 .

Although Cuernavaca is considerably north of Chilpancingo, the type locality of *Neochloe brevipennis browni*, it is west of the heretofore known range of *N. b. brevipennis*. In all respects, however, the female here recorded agrees with descriptions of the latter race, and it affords no evidence of sexual dimorphism in size or color of plumage. The back is gray and there is only the slightest tinge of green evident on the lower rump. The wing measures 56 mm.; the bill measures 6.6 mm. from the nostril to the tip and 3.4 in width at the anterior edge of the nostrils.

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