

not hesitate to verify his identification of the bird as a Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*). Unfortunately, Mrs. Lewis did not wish the bird collected, so it can be reported only as a sight record. I was later advised that the bird remained around the feeding station two or three days longer and then disappeared. I know of no other record of the occurrence of this species in Oregon.—ALEX. WALKER, *Tillamook County Pioneer Museum, Tillamook, Oregon, October 20, 1959.*

Wilson Petrel off the California Coast.—On August 29, 1959, we identified a Wilson Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*) about two miles south of the Farallon Islands, California. There are few records of the species in California and for the west coast of North America. The first specimen was taken by R. H. Beck on Monterey Bay, August 24, 1910 (Grinnell, *Pac. Coast Avif.* No. 11, 1915:29) and the second by Loye Miller 25 miles west-northwest of Point Loma, San Diego County, August 31, 1935 (Miller, *Condor*, 38, 1936:13).

The bird remained around our boat for seven or eight minutes, and at times it approached within about 30 feet, when we had clear views of the characteristic yellow webs of the feet, which extended well beyond the end of the tail. The tail was square-ended, slightly rounded at the corners; the upper tail-coverts were pure white, without a dark center line; the remainder of the plumage was sooty-black, with the upper wing-coverts slightly grayer. The bird appeared about the size of a Fork-tailed Petrel (*Oceanodroma furcata*), which was in view at one time for comparison, but its wings were shorter and broader, and its flight was direct and deliberate, with slow, even wing-beats; it often settled on the water. On one occasion it dangled its legs and "walked" on the water in characteristic fashion.—I. C. T. NISBET, *Cambridge, England*, and R. G. McCASKIE, *Tahoe City, California, October 21, 1959.*

Nesting Attempt by a Pair of Barn Swallows in Northern Alaska.—No species of bird wholly or even primarily dependent on flying insects for food has become established in the high arctic. This is not due to lack of opportunity to do so; for example, six of the eight species of swallows which occur on the North American mainland north of México have been recorded at Barrow, Alaska (Bailey, *Colorado Mus. Nat. Hist. Popular Series*, No. 8, 1948). The factors limiting the northward spread of these species are presumably connected with the scarcity of flying insect species in the arctic, their short season of activity, and the fact that periods of cold weather, even in the arctic summer, will keep insects inactive for days at a time. However, lack of proper nesting sites may also be limiting. In this light it is of interest to report an attempt by Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) to utilize an artificial site for nesting in an area north of the normal range of this species.

On June 17, 1959, two Barn Swallows were seen foraging over the tundra near the mouth of the Pitmegea River, Cape Sabine, Alaska. This species has not been recorded in two previous years of field work in this area (H. E. Childs, Jr., MS). On the following day one was seen near our tent, situated next to the river one mile from the coast. On the evening of June 19 two were seen there. From then until early July the pair was seen frequently. On June 22, courtship activity and attempted copulation were observed at our tent. On June 25 we found one member of the pair roosting in a deserted cabin at the mouth of the river. On July 1 a partly constructed nest, measuring $4\frac{1}{2}$ by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, was found built on the side of a beam in the cabin. No additional construction was done, and by the middle of July only one bird still remained in the area.

Barn Swallows were observed at two other localities in this general area in 1959. Maher recorded two at Cape Beaufort, 20 miles east of Cape Sabine, on June 27. On July 15, a male was collected by Childs at a locality seven miles inland along the Pitmegea River.

Bailey (*op. cit.*) indicates that nesting by Barn Swallows may occur, though rarely, in the Alaskan arctic. He cites a report by Charles Brower of a possible nesting at Barrow. Brower collected a female with three flying young of the year and suggested an abandoned sod igloo near the village as the probable nest site. The specimens have unfortunately been lost.

There are now two instances of Barn Swallows nesting or attempting to nest in the Alaskan arctic. Both times the birds sought a site which met their nesting requirements in an environment where these requirements were not found naturally. Such nesting attempts by vagrants lead to the colonization of new areas, an important event in the adaptation to climatic changes through geologic time.

These observations were made during field work on projects supported by the Arctic Institute of

North America and the Office of Naval Research.—HENRY E. CHILDS, JR., *School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, California*, and WILLIAM J. MAHER, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, October 1, 1959.*

Rocky Mountain Race of the Williamson Sapsucker Wintering in California.—The winter occurrence in California of Williamson Sapsuckers of the Rocky Mountain race, *Sphyrapicus thyroideus nataliae*, was first reported in 1944 by Grinnell and Miller (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 27:236–237). At that time four specimens from the Providence Mountains, San Bernardino County, collected in January, one from near Susanville, Lassen County, also collected in January, and a September-taken specimen from 8 miles northeast of Hyampom, Trinity County, comprised the known records of *nataliae* in that state.

Comparison of a small-billed Williamson Sapsucker collected by the author in 1957 with other specimens in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology revealed the existence in the collection of the museum of several further examples of *nataliae* from California. The following are the additional records: 3½ mi. E Weed, 5000 feet, Siskiyou County, male, December 21, 1934; Warner Creek, 6600 feet, Shasta County, male, September 24, 1923; Eagle Lake, Lassen County, female, October 14, 1923; Santa Cruz County, male, November 29, 1896; Sage Hen Creek, 6500 feet, Nevada County, female, November 12, 1950; and 2 mi. W Reyes Peak, 7000 feet, Pine Mountain, Ventura County, male, December 29, 1957.

These specimens all possess small bills. The two races overlap in bill length and width (Cowan, Condor, 40, 1938:128–129), but measurements do not adequately reveal the full extent of the difference in the bulk of the bills of the two forms. The bills of the specimens here listed are all well within the range of measurements of *nataliae* and are below the means for *S. t. thyroideus*. Careful visual comparison of overall bill sizes removes doubt as to their affinity to *nataliae*.

Thus, there are presently twelve records of the Rocky Mountain race wintering in California. The localities from which the various specimens have been taken are spread throughout the various mountain regions of the state, and the dates fall in the months from September through January. Nearly half of the twenty-five winter-taken specimens of Williamson Sapsuckers from California in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology belong to *nataliae*, and at least two others should perhaps be assigned to that subspecies. These facts concerning numbers and distribution indicate a probable widespread migration of *nataliae* to the coniferous forests to the west of its breeding range.

The author wishes to express appreciation to Ned K. Johnson for aid and to Dr. Alden H. Miller for advice and loan of specimens.—RALPH J. RAITT, JR., *Department of Biology, New Mexico State University, University Park, New Mexico, December 28, 1959.*