

In the flesh the yellow in the eye-stripe of 3 and 4 appeared sufficiently intense to warrant their being assigned to *dominica*; but as a skin, the yellow in 3 is less prominent, and it might be referred without violence to *albilora*. Unless the white adjoining the base of the lower mandible be considered diagnostic, the determination of such intermediates seems to be a matter of considerable uncertainty, depending on doubtful estimates as to quantity and intensity of the yellow in the white line above the eye.
—LEVERETT M. LOOMIS, *Chester, S. C.*

Discovery of the Nest and Eggs of the Western Warbler (*Dendroica occidentalis*).—During the past season (1886) Mr. C. A. Allen had the good fortune to find two nests of *Dendroica occidentalis* in Blue Cañon, California. The first contained two eggs on June 4. It was left for a full set, but on visiting it three days later, Mr. Allen found it in a dilapidated condition, the eggs broken, and their yolks smeared over the lining, evidently the work of squirrels. Of the eggs, Mr. Allen writes: "I cannot give you an exact description of these eggs, but in size and appearance they resembled those of *D. aestiva*, only they were more heavily marked on their entire surface. I am very sorry now that I did not take them, but I wanted the full set, which, I think, would not have exceeded three, as I found a nest seven or eight years ago with three young, and another with the same number while returning from my second visit to the nest with eggs. All three nests were similarly placed;—in 'pitch pines,' from twenty-five to forty feet above the ground, on thick, scraggy limbs, where they were so well concealed that it would have been impossible to find them except by watching the birds, as was done in each instance. The female of the nest that was destroyed was seen digging up fine roots from a logging road morning after morning, but I could never follow her to the nest, which I finally found by accident; happening to shoot a Douglass's squirrel in the adjoining tree, the report of the gun started her out."

The nest with young, taken June 7, 1886, is now before me. It is composed of the fibrous stalks of herbaceous plants, fine dead twigs, lichens (*Evernia vulpina*), and a little cotton twine, and is lined with the soft inner bark of some coniferous tree and fine long hairs, apparently from the tail of a squirrel. The bright, yellow *Evernia*, sprinkled rather plentifully about the rim, gives a touch of color to the otherwise cold, gray tone of the exterior and contrasts agreeably with the warm, reddish-brown lining. Although the materials are coarse and wadded, rather than woven, together, the general effect of this nest is neat and tasteful. It does not resemble any other Warbler's nest that I have seen, but rather recalls the nest of some Fringilline bird, being perhaps most like that of the Lark Finch. It measures externally 4.50 inches in width by 2 inches in depth. The cavity is 1.25 inches deep by 2.50 inches wide at the top. The walls at the rim average nearly an inch in thickness.

The three young taken from this nest, together with both their parents, were also sent me by Mr. Allen. The young are about two-thirds grown

and sparsely clothed with first plumage, which above and across the breast is uniform grayish-brown, on the abdomen yellowish-white. There are two light (brownish-white) bars on the wing-coverts.

If I am not mistaken, the nests and eggs just described are the first identified ones that have been thus far reported, but Captain Bendire writes me that he has what he believes to be "a set of these eggs taken at the Big Meadows on the banks of the Des Chutes River near its headwaters, on my way from Fort Walla Walla, W. T., to Fort Klamath, Oregon" June 12, 1882. The nest was placed in the crotch of a willow overhanging the water, and the parent shot, but falling into the river was carried away. The eggs have a faint grayish-green ground color; two of them are heavily spotted and blotched with lilac and dark umber brown. They are about the size of the eggs of *D. aestiva*, and resemble the eggs of *D. blackburnia*, with the exception of the ground color, the green of which is not as perceptible as in the eggs of *blackburniae*.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, Cambridge, Mass.

What constitutes a Full Set of Eggs?—The question as to what constitutes a full set of eggs, and how to determine the number with any certainty, is a matter to which I desire to call attention, and, in doing so, will say that I have given the matter considerable thought, and have reached the conclusion, on account of the many nest robbers of the birds, that the larger number is the only safe one to enter as a full set. For example, say thirty nests of *first* sets of a species are found, with birds sitting, as follows: Four nests with four eggs in each; six nests with three eggs in each; ten nests with two eggs in each; and ten nests with one egg in each. In this case I would enter three and four—possibly two to four—as a full set. But in no case one to four, believing the undisturbed birds of a species do not vary much, if any, as to number of eggs laid. Say four eggs in first set, and three in the second; that is, in case the first set is destroyed, or the birds rear two or more broods in a season; for I find as a rule that the first set is the larger one.

Many of the birds, especially the larger ones that breed in trees, as Hawks, Herons, etc., cannot hide their bulky nests; in fact, the branches overhead are more a protection to the thieves than to the nests when the parent birds are away; for all birds, however watchful, will, during the early stages of laying and love making, steal away from their nests a short time, for a sail or flirtation, which affords the cunning Crows, Jays, squirrels, etc., an opportunity to come up from the lower limbs and steal the eggs unobserved, or before the parent birds can return to protect them. Such robberies, and the advancement of incubation, make the birds more watchful and closer sitters. But, with all their vigilance, I think to find a full set the exception and not the rule. It is to the interest of paid collectors and dealers in eggs to have the smaller as well as the larger number treated as full sets. But the oölogist at heart, whether a collector or not, can have but one desire, and that is to arrive at the facts in the case.

In my 'Revised Catalogue of the Birds of Kansas,' I was governed in