

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Misapplied Perseverance.**—On the west porch of our house in Colorado Springs is an awning, extending along the front for fifteen feet. This is taken down every fall and put up again in the spring. It is the ordinary type of awning on an iron frame which can be pulled up against the side of the house by cords. By an odd coincidence it was put up for the season in 1924, and again in 1926, each time on the 5th of May. House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) seem to think this is put up for their convenience as a roosting place at night, and they sometimes attempt to nest in it. This note deals with two of these attempts.

The first was in 1924. My notes of May 24 say that for several days previously, perhaps two weeks, sparrows had been trying to build a nest in this awning, and that I had dumped the nearly finished nests two or three times by letting down the awning. It should be stated that this is not done daily at this season. On the 23rd, when the awning was dropped, there was a nest with three fresh eggs. Evidently the awning had not been down for several days. The morning of the 24th a broken egg was found on a step below the awning. Apparently the bird had had nowhere else to go and had laid it in the awning. The afternoon of the 25th another half-completed nest was dumped, and on the 26th I saw the birds carrying nesting material to the place. A nearly completed nest was dropped out on the 28th. On June 2 I destroyed another nest, with three fresh eggs, in the awning. This nest must have been built in a great hurry, or the bird must have begun to lay before it was completed; for the first egg could have been laid not later than the 31st, with the rest laid at the rate of one egg a day. This did not give much more than two days for the building of the new nest. On June 4 another nest had been begun, and on the 6th still another almost completed one was destroyed. On the 7th there was a little nesting material on the awning, and a practically completed nest was destroyed on the 10th. A fresh egg of a sparrow was found on the lawn in front of the house on the 13th; this possibly had been dropped by the same bird which had been trying to nest. There was nothing doing for some time after this, but on the 22nd more dry grass fell when the awning dropped. Apparently the birds were trying it again. We went away for the summer a day or two after this, and the house was rented. I do not know if the tenants had any trouble with the birds.

We had no trouble in 1925. We were in the house until the middle of June, and then went away. In the spring of 1926 the sparrows made no attempt to build in the awning; but about the first of August, or before that date, a pair began to nest there, despite the fact that the awning was dropped early every afternoon and usually remained down until after six o'clock. On the 2nd two eggs fell out and were of course broken. It is something of a puzzle as to when those two eggs were laid—one possibly the night before and the other the next morning, unless there were two females. Another egg fell out on the fourth. A nest had been started on the fifth, and this seems to have been the last attempt, for there was nothing more after that date. A broken egg was found on the walk in front of the house at this time. The various nests were constructed of grass and straws, and those nearest completion would have some feathers in them.

One cannot help admiring the perseverance of these birds in trying to nest under such adverse conditions, but in both years it seems to have taken some little time to show them how futile were their efforts. They had to have a lot of experience to teach them.—EDWARD R. WARREN, *Colorado Springs, Colorado, August 17, 1926.*

**A Southern Race of the Fan-tailed Warbler<sup>1</sup>.**—A series of fan-tailed warblers collected by the junior writer in Salvador in 1925 and 1926 differs in several respects from *Euthlypis lachrymosa lachrymosa* Cabanis of southern Mexico and from *Euthlypis lachrymosa tephra* Ridgway of northwestern Mexico. These southern Pacific coast birds are characterized as follows:

*Euthlypis lachrymosa schistacea*, subsp. nov.

Southern Fan-tailed Warbler

**Type.**—Male adult; no. 17,404, collection of Donald R. Dickey; Pine Peaks, Volcan Conchagua, Salvador; altitude 3,000 feet; February 27, 1926; collected by A. J. van Rossem; original no. 10,478.

<sup>1</sup> Contribution from the California Institute of Technology.

*Subspecific characters.*—Similar to *Euthlypis lachrymosa lachrymosa* Cabanis, but dorsally clearer, purer slate color, particularly on rump and upper tail coverts; remiges and rectrices darker slate, sometimes slate-black; under parts with yellow of throat and abdomen more extensive and brighter (more lemon, less tawny) yellow, and in much more decided contrast to tawny of breast.

*Range.*—Pacific coast of Central America from Chiapas (?) south to Salvador and probably to Ometepe, Nicaragua.

*Remarks.*—*Schistacea* is the clear slaty extreme of the species, with contrasted under parts; *lachrymosa* occupies an intermediate position in characters as well as geographically; while *tephra* is the palest, most olivaceous race, with under parts least contrasted. The supposed slight differences in size between *lachrymosa* and *tephra* seem to be too intangible to have any diagnostic value in the series examined. The Guererro specimen is not typical of any race, but seems nearest to *lachrymosa*.

*Specimens examined.*—*Euthlypis lachrymosa lachrymosa*: Mexico: Vera Cruz: Motzorango, 1; Orizaba, 1; Mirador, 1; Oaxaca: Pluma, 1; Guerrero: Acahuizotla, 1; Tamaulipas: Santa Leonor, 1. *Euthlypis lachrymosa tephra*: Sinaloa: Mazatlan, 1; Rio Mazatlan, 1; Chihuahua: Hacienda San Rafael, 7; Jalisco: Barranca Ibarra, 2. *Euthlypis lachrymosa schistacea*: Salvador: Volcan Conchagua, 4; Volcan San Miguel, 2; Colinas de Jucuaran, 5; Lake Olomega, 5; Volcan Sociedad, 4; Mt. Cacaguatique, 7; Guatemala: Barranco Hondo, 1; Mexico: Chiapas: Tuxtla, 2 (not typical).

We are indebted to the Museum of Comparative Zoology, the Field Museum, the United States Bureau of Biological Survey, and to the United States National Museum, for the loan of necessary comparison material.—DONALD R. DICKEY and A. J. VAN ROSSEM, Pasadena, California, August 28, 1926.

**Observations in the San Francisco Bay Region.**—During the past spring for the first time I had an opportunity to study and collect birds about San Francisco Bay. On April 28, 1926, while on the tide flats at Albany, Alameda County, I collected a Sabine Gull (*Xema sabini*), and the next day, about a mile north of this point, I secured another. Both of these birds were males and they were in company with Bonaparte Gulls. Although many trips were made to these tide flats these were the only Sabine Gulls seen. Dr. Grinnell advises me that this gull is of uncommon occurrence in this region.

On April 29, I secured a male Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*), this being the only bird of this species observed. Shore-birds, especially Western Sandpipers and Long-billed Dowitchers, were fairly numerous during the latter half of April. Hudsonian Curlews, Red-backed Sandpipers and Semipalmated Plover were common also. The birds appeared to be at the height of their migration between the 20th and 25th of April. After that their numbers diminished rapidly, and by the end of the first week of May only a few were to be seen on the tide flats.

April 17 to 20 was spent at the ocean beach a short distance north of Point Reyes, Marin County. The beach at this place is very sandy, the sand extending far back from the shore. Here the first shore bird I met with was the Sanderling (*Crocethia alba*). Flocks of them were feeding along the beach close to the water. As each wave receded they would run in close pursuit of it, hurriedly picking here and there at the food particles that it left on the sand. As the next wave advanced they ran up the beach just ahead of it, lingering as long as possible without being engulfed by it.

I also found the Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*) here, and on April 19 was so fortunate as to find a nest of this species containing three eggs. The eggs were deposited in a slight depression in the sand, close to a small piece of driftwood and about 200 yards from the water. I am reliably informed that this is the first nesting record of the Snowy Plover for this vicinity.

About a mile from my camp here I found a colony of Tri-colored Blackbirds (*Agelaius tricolor*) building their nests in a dense growth of raspberry brush. None of the nests was completed at that time.—E. J. BOOTH, Bellingham, Washington, September 1, 1926.

**Weasel and Birds.**—Recently, while walking along a foothill road within the city limits of Riverside, my path was suddenly crossed by a California Weasel (*Mustela xanthogenys*) running at a rapid pace. Closely pursuing it in the air were a female