

is unusually bulky and loosely woven at the bottom, showing plainly—were such evidence needed—that it must have originally rested on a broader and more stable foundation than the fork or branch of a tree or shrub. Its identification is placed beyond all question by the fact that it is accompanied by the skin of its little architect and owner who was shot while sitting on her four eggs. These, it may be added, are perfectly typical eggs of *D. virens*.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Dendroica palmarum in New Jersey.—Learning from Mr. Witmer Stone's 'Birds of Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey' that this western race of the Palm Warbler has not been recorded from the region covered by that work I desire to record my capture of an adult female *Dendroica palmarum* at Red Bank, Monmouth County, New Jersey, September 28, 1889. Several others were observed at close range and the comparative absence of yellow remarked.—HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, *Washington, D. C.*

Breeding of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in Minnesota.—Until the summer of 1892 this bird was a rare visitor in Minnesota and was not supposed to breed here at all. In the month of April, 1892, several pairs were observed near St. Paul for the first time. In June a nest was found by a local collector and brought to me for identification. The parent being taken with the nest it was easily identified. This find set me to searching for their nests the next season, and I was rewarded with a fine set of five eggs which were taken with the nest and parent in June. That was the only nest observed in 1893. The past summer the birds were much commoner than ever before, and four nests were found, three with eggs. The first nest was taken May 27, and contained four fresh eggs. The second set was taken on June 2, with five slightly incubated eggs. The third, also taken on June 2, contained four fresh eggs. The fourth nest, taken on June 18, contained four young, just hatched, and one addled egg. This is, I believe, the first record of the Gnatcatcher breeding north of 43° N. lat., St. Paul being in lat. 45° N. All the nests, with one exception, were taken in West St. Paul, in Dakota County. They were all placed on horizontal branches of the burr oak and the height varied from twelve to twenty-four feet.—WALTON MITCHELL, *St. Paul, Minn.*

The Systematic Name of the Mexican Creeper.—The specific or subspecific name *mexicana* has long been in use for the *Certhia* inhabiting the mountains of Guatemala, Mexico, and southern Arizona. The original reference to the name I have had no opportunity to verify, but it is credited to Gloger (Handbuch, 1834, 381) and Reichenbach (Handb. Spez. Orn., 266). The former is cited in the American Ornithologists' Union Check-List and by Mr. Sharpe in Volume VIII of the 'Catalogue

of Birds in the British Museum,' the latter by Messrs. Salvin and Godman in the 'Biologia Centrali-Americana.' In either case the name is antedated by *Certhia mexicana* Gmelin, Syst. Nat., I, 1788, 480. Gmelin's bird, "C. rubra, gutture viridi, remigum apice cærulescenti," is the *Certhia rubra mexicana* of Brisson (Aves, III, 651), a species not easily identifiable, but certainly not a *Certhia* (perhaps one of the red species of *Myzomela*). As no other name has been proposed for the Mexican Creeper, the bird (No. 726a of the A. O. U. Check-List) may stand as *Certhia familiaris alticola*.—GERRIT S. MILLER, JR., *Washington, D. C.*

A New Family of Birds.—In revising the North American Finches and Tanagers Mr. Ridgway has found it necessary to establish a new family for the reception of the members of the genus *Procnias*. This distinction is certainly warranted by the cranial characters of the genus, the skull, among other things, being notable from the shape of the palatines and total absence of transpalatine processes. The head and skull of *Procnias*, it may be remembered, suggest those of a Swallow, but the resemblance is purely superficial, the skull structurally resembling that of a Tanager more than it does that of a Swallow.—F. A. LUCAS, *Washington, D. C.*

The Tongues of Birds.—Herr Schenking-Prévôt contributes an interesting article on the tongues of birds to the November number of the 'Zoologische Garten,' although some of his statements must not be too implicitly trusted. Such, for example, are the remarks that the tongue of the Woodpecker is not used as a spear, but as a "lime twig" to which insects are stuck by the viscous saliva, and that it is an organ of incomparable pliancy, feeling about in all directions.

Now, as a matter of fact, the structure of the Woodpecker's tongue is such as to render it, for its length and slenderness, extremely rigid, and while the Flicker undoubtedly draws ants out of ant-hills by means of the sticky mucous with which the tongue is plentifully besmeared, yet there can be no doubt that the barbed tip serves, like a delicate eel spear, to coax larvæ out of their hiding places in trees. Herr Prévôt is probably not acquainted with our Sapsucker or he would have called attention to the peculiar modification by which the tongue is rendered an admirable swab for collecting syrup.

The tongues of granivorous birds are said to be often arrow-shaped, or awl-shaped, a term which certainly does not apply to any of our North American Finches, in which the tongue is rather thick and fleshy, and slightly bifid or brushy at the tip, being so constructed as to play an important part in husking seeds.

Herr Prévôt decidedly overestimates the probable taxonomic value of the tongue, for no other organ seems to be so subject to variation; no two species of North American Sparrows that have come under my observation have the tongues exactly alike, while two such near neigh-