

BULLETIN  
OF THE  
NUTTALL ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB.

VOL. VIII.

JULY, 1883.

No. 3.

BIRDS OF THE LOWER URUGUAY.

BY WALTER B. BARROWS.

(Continued from p. 94.)

25. **Paroaria cucullata** (*Lath.*). CARDINAL COLORADO (RED CARDINAL).—This is the bird familiar to many as a cage-bird under the name of Brazilian Cardinal. It is said that the market is mainly supplied by the netting of the birds in lower Brazil and Paraguay.

As they are commonly found in large flocks, are quite unsuspecting, and feed much on the ground, it would seem easy to catch them in nets, but I have never seen it done. The sexes are equally brilliant and not distinguishable by color, so I do not know whether the females sing or not. The species is abundant wherever any considerable extent of woods remains, and undoubtedly it nests near Concepcion, but I did not have proof of it further than that implied in the presence of the birds in undiminished numbers through the warm weather.

26. **Poospiza nigrorufa** (*Lafr. et d'Orb.*).—One of the commoner Finches of the country, abundant everywhere in wet, bushy ground, and often seen scratching among the leaves like a Chewink (*Pipilo*). Its cheery and often repeated little song is so constantly heard that one hardly notices it more than the droning of the cicadas or the chirping of the grasshoppers;

yet there is a good deal of real music in it. Although I not unfrequently saw young unable to fly, I could never find the nest, but was convinced that it must be placed on the ground, at least normally.

27. **Poospiza lateralis** (*Nordm.*).—A single specimen of this species was taken at Concepcion, September 29, 1879. It was in company with another individual of the same species and several of the preceding. During the summer following I looked in vain for others, but late in the autumn (April 23), while hunting capybaras on a stream about a dozen miles west of this place, several were observed. As our charges at the time were of buckshot none were secured. The following September, when I was on the lookout for this bird, almost all the favorable ground was flooded, and I only caught a glimpse of one on a nearly submerged island among impenetrable thickets where he escaped the shot.

The species seems to be but slightly known, and would appear to be only migrating at the points mentioned.

28. **Poospiza melanoleuca** *Vieill.*.—Although much better known than the preceding species, this bird was far from abundant at Concepcion. It was only met with in autumn on one or two occasions, and was found then among scattered trees and bushes on high ground, and in company with *Synalaxis*, *Zonotrichia*, and some Gnatcatchers.

It had the general motions and appearance of a Titmouse, thus differing widely from the other members of the genus.

During the trip to the Sierras of the Pampas, and while in camp on the Pigué, about 25 miles from the town of Carhué, a *Poospiza* was taken which appeared to be another species (possibly *torquata*), but it was moulting and was unfortunately afterward lost.

29. **Phrygilus caniceps** (*Burm.*).—Only met with in the Sierra de la Ventana, where it was abundant in flocks, some of which numbered as many as a hundred individuals. When found near the base of the sierra they were almost always associated with the common *Zonotrichia*. Although most of them had not finished moulting, they were constantly singing and seemed perfectly contented with their desolate surroundings.

30. **Gubernatrix cristatella** (*Vieill.*). **CARDINAL AMARILLO** (YELLOW CARDINAL).—This is another well known cage-

bird, but less common than the Brazilian Cardinal, with which it is often associated, both in freedom and captivity. It is said to gather in flocks to the number of several hundreds, but I have never seen more than three in company, and in such cases the adage seemed to be verified,—“Three’s a crowd.” As there is no trace of red on the bird the name Yellow Cardinal can hardly be justified except on the ground that it is “the *name* of the thing.”

31. **Diuca minor** *Bp.*—A common bird among scattered bushes or thickets in comparatively open ground. It disappears during the coldest weather, but makes its appearance again in little flocks late in July or early in August. These soon scatter, and through the summer the male is commonly heard chanting a rather short and not particularly pretty song from the top of some low bush or from a fence post. The nest and eggs were not taken.

32. **Zonotrichia pileata** (*Bodd.*). CHINGOLO; CHINGOLITO.—By far the most familiar if not the most abundant bird of the family. It is resident through the year at Concepcion, and also much farther south. It spends most of its time on the ground, but I think is never met with in any numbers at a distance from shrubs or trees of some kind. The nest is built on the ground, usually under a tuft of grass, a thistle, or almost anything which will conceal it. In one case I found it placed within and beneath the battered rim of an old tin pan beside the road. Three eggs are usually laid, seldom four, and never, to my knowledge, more; but the Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) usually adds one or two more and sometimes even four or five. More than half the Sparrows’ nests found contained eggs of the Cowbird, and quite frequently I found them deserted, evidently from that cause. The earliest nest found was October 4, and from that time until late in December they were constantly noticed, sometimes a half dozen in a morning’s collecting.

Undoubtedly two broods are reared by many of the birds if not all. The eggs vary widely in color, but the ground-color is always bluish-green, sometimes sparingly and irregularly spotted with coarse markings; at other times profusely and evenly sprinkled with minute dots, the markings being different shades of brown.

33. **Coturniculus manimbe** (*Licht.*).—It was not until a

year had been spent at Concepcion that I found this species there. Possibly it had been overlooked, as all the specimens subsequently taken near this place were found in cultivated ground, several being shot while perched on sheaves of wheat and in full song. This was at Christmas time, 1880. Two months later we found it abundant in similar places near Bahia Blanca, as well as on the grassy slopes at the foot of the Sierra de la Ventana. At all these places it was breeding, but nothing was learned of its nest or eggs.

34. **Embernagra platensis** (*Gm.*).—A common resident at Concepcion, where it breeds. Also numerous in suitable localities at all other points visited. It prefers damp ground with or without bushes, and where the plumed pampas-grass abounds the bird delights to sit swaying on its feathery tips, chanting his weak but well-meaning song. The nest is placed near or on the ground and contains three white eggs with a very few dark flecks at their larger ends. Sets were taken at Concepcion, October 12 and December 7, and at Azul, January 28, indicating a second and perhaps a third brood.

35. **Chrysomitris barbata** (*Mol.*). JILGUERO (GOLD-FINCH).—I first made the acquaintance of this sprightly little songster in the markets and bird-stores of Buenos Aires where they are kept by hundreds as cage-birds. Afterwards I found them more or less abundant at all points visited. Like our common Yellowbirds, they are almost always in flocks, always restless, and able to sing well when they feel like it. Nothing was learned of their nesting habits.

36. **Sycalis luteola** (*Sparm.*). MISTO or MIXTO. (MIXED, perhaps in allusion to the character of the flocks).—Abundant everywhere in immense flocks, often of many thousand individuals, and largest in winter, when they are shot by the hundred and sold in the markets of Buenos Aires. Other species often help to swell the size of these flocks, *Chrysomitris* perhaps most often, and then *Zonotrichia*, *Spermophila*, and even *Anthus correndera*. Nests were found during November, December, and January, and probably many breed during October. The nest is very variable in size, material and location. Probably it is oftenest placed on the ground, but I have taken eggs from a well-built nest of the Oven Bird (*Furnarius*) ten feet from the ground, and was told by natives that the bird often nests in

hollows of fence posts or of trees and stumps. The eggs are nearly white, spotted pretty finely and evenly with brown, and are commonly five in number. This species seems to have no song even during the breeding season.

37. **Cassicus solitarius** (*Vieill.*). BOYERO (COW-HERD. The significance of this name here is not obvious; I suspect, however, that it was originally given to the Cowbird (*Molothrus*), and the present species being entirely black has been confounded with that bird).—Only a single specimen taken (Concepcion, October 12, 1880), but one or two other individuals were seen at about the same time. It is said to be much more abundant a little further up the river and in sections where the heavy swamp forest has not been cleared. According to these persons the song is very rich and beautiful, and I was often assured that single birds were worth as much as ten dollars in Buenos Aires.

An allied species, *Scaphidurus ater* (*Vieill.*), was not uncommon as a cage-bird. It is found along the Upper Uruguay, but has not yet been detected as far south as Concepcion.

38. **Icterus pyrrhopterus** (*Vieill.*).—Like the preceding, and with equal inaptness, called Boyero or Boyerito (Little Cow-herd).

This species is not abundant, yet was frequently met with, and seems to be resident at Concepcion through the entire year. They commonly go in pairs, were never seen on the ground or far from the swamps, and hang in any position while feeding on insects or berries. I do not recall ever having heard one sing, but have seen them caged, and they are credited with a fine song. A nest found December 20, 1880, contained three nearly fledged young. It was pensile, but only about as deep as broad, was neatly woven of fine yellow grass, and suspended among the topmost twigs of a small mimosa at a height of about fifteen feet from the ground. The eggs I did not see.

39. **Molothrus bonariensis** (*Gm.*). TORDO (THRUSH, possibly so called because the European Blackbird (*Turdus merula*) is sometimes so called in Spain, and the present species resembles it in color. It seems probable, however, that the name Tordo belongs to *Cassicus solitarius*, and the name Boyero, by which that is known, to this species.)

The common Cowbird abounds at Concepcion through the year, but is rather less abundant in May and June than at other

times. In general habits it is precisely similar to *M. ater*, and the eggs of the two birds are scarcely distinguishable. I am inclined to think that the Argentine bird differs less from our own in its parasitic habits than is generally supposed. Its great abundance and the comparative openness of the country will in great measure account for the larger number of eggs found as well as for the numbers sometimes observed in single nests. The largest number I ever found in any nest at one time is four, but not very rarely twice that number is found, as witnessed by many reliable observers. Of course this overdoes the matter so as to compel the rightful owner to desert the nest, but I suspect our own Cowbird would be no wiser under similar pressure.

40. ***Molothrus rufo-axillaris* Cass.**—Much less common than the preceding, and usually met with only in the woods or close to them. Here little parties of ten or a dozen may be found at any season. Although so common, I was not able to satisfy myself by observation either that they did or did not build nests for themselves or impose on other birds. I have frequently seen them in small parties clambering about the bulky nests of different species of *Synallaxis*, and occasionally even entering such nests as if they owned them; but examination afterward never revealed eggs of any kind in the nests, so that I was at a loss to account for the proceeding. Twice I have found in the nests of *Zonotrichia pileata* a good sized white egg (in one case spotted, in the other immaculate) differing in size, shape, and color from the average egg of *M. bonariensis*, yet I am not ready to say that these were not abnormal specimens laid by that species. As I have never seen the eggs of *M. rufo-axillaris* I can of course draw no conclusions in that direction, but suspicion naturally falls on any member of a disreputable family who has not proved an alibi.

41. ***Agelæus thilius* (Mol.)**.—Abundant in flocks through the year, but the flocks seldom consist of more than fifty individuals, oftener of only a dozen. Breeds in the marshes during October and November, but rather sparingly; probably the majority breed farther south. The male in spring has a low but sweet and varied song.

42. ***Xanthosomus flavus* (Gm.)**.—During the first year spent at Concepcion this species was not observed, but in October, 1880, it made its appearance in flocks and remained to

breed. About a dozen pairs nested near each other on low bushes in a very wet marsh. The nests were rather bulky, made of weed stalks, grass, etc., and contained three or four eggs each, white spotted with brown. The eggs were laid about the third week in December, and with them were found many Cowbird's eggs.

Late in March, 1881, we found this species in large flocks on the Pigué, and it was a beautiful sight to see a hundred or more fluttering about among the snowy plumes of the pampas grass and displaying their rich black and yellow dress. Unlike most other birds obtained at that time, their plumage seemed nearly as bright and fresh as in summer.

43. **Amblyramphus holosericeus** (*Scop.*).—Found rather sparingly at Concepcion, but resident through the year and breeds. The birds are found singly, or at most in pairs, frequent swamps and marshy ground, and are remarkable for their clear, penetrating, bell-like call, which may be heard at least half a mile, yet sounds hardly louder when heard at a distance of a dozen yards. The feathers of the head, neck, and tibiæ are of the most brilliant scarlet, while the rest of the bird is lustrous black. The sexes are alike in size and color, and a young female only a day or two from the nest showed many red touches about the head. Of the nest and eggs I am ignorant; the young bird just mentioned was taken December 24, 1880.

44. **Pseudoleistes virescens** (*Vieill.*). PECHO-AMARILLO (YELLOW-BREAST).—No bird of the family is better known to the average Argentine than the Pecho-amarillo. Every rush-bordered pool or stream and every acre of long, coarse grass has its colony of these birds, and in the breeding season they go back and forth in troops, laden with building materials and apparently as unmindful of man and beast as the grass amongst which their nests are built. Some nests were begun as early as the middle of August, and on October 2 an unfinished nest and one containing nearly fledged young were found side by side. The nest is a substantial structure of reeds, grass, and sometimes mud, lined with fine grass and built into and around the grass stems so as to leave it at least a foot or two above the mud or water. The eggs are four or five in number, white, heavily marked with brown, often making them appear clear chocolate-colored. Two broods are usually reared.

45. **Leistes superciliaris** Bp. PECHO-COLORADO (REDBREAST).—My attention was first called to these birds by a somewhat odd habit of the males soon after their arrival from the north early in October. They rise quickly and silently by vigorous beats of the wings to a height of fifty or sixty feet, when they suddenly spread the wings and glide slowly down to the ground again, at the same time giving vent to a wheezy little song, which suggests the idea that the exertion of the ascent has left very little breath for vocal exercises. The wings are not moved at all during the descent until within a few feet of the ground. This exercise is repeated once in every two or three minutes, sometimes for hours together, and the sight is very pleasing when, as is usually the case, the birds are quite numerous. The nest is placed on the ground and the eggs are spotted. The only set taken was found December 20, 1880, and consisted of four fresh eggs. The birds are only found in open, wet, grassy places, and while many pairs may be found in the same meadow or field, they never seem to be truly gregarious, even after the nesting season is over.

46. **Sturnella defilippii** Bp. PECHO-COLORADO (REDBREAST).—Not found at Conception at all, nor was it met with until reaching Azul. At this place and further south it seems to replace the preceding species and bears the same name. It was seen nearly every day during our trip to the Pampean Sierras, and only parted company with us at Puan after several severe frosts. At the last-named place the flocks frequently numbered several hundred individuals, and during the whole time of our acquaintance with it it was always seen in large but scattering flocks.

47. **Cyanocorax pileatus** Temm. URRACA (in imitation of its usual call-note).—Confined to the islands in the river and to the deep woods along the shores, where it is resident through the year. Even in such places it is no longer abundant, and very few specimens were obtained.

The following twelve species, belonging to the sub-family *Fluvicolinae* Cab. (*Tæniopterinae* Bp.), form one of the most interesting groups found in the Argentine Republic. To almost all the general habits of Flycatchers they add others peculiarly their own, some of which are not readily explainable.



Not one of them has bright colored plumage, if we except the sulphur-yellow under-parts in two species (*Sisopygis* and *Machetornis*) and a half concealed crown-patch of orange-red in *Machetornis*; yet almost every one possesses some characteristic of form, color, or habit, which makes it conspicuous even to the casual observer. Well-defined areas of black and white mark several species, while peculiarly developed outer tail-feathers, or remarkable eye-lids characterize two others.

48. **Agriornis maritima** (*Lafr. et d'Orb.*).—Only met with a few times in the gorges of the Sierra de la Ventana, where it was sometimes seen perched motionless upon a great block of gneiss, or darting suddenly out after a passing insect.

49. **Tænioptera nengeta** (*Linn.*). ALCAHUETE (a word which unfortunately has no precise equivalent in English, but which, as it refers to the remarkable vigilance and quickness of the bird, may be very liberally translated *sentinel*.)

These birds and the following species (*T. coronata*) appear at Concepcion at the first appearance of cold weather, and remain until spring opens. They are most abundant between April 1 and August 15, but possibly a few of the present species remain through the summer, as a single one was taken September 8, and another on February 11.

They are commonly seen perched on fences or the tops of bushes or trees in open ground, frequently making sallies for winged insects, or dropping to the ground to catch a grasshopper or worm. When shot at while perched and watching you, they almost invariably leave the perch at the flash, pitching forward and downward and usually evading the shot even at short range. Several times I have secured them by shooting about a foot below and two feet in front of them as they sat, but they do not always fly in this direction. Much the surest way of dropping them is to walk up till they fly, and then shoot, as they seldom dodge while on the wing. The rapidity of their flight when frightened, or when quarreling, is simply astonishing. I have seen one chase another for three or four minutes, doubling, turning, twisting and shooting, now brushing the grass and now rising to a height of at least two or three hundred feet, and all the movements so rapid that the eye could scarcely follow them; and at the end of it each would go back to the top of his own chosen weed-stalk, apparently without a feather ruffled.

50. *Tænioptera coronata* (Vieill.).—The preceding description is applicable to this bird except that I did not note its presence at Concepcion after September 1 until the following April. This species frequently persecutes smaller birds in a way which seems to imply pure love of mischief. One afternoon in July, when the river had fallen some feet after an unusual rise, I was walking along the lines of drift left by the falling water, and watching the different birds which were picking up insects or other food from the windrows. A score or two of the little chestnut-backed *Centrites* were running about, and here and there a *Tænioptera* was looking quietly on. Suddenly I heard a chirp of distress, and looking up saw one of these small birds apparently making every effort to escape from a *Tænioptera*, which was following in full chase. The two birds were hardly a length apart and both going at full speed, doubling and dodging in a way that would have done credit to a bat. The chase lasted perhaps half a minute when the smaller bird alighted and at once the other also alighted and began running about unconcernedly and picking up food. But the instant the smaller one made a start, his enemy was at his heels (or more properly his tail) again, and he was forced to alight. This was repeated so often that I was on the point of shooting the pursuer, when without any notice he flew quietly off and resumed his usual demeanor. Afterwards I saw the same proceeding quite frequently—the tyrant being in every case *T. coronata* (except once when I think it was *nengeta*), but the victim was personated at different times by certainly four or five different species; all small, but all very strong on the wing. So far as I could judge, the pursuer never actually touched the pursued; nor did he ever appear to stop, or pick up anything which the other might have dropped. It looked like a case of simple spite, for even if there were twenty other birds about, one seemed to be selected and followed without regard to the rest. Moreover, neither species was nesting, for this occurred in mid-winter, and while the *Centrites* was in flocks, and if it were only from pugnacity there would seem to be no reason why other birds should not share in the attention.

My only explanation is that it was an *amusement* in which the larger bird indulges simply for the pleasure derived from the exercise of his power.

What becomes of these birds in summer I do not know. None were met with on the pampas during our trip, though another species (*M. rufiventris*), which only visits Concepcion in winter, was abundant about the Ventana in March.

51. **Tænioptera dominicana** (*Vieill.*).—At Concepcion this bird does not occur. It was first seen as we approached the Pampean Sierras. Here among the stalks of the drying thistles, or on the tops of the beautiful pampas grass, it was frequently seen. It has an undulating flight which, taken in connection with its black and white dress, at once suggested a Shrike in unusually fine plumage. At this time (February 4, 1881) they were only seen in pairs or little family parties, were almost silent, and in ragged plumage; but late in March, on the Pigué, we found them in large, scattering flocks, which collected in one place toward evening, and went through with a series of aerial evolutions accompanied with vocal exercises of a varied and entertaining kind, lasting half an hour or more.

I presume this was in preparation for their northward (or westward?) migration, as we did not see them again after leaving this spot, though equally favorable localities were visited.

52. **Tænioptera irupero** (*Vieill.*). VIUDA; VIUDITA (WIDOW; LITTLE WIDOW).—The snowy plumage of this little bird, only the outer wing feathers and the tip of the tail being black, makes it one of the first birds noticed in going into the country. The name Little Widow, by which it is everywhere known, is very appropriate, though the black edgings are not very conspicuous at a little distance, and I have been frequently assured by sportsmen and even by *gauchos* that there was a bird on the pampas called Novia (Bride) which was of milky whiteness without a single touch of other color.

At Concepcion this species is resident through the year. It was not met with further south than Azul, but at Carhué I heard of the "Novia" as a common bird in summer.

The nest is built very early in the season, often, I think, by the middle of August, judging from the condition of old birds taken then. On August 30, 1880, I saw a pair building a nest, largely of feathers, in the hollow limb of a dead tree, and I afterwards saw others in similar places. I never saw the eggs but was told that they were pure white and unspotted. From statements from another source I had reason to believe that the

eggs were sometimes spotted. The sexes are precisely alike in color, and the young when able to fly differ but slightly in appearance from the parents. From the fact that young unable to fly were taken in November, I judge that a second brood is not infrequently raised. The adults have several of the first primaries remarkably attenuate. Young birds appear to acquire these attenuate primaries only after a complete moult. But I took one specimen which showed one or more primaries with tips of ordinary shape but with a line apparently *worn* into the vane of the inner web so as to mark out distinctly the attenuate tip, and it seemed as if a little more wearing would cut out a piece which would leave the primary as in the old bird.

53. **Myiotheretes rufiventris** (*Vicill.*).—The largest of the family found at Concepcion, where it occurs only in winter. It is found in flocks, the individuals of which scatter about the ground and resemble our common Robins not a little. I have never seen this species alight on a bush or tree,—but as it is not plenty at Concepcion, and as there were no trees or bushes in the region where it was abundant further south, I will not say that it does not often do so.

54. **Alectorurus guira-yetapa** (*Vicill.*). TIJERITA REAL (ROYAL SCISSOR-TAIL).—Only sparingly found at Concepcion, and only during warm weather, when it probably breeds. The remarkable condition of the outer pair of tail feathers is interesting. In the male these two feathers reach a length of nearly ten inches, the rest of the tail being about three inches in length. The vane on the *inner* side of each is wanting for the first two inches and then suddenly develops to a width of nearly two inches, which it maintains almost to the tip when it gradually narrows. The vane on the *outer* side of the shaft is only about one-quarter of an inch wide, and is folded so tightly against the shaft that it is quite inconspicuous. In the only two males of this species which I have seen flying, these long feathers seemed to be carried folded together *beneath* the rest of the tail, and stretching out behind like a rudder or steering-oar, their vanes at right-angles to the plane of the rest of the tail. The only male which I took myself was shot at Carhué, April 6, 1881, and had not quite completed the summer moult. The chin, throat, and sides of head below the eyes were completely feathered. Two males, however, were brought to me at Concepcion, October 7,

1880, which had these parts perfectly bare, and of a bright orange-red color. As this was the breeding season I can only suppose that the feathers are lost from these parts at that time, and not regained until the entire moult takes place. The birds seem to prefer high grass and weeds in wet open ground.

55. **Sisopygis icterophrys** (*Vicill.*).—Not uncommon in open woods and bushy places through the entire year. A nest found December 24 was a rather shallow affair, built of twigs, weed-stalks, etc., and lined with wool and soft vegetable materials. It was placed on the horizontal branch of a bush overhanging the water, on the edge of a swamp, and contained three eggs nearly ready to hatch. Their color was white, with a few (in one case only five or six) large dots and splashes of brown.

56. **Cnipolegus cyanirostris** (*Vicill.*).—Apparently only a migrant, as but three specimens were taken, one September 29, 1879, and one each on September 26 and 29, 1880.

57. **Lichenops perspicillatus** (*Gm.*). VIUDITA NEGRA (LITTLE BLACK WIDOW).—Abundant at Concepcion in summer and many winter there. The plumage of the adult male is glossy black, the outer primaries alone being partly white. This would make a very pretty little "widow" did not the yellow appendages or outgrowths on the eye-lids give the bird such a grotesque appearance. They are bright yellow, as are also the irides and bill, so that even at long range it is impossible to mistake the bird for any other. They frequent the tall grass and reeds in wet places and are never found far from water. While they frequently go to the ground for insects, and even hop about there considerably, they only seem really at home when swaying on the long grass or perched on the top of some swamp shrub. In warm, quiet weather, even in winter, the male has a habit of flying perpendicularly upward from such a perch and returning again instantly. So quickly is the action performed that although he must rise to a height of ten or fifteen feet, not more than a single second is occupied in it. It looks precisely as if the bird were shot up by a spring and pulled back by an elastic, as in the case of a toy return-ball. A little quavering whistle is heard at the same time, and I suspect it is partly due to the action of the wings. The performance is doubtless an act of display for the benefit of the female, or a challenge to other males. It cer-

tainly is not for the purpose of catching insects, which are taken in the ordinary manner.

A nest found October 2, 1880, contained two fresh eggs, probably an incomplete set. They were white, with heavy brown spots scattered sparsely over the larger ends. The nest was neatly hidden in a wet tussock on the edge of a swamp. It was very deeply hollowed, formed of fine grass and a little hair and feathers, and the lip or border was covered with green moss.

The species was met with at all points visited, but south of Azul not a single male in the black plumage was seen, though the brown birds (presumably females or young) were met with almost every day for nine weeks, and frequently in large numbers. Of course I began to suspect that the males must moult into a brown suit after nesting, as do our Bobolinks and many other birds, but I shot specimens at various times, and all proved to be either females or young males, and as I was confident that at Concepcion black males were to be found through the year, I was at a loss for an explanation, and am so still.

58. *Machetornis rixosa* (Vieill.).—Occurs sparingly through the winter at Concepcion, and a few may remain to breed. Not elsewhere noted. On July 30, 1880, I found a small flock among trees on a slope close to the edge of a meadow. They were quite unsuspecting and I watched them some time before shooting any. In moving from place to place they kept together and first alighted on trees, afterward going down to the ground where they ran about as easily and gracefully as Thrushes. Their general appearance, even to points of color, so strongly suggested a true *Tyrannus* (e.g., *T. melancholicus*) that their easy motion on the ground was rather surprising until you noticed that their legs did not justify such a comparison. During the warmer weather the few which remained seemed to be solitary.

59. *Centrites niger* (Bodd.).—One cold, misty morning, the last of April, a few of these birds made their appearance at Concepcion. They gradually increased in numbers until July, when they were very abundant everywhere in open ground. The adult males were jet black with a patch of chestnut in the middle of the back. The females and young of the year were dull ashy inclining to tawny, and as the time wore on the feathers wore off and many of the dull colored birds were metamorphosed into good-looking males in spring plumage. I think this is

one of the most restless birds I ever saw. You cannot depend upon him to be in the same place two consecutive half seconds. He runs like a Sanderling, and whenever he keeps his feet still by accident, his wings are flirited in a way that shows his anxiety to be off. Several are usually found together, and sometimes a loose flock of a hundred or more is seen. They are very strong on the wing, sometimes mounting rapidly for several hundred feet, if suddenly startled, and after a few moments spent in circling like a Snipe, they drop again almost as suddenly as a shot, and as if from the very clouds. They became scarce at Concepcion during August, and by the 10th of September none were to be found there. At Azul, February 1, 1881, they were very plenty but in poor plumage, and we continued to see them in all suitable places until our return to Buenos Aires early in April.

Their note seemed to be only a sharp chirp. Of their breeding habits I know nothing.

(To be continued.)

---

## BIRD NOTES FROM WESTERN ONTARIO.

BY T. MCLWRAITH.

The winter of 1882-83 will be remembered in Western Ontario by those who are fond of observing the movements of our native birds as the one in which the Pine Grosbeaks were so plentiful. The visits of these northern strangers are by no means regular; sometimes a few pairs will be observed during January or February, and again they will be absent altogether for several years in succession, but on no previous occasion have they ever appeared in such numbers or stayed so late in the season as during the winter now drawing to a close. They were first observed in the shrubberies in and around the city about the 10th of January, and almost simultaneously with their arrival here there appeared notices in several country newspapers of the "arrival of flocks of strange birds, mostly of a smoky grey colour, but sometimes having a leader clad in glowing crimson."