

Spizella passerina. Chipping Sparrow. There are only a few published records of Chipping Sparrows in Alaska: Brower collected one at Point Barrow on September 18, 1929 (Bailey, *Birds of Arctic Alaska*, 1948), and Francis H. Fay observed one at Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, on May 23, 1956 (Fay and Cade, *Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool.*, 63, 1959:73-150). There apparently has been, however, a range extension along the Tanana River Valley into interior Alaska by birds from Yukon Territory. On the morning of May 27, 1958, I watched a male Chipping Sparrow as it sang almost continuously from a stand of tall willows at College. The specimen (UA 1068) weighed 11.5 grams, and the testes measured 8×5 and 6×5 mm. In 1959 four nesting records were obtained along the Tanana Valley. At Tetlin Lake Donald E. McKnight found a nest with 4 eggs on July 3, 10 inches up in a rose bush (*Rosa acicularis*); and in the same area James King found one with 3 eggs on July 6 in a 3-foot spruce. Svein Haftorn found two nests containing young in white spruce at Big Delta on July 10, 1959 (Haftorn, *Det. Kgl. Norske Vidensk. Selsk. Forh.*, 32, 1959:107-111).—BRINA KESSEL, *University of Alaska, College, Alaska, April 18, 1960.*

Notes on Vaux and Chimney Swifts.—There have recently been two instances of Vaux Swifts (*Chaetura vauxi*) seeking night roosting shelter in chimneys near San Diego, California. On May 4, 1960, Mrs. Edith Heller brought to the Natural History Museum in San Diego a specimen of a Vaux Swift for verification of identity. She reported that shortly after sundown, on the evening of May 3, a flock of about 25 of these swifts came down the fireplace chimney into the living room of a residence in the Point Loma district of San Diego. The day had been misty with intermittent showers, and there was a prediction of sharper showers during the night so that conditions were such that the birds were seeking shelter for the night. After some commotion one bird was captured; this is the swift she brought in and it is now a specimen in the collection of the museum. Mrs. Heller also stated that a like occurrence had taken place in May five years ago at the same residence when a much larger flock had descended the chimney for a night's shelter.

On preparing the specimen I found a small amount of material in the stomach. As little seems to be recorded of the food of this species, it was saved for study by Dr. F. X. Williams and Mr. C. F. Harbison, entomologists on the museum staff. The contents had been heavily digested and appeared to be a black pasty mass, highly mutilated, with no pieces large enough to see with the naked eye. However, with the aid of a microscope, they were able to find insect fragments representing three orders: Lepidoptera, Diptera and Hymenoptera. These flying insects had apparently been caught by the bird before it sought shelter for the night.

Mrs. Heller subsequently returned with a further report. On the evening of April 23, 1960, a flock of swifts estimated to have been 500 birds flew down the fireplace chimney at the residence of Mrs. Robert Mosher in La Jolla. They descended the chimney in such numbers that most of the soot that had accumulated on the chimney walls was brought with them into the room. The police were called to help remove the birds and next day the interior decorators were called to repaint the walls and revamp the furniture! The writer found that April 23 had been overcast and showery as was the 24th, so without question the migrating swifts were seeking shelter from inclement conditions.

A further record of importance is the capture of a Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*) within the boundary of California. The bird was a male and is now in the collection of the San Diego Society of Natural History (no. 13055); it was collected in the willow-cottonwood association, 1 mile north of Potholes, Imperial County, California, on the Colorado River, May 6, 1930, by Samuel G. Harter. This record adds another species to the list of California birds.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *San Diego Society of Natural History, San Diego, California, May 20, 1960.*

Notes on the Nesting of the Roadrunner.—In Bent's Life Histories (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 176, 1940) the account of the nesting of the Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*) states (p. 41) that "it is supposed that only the female incubates"; it is also suggested that it had not been proved that second sets of eggs are laid by females that had already succeeded in bringing out one brood.

Perhaps more definite data have since been published, but it may be of interest in any event to record the following observations made this year at the writer's home in Covina Highlands, about 25 miles east of Los Angeles, California.

During the first half of March a pair of Roadrunners was noticed carrying small sticks and stems into the middle of a large, compact clump of cactus of the subgenus *Platyopuntia*. On March 19 the female was seen sitting on the nest and presumably incubating, although a clear view of the bottom of the nest could not be obtained because of its depth and inaccessibility. Most of the incubation seemed to be done by the female, but the birds were observed to relieve each other on the nest, and the eggs were seldom left uncovered. Occasionally, when the male was not near, the female would leave the eggs briefly in order to forage in the immediate vicinity of the nest.

On April 5, 16 days from the apparent beginning of incubation, an egg and a newly hatched young bird could be seen, and on April 7 three young were visible. While the young birds were small, the parents would brood them for a while after bringing food. In reaching the nest they always climbed over the cactus, but they flew down when leaving. As the nestlings became well grown, the male parent was perhaps the more active in bringing provisions, which consisted mainly of fence lizards (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) and alligator lizards (*Gerrhonotus*). Large grasshoppers were also brought, as well as unidentified smaller invertebrates. No other vertebrate prey was noted. During the nesting activities the male often flew to the top of the house roof to coo, sometimes while holding a lizard in his bill.

The Roadrunners made no attempt to avoid betraying the location of their nest and showed surprisingly little concern over the presence of an observer. The female, in particular, would approach within seven or eight feet while foraging, and she was not alarmed by movements.

On April 25 it was found that two of the young had left the nest, the third remaining about two days longer. On April 29 the Roadrunners were again adding material to the nest, which had been kept in a perfectly clean condition, and on May 2 an egg appeared. The additional material had raised the bottom of the nest so that its contents were more clearly visible. A second egg was laid on May 4, incubation beginning on May 6, although it was somewhat intermittent for the first day or two. A third egg which may have been previously concealed from view was discovered later.

On May 9 and 10 the three young of the first brood, now hardly distinguishable from the adults, were seen following the male parent and begging for food, with undetermined success. Through most of the incubation period, both birds continued to bring small bunches of soft, dry grass when taking their turns on the nest. As the hatching time approached, the female seemed to be occupying the nest continuously during the day, except for a respite in late afternoon, when she would run up the driveway to meet her mate, who had cooed from a distance and was approaching with a lizard in his bill. After transferring the lizard, the male would proceed to the nest while the female went farther afield. The rooftop cooing was not resumed during the second nesting.

Two young were hatched on May 24, or possibly the preceding evening, the third within two or three days. The feeding of this brood was much the same as in the first case, except that fewer large alligator lizards were noted. The number of these lizards previously brought was entirely unexpected, as they are seen only occasionally. For this reason it is impossible to estimate to what extent their numbers may have been depleted. As for the fence lizards, they did not become noticeably scarce at any time, even immediately around the clump of cactus which contained the nest. Intervals between visits to the young varied greatly, sometimes lengthening to an hour or more in the late afternoon. Prey was captured by cat-like stalking, climaxed by a swift lunge, after which the victim was pounded vigorously against the ground.

The first young bird left the nest on June 13, and on the following morning the other two were found outside but near the nest. After the next visit of one of the parents, the second bird had disappeared, whereas the third and presumably youngest returned to the nest to remain another day. Thus the records of the two broods indicate that Roadrunners remain in the nest for about 20 days after hatching. The female parent began molting her tail feathers just before the second brood left.

Despite the more or less juicy nature of their food, Roadrunners often drink copiously. Smaller birds, except when engaged in raising young, paid little attention to them, but when the Roadrunners were harried by nesting jays, they reacted belligerently.—ROBERT S. WOODS, *Covina, California, June 17, 1960.*