

A nest of the Sun-bittern in Costa Rica.—On March 26, 1945, an old man who lives near me showed me a nest of the Sun-bittern (*Eurypyga helias major*) in the Terraba Valley, Costa Rica. Between a 30-foot cliff and the boulder-strewn channel of the clear impetuous Río San Pedro, lay a narrow belt of rocky land wooded with trees of small and medium size. One of these trees, a *Gilbertia arborea*, held the nest about 20 feet above the ground and about 10 yards back from the margin of the torrent. The dark, roughly globular structure, some 12 inches in diameter, was saddled over an obliquely ascending branch about 2 inches in diameter. The great bulky nest seemed to be most precariously balanced on the slender branch at a point where there was no visible lateral twig to prevent its turning sideways. It was composed of decaying leaves, stems, and other vegetation, a small amount of green moss, and apparently also some mud. In the top was a shallow depression lined with green leaves. The altitude at this point was about 3,000 feet above sea-level.

From the top of the cliff we looked down upon the Sun-bittern, half sitting, half standing on the nest. Facing the cliff-top, the bird gazed intently on its visitors with its big red eyes. It was raised high enough on its yellow legs to reveal portions of the two big, buffy eggs on their bed of green leaves. I examined it through a binocular from several positions, one at the very edge of the precipice, but at length it jumped from the nest, spread its wings, glided down toward the river, and disappeared amid the foliage. The glorious bright chestnut shields on the spread wings left no doubt that the bird was indeed a Sun-bittern. Because of the thinness of the trunk and the weakness of the wood, the nest tree could not be climbed. I sat on a log in a neighboring clearing and waited half an hour for the bird's return to the nest, but in vain.

In the basin of El General, from 2,000 to 3,000 feet above sea level, the Sun-bittern is a very rare bird, and aside from the owner of the nest described above, I have seen only a single individual. Carriker (1910. *Ann. Carnegie Mus.*, 6:425) says that the Sun-bittern in Costa Rica is "distributed sparingly over the lowlands of both the Atlantic and Pacific slopes, up to not more than 2,000 feet above sea-level," and that he was "never able to learn anything of their breeding habits." I have been able to find but one definite Central American breeding record for the Sun-bittern. H. G. Deignan (1936. *Auk*, 53:188) collected a male and female in Honduras on April 23, 1933, the male with right testis greatly enlarged, the female with a fully developed egg.—ALEXANDER F. SKUTCH, *San Isidro del General, Costa Rica*.

The Dakota Song Sparrow in Arizona.—In the Dickey Collection, University of California at Los Angeles, there is a typical example of *Melospiza melodia juddi*, an adult female (No. 11486) taken at Tucson, Arizona, on December 20, 1915, by A. Brazier Howell. Howell's notes make no special mention of this bird, but evidently it was taken "in the river bottom to the northeast [of Tucson]."

Both in bill size and plumage characters, this individual is definitely outside the extremes of variation known for *Melospiza melodia montana* (which winters commonly in that locality); it is in no way distinguishable from a small North Dakota series of typical *juddi* in the University of California collections. However, the specimen was submitted for an additional check to Josselyn Van Tyne at the University of Michigan, and he has verified my identification of the specimen as *juddi*.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *University of California at Los Angeles*.