

Aechmophorus occidentalis. Western Grebe. Numbers nested on Topaz Lake, Mono County, July 21, 1918, where sets of fresh eggs and an adult (no. 316) were collected July 6, 1923. Three seen on Sandborn Slough, near Butte Creek, 7 miles west of Pennington, Sutter County, June 13, 1925. Nests in numbers on Clear Lake, Lake County, where many were seen July 4, 1936, and July 16, 1928. Two to three hundred adults noted here on July 15, 1938, had only about twenty, one-third grown young with them. Several pairs nested on a deep pond 3 miles south of Los Baños, Merced County, June 10, 1926 (2 sets eggs). Occasional birds are to be seen on the open ocean in summer, as one off Bolinas, Marin County, June 20, 1920.

Podilymbus podiceps podiceps. Pied-billed Grebe. A completed nest and 2 birds were seen on a lake 2 miles south of Glen Ellen, Sonoma County, May 30, 1928. In 1925, a pair wintered on this lake, remaining until late April. They were then in summer plumage and were uttering courtship notes. A set of fresh eggs was taken 3 miles south of Los Baños, Merced County, June 10, 1928; found breeding commonly here in several years.—JAMES MORFITT, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, August 20, 1938.*

Some Notes from Negit Island, Mono Lake, California.—The writer, accompanied by H. S. Fuller, spent July 9 to 12, 1938, on Negit Island, Mono Lake, California. The island is about 400 acres in extent and is made up for the most part of very rough lava, but there are some areas composed of sandy soil covered with artemisia. No birds were taken, because of my belief that the island had been set aside as a bird preserve, but the following birds were seen repeatedly at close range.

Larus californicus. California Gull. The Mono Lake colony of gulls is now confined entirely to Negit Island, but formerly some birds nested on the adjoining Paoha Island (Dawson, *Birds of California*, vol. 3, 1923, p. 1406). We estimated that the gulls numbered approximately 3000 adults, and we succeeded in banding 510 of the then well-grown young. It might be interesting to add that on July 11 the writer was struck on the parietal region of the head by a gull swooping down from the rear; a deep scalp wound resulted. The gull was killed by the blow and an autopsy revealed a broken lower mandible, dislocated cervical vertebra, and extensive subcutaneous hemorrhage on neck, breast and belly. The skin is now in my collection (male no. 315). We were brushed several times by the gulls' wings when they dove on us, but this was the only accident. The young birds had been fed on insects and fly larvae, as well as some trout, which must have been obtained from quite a distance.

Colymbus nigricollis californicus. Eared Grebe. Both Dawson (*op. cit.*, p. 2052, and W. K. Fisher, *Condor*, vol. 4, 1902, p. 11) observed birds of this species in the region. We found them numerous around Paoha Island, but none was seen about Negit Island.

Phalacrocorax auritus. Cormorant. Six cormorants, which we took to be Farallon Cormorants (*P. a. albociliatus*), were seen flying over the lake on the evening of July 10.

Steganopus tricolor. Wilson Phalarope. One was seen near the western shore of the lake on July 9, and another at close range from Negit Island on July 11.

Tachycineta thalassina lepida. Violet-green Swallow. Great numbers of this swallow were nesting on the island in cracks between the loose rocks which make up the steep volcanic rubble heaps.

Say Phoebes (*Sayornis saya*), White-crowned Sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys*), Sage Sparrows (*Amphispiza nevadensis nevadensis*), California Linnets (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*), and Rock Wrens (*Salpinctes obsoletus obsoletus*) were seen on Negit Island. Both adults and young of these species were noted.—WALTER F. NICHOLS, *Pasadena, California, September 4, 1938.*

A New Race of Becard from Northeastern Mexico.—The series of becards of the species *Platyparis aglaiae* in the British Museum is probably unequalled in any institution in the world. While at the British Museum in the summer of 1938, the writer devoted some time to an attempt to work out the characters of the species in northeastern and eastern Mexico. At the time Ridgway wrote part 4 of the *Birds of North and Middle America*, certain material then in American museums either was not available to him or else was overlooked, for, subsequent to arriving at certain conclusions at the British Museum, I have found ample confirmatory material in America which had been collected prior to the publication of part 4 in 1907. The northeastern race, the largest of the species, is here named as

Platyparis aglaiae gravis, new subspecies

Type.—Adult male, no. 435419, United States National Museum; Alta Mira, Tamaulipas, Mexico; February 11, 1895; collected by F. B. Armstrong.

Subspecific characters.—Largest of the races of *Platyparis aglaiae*. Compared with *Platyparis aglaiae aglaiae* of the highlands of central Vera Cruz and northern Oaxaca, size decidedly larger throughout; males very similar in coloration, that is, with sharp demarcation between the black head and gray

back; females decidedly paler below and very much redder above. Compared with *Platypsaris aglaiae sumichrasti* of the lowlands of central Vera Cruz and southward, coloration of males very much paler throughout, and back gray instead of black; females paler throughout, and back more orange (less rufous) red and more or less washed with gray, with prominent collar of pale orange around hindneck. Size slightly larger, save for the bill, which is about equal in the two races.

Range.—Northeastern Mexico, from the coastal region of northern Vera Cruz (Rivera; Papantla) and Tamaulipas (Tampico; Soto de la Marina) west to the interior of Tamaulipas (Carrizal; Forlon; Alta Mira; Victoria; Hidalgo), and the States of Nuevo Leon (San Diego; Montemorelos; Monterey; Cerro de la Silla), San Luis Potosi (Valles), and Morelos (Puente de Ixtla).

Remarks.—There is not sufficient material to hazard comment at this time on the geographic variation in the rose-throated becards in central Mexico. What little has been examined, however, indicates a variable population which connects the east- and west-coast races in a most erratic manner.

It may be well to emphasize that *gravis* is not in any sense an intergrade between *aglaiae* and *sumichrasti*. It is the largest of the known races and also occupies the extreme northeastern section of the area occupied by the species. It obviously is a pallid variation of the large-billed group (*hypophaeus*, *yucatanensis*, *latirostris*, *sumichrasti*, *gravis*) with no close relationship with the small-billed, gray-backed (females) series consisting of *aglaiae*, *albiventris*, *insularis*, and *richmondi*.

In the matter of local and individual variation, *gravis* exhibits a normal range. Specimens from the coast of northern Vera Cruz are intermediate toward *sumichrasti* in variable degree. Some from Nuevo Leon are distinctly paler than the average, and the palest individual of all has even been called "*albiventris*" by Ridgway. I have examined this specimen and consider it to be an exceptionally pale *gravis*, with which race it agrees in large bill and general measurements.

EXTREME MEASUREMENTS OF MALES IN MILLIMETERS

	Wing	Tail	Culmen	Width at nostrils	Tarsus
22 <i>aglaiae</i> from Vera Cruz	85-91	60-68	14.2-16.7	6.8- 8.3	18.5-20.2
57 <i>sumichrasti</i> from Vera Cruz, Tabasco, and Chiapas	84-90	64-71	17.5-19.1	8.4-10.2	19.5-22.5
48 <i>gravis</i> from Vera Cruz, Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, and San Luis Potosi	90-96	66-74	17.3-19.5	8.6-10.0	20.5-22.5

—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, September 14, 1938.*

Color Changes in a Captive Cassin Purple Finch.—In December, 1937, while collecting birds in the Providence Mountains of southeastern California, the writer obtained a live adult Cassin Purple Finch (*Carpodacus cassinii*) in typical red male plumage. The bird was returned to Berkeley, where it has been kept in a small cage. During the early months of its captivity, it was fed a diet of seeds only. Later, it was found that fruits of various kinds were taken readily, but that health was maintained without this addition.

In the summer of 1938, I was away from Berkeley and left the bird in the care of a friend, during which time it was fed only the seed mixture. Upon my return, the last week in July, many of the flight feathers of both wings and tail had been dropped. Again I left for a week, and the bird was not seen until the first week of August. At this time, it was discovered that the flight feathers of the wings that had been renewed were almost completely white, with but a margin of dark color on the tips. The feathers of the top of the head, throat, and breast had begun to drop, but had not grown in sufficiently to determine their color. The bird now was given a food mixture that is recommended for birds of the "soft-bill" type and that contains much animal matter. This was in addition to its seed ration. However, the flight feathers continued to come in white as before, and the contour feathers of the head and breast came in yellow. Some of the latter, notably those on the throat, had black edgings, a feature not seen in any wild-taken representative of the genus.

Pyracantha berries being available, they were now regularly presented, and the bird ate them readily. After several weeks, two more flight feathers grew in, this time with the ordinary dark gray color. Furthermore, the contour feathers that have grown since then have been red. The resultant plumage shows a curious mottling of red and yellow on the top of the head and on the breast.

In conclusion, the abnormal pigmentation seemingly was caused by an insufficiency in the diet, and was corrected by the feeding of red berries. It is well known that the related House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) changes color similarly, whatever the reason, but I can find no reference to such an anomaly in the species *cassinii*. In only one instance is there an indication of such variation in the specimens in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. An adult male collected in June, 1938, by J. T. Marshall, Jr., shows several yellow feathers on the throat. It may be assumed that yellow coloration is not common in nature, as it is in *C. mexicanus*, but that it may result from changed conditions attendant upon captivity.—DALE ARVEY, *Berkeley, California, September 14, 1938.*