

branch and not at the extreme end of it. It was made of fine fibres and dry grasses and had no lining. The 2 eggs, which rested on the fine fibres of the bottom, were fresh, so perhaps the clutch was not yet complete. Their weight was 1.80 and 1.98 grams. They measured  $18.4 \times 13.2$  and  $19.1 \times 13.4$  mm. In ground colour they were creamy white (dead white after blowing). They were marked all over with small reddish spots and blotches. These markings were larger and more numerous at the larger end.—FR. HAVERSCHMIDT, *P. O. Box 644, Paramaribo, Surinam, Dutch Guiana.*

**Behavior and habitat of *Thryophilus leucotis* in Central Panamá.**—On July 15, 1950, in a damp thicket in the Juan Franco suburb of the city of Panamá, I observed an adult Buff-breasted Wren (*Thryophilus leucotis galbraithii*) feeding an almost full-grown, but still stub-tailed, young bird. Another adult wren was singing close by. For several minutes the adult which I was watching proceeded to work over the top of the young bird's head and back with its bill, as if searching for vermin or preening the feathers. While I had often watched monkeys busy with their social grooming, and seen birds picking ticks from the bodies of mammals, this particular form of bird behavior was new to me.

*Thryophilus leucotis* is a South American species which reaches its northern limit in central Panamá. In western Panamá and elsewhere in Middle America it is replaced by various forms of the closely related, and very similar, *T. modestus*. The most striking point of difference between the two species is this: in *leucotis* the wing-barring is sharp and black, in *modestus* it is vague and obsolescent. The two birds are so similar morphologically that some ornithologists would doubtless consider them conspecific but for the overlapping of their ranges in central Panamá. In this narrow zone of overlap there appears to be some tendency toward ecological segregation: *leucotis* prefers the more humid thickets, particularly those near water, *modestus* the drier, more open areas, near houses. At the Pacific coast locality mentioned above I heard a singing individual of each species within a hundred yards of each other, one in a wet thicket near a small stream, the other in a dry thicket on an open hillside. Similarly, on the humid, and formerly forested, Caribbean slope of the Canal Zone, *leucotis* has been recorded at the edge of small openings in heavy woodland (e.g., that on Barro Colorado Island), while *modestus* is found along roadsides and in the more extensive clearings. In western Panamá, beyond the range of *leucotis*, *modestus* is often noted in wet tangles and along river borders.

Both species indulge in antiphonal singing and utter a variety of loud, emphatic, whistled phrases which, though similar in basic character, are, according to my experience, sufficiently different in pattern to be distinguishable. *Leucotis* tends to end its phrases with a downward slur or drop in pitch, while *modestus* usually favors a rising or sustained *ee* as the final sound.—EUGENE EISENMANN, *Linnaean Society of New York, 11 Broadway, New York 4, New York.*

**Some Remarks on West Indian Icteridae.**—In his stimulating article, "Convergent evolution in the American orioles" (1950. *Wilson Bulletin*, 62: 51–86), Beecher suggests that two phyletic lines (*Icterus* and "*Bananivorus*") have arisen from "opposite ends" of the genus *Agelaius*. Thought provoking though this concept may be, certain of Beecher's statements relating to West Indian forms appear to me to be open to criticism.

Beecher is evidently of the opinion that *Agelaius* and "*Bananivorus*" entered the West Indies through Cuba from Honduras. He states (p. 59) that "*A. humeralis* may have reached Cuba from the ancestral *thilius* stock of Central America as a typical marsh-dweller when it [Cuba] was emergent in the Early Pliocene." Now, most students of West Indian natural history believe that the majority of species that reached the Antilles from Central America entered the region mainly via Jamaica, an island not shown on Beecher's map (p. 62) depicting evolution in the "*Bananivorus*" group. Jamaica is a "key-island" in any such discussion. The fact that neither "*Bananivorus*" nor *Agelaius* now inhabits this island is of no