

A COLLECTION OF BIRDS FROM MOUNT ORIZABA,  
MEXICO.

BY ULYSSES O. COX.

IT was my good fortune to be a member of Dr. J. T. Scovell's party which visited Mount Orizaba during the summer of 1891 for scientific purposes. One week was spent at the city of Orizaba, altitude 4,000 feet, and about the same time at San Andres, altitude 8,200 feet, and on the mountain itself. It rained nearly the entire time while in the city of Orizaba, so very little collecting was done, and, on account of the condition of the weather, but few birds were seen. The country around the city of Orizaba is very broken and the mountains, which are foothills of the volcano itself, are covered with timber. Ordinarily the city must be an excellent collecting ground for birds.

At San Andres the surrounding country is entirely of volcanic origin and for the most part is barren, but on the side of the peak the timber, chiefly pine, extends down to within a few miles of the city. Below the timber line birds were not numerous but when the timber line was reached they were quite abundant. The mountain above lower timber line is scarcely at all inhabited and rarely has the axe disturbed the peace of the stately pines. At an elevation of 14,000 feet the timber disappears and snow line is reached.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. J. T. Scovell of Terre Haute, Indiana, by whose kindness I was permitted to make the collection; to Mr. Robert Ridgway of the U. S. National Museum, who has assisted in the identification of the specimens and who discovered and described the one new species; also to Prof. A. J. Woolman of Duluth, Minnesota, who assisted in the preparation of the skins.

The following species were either taken or observed, and in each case it is so stated:—

1. *Catharista atrata* (Bart.). BLACK VULTURE.—This bird was very common in the city of Orizaba where it was semi-domesticated. It was so tame that a person could walk within a few feet of it before it would fly,

and it was interesting to watch its actions around the piles of offal which the birds and dogs shared in common. These Vultures seemed to go in flocks of eight to ten.

2. *Syrnium nebulosum sartorii* *Ridgw.* MEXICAN BARRED OWL.—A Barred Owl was seen in the deep pine forests about half way up Peak Orizaba but I was not able to shoot it. It appeared very much like our common *S. nebulosum*.

3. *Dryobates stricklandi* (*Malk.*). STRICKLAND'S WOODPECKER.—A specimen of Strickland's Woodpecker was taken at an altitude of 11,000 feet, but unfortunately it was so mutilated that it was not preserved. Several others were seen. The species, of course, is doubtful.

4. *Petasphora thalassina* (*Sw.*).—Two specimens were taken at 11,000 feet.

5. *Cœligena clemenciæ* *Less.* BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD.—Two specimens, a male and a female, were taken at an elevation of 11,000 feet on Peak Orizaba. It was noticed that this species kept up a continual chattering similar to that of a Sparrow.

6. *Selasphorus platycercus* (*Sw.*). BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD.—Two specimens were taken at 11,000 feet on Peak Orizaba. They were seen flying around flowers and were heard to chirp a few short, distinct notes.

7. *Basilinna leucotis* (*Vieill.*). WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD.—One specimen was taken at an elevation of 11,000 feet on Peak Orizaba.

8. *Myiozetetes texensis* (*Gir.*). TEXAN FLYCATCHER.—One specimen was taken at an elevation of 9000 feet.

9. *Empidonax fulvipectus* *Lawr.*—This Flycatcher was taken at an elevation of 10,000 feet. Another was seen, but my observation would lead me to think that this species was not common.

10. *Aimophila supercilliosa* *Sw.*—This Sparrow was found very abundant from San Andres up the mountain to an elevation of 11,000 feet. It is a fine singer and rather tame. Four specimens were taken.

11. *Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis* (*Say*). HOUSE FINCH.—Very common about the houses in the town of San Andres.

12. *Chamæospiza torquata* (*DuBois*).—One specimen was taken of this shy but beautiful bird. The note was very pleasant and, while I saw but one, I judge it lives mainly in bushes.

13. *Euetheia pusilla* (*Sw.*).—One specimen was taken on a high bluff near the city of Orizaba. No others were seen.

14. *Junco cinereus* (*Sw.*). MEXICAN SNOWBIRD.—This rather common bird was taken at the foot of Mt. Orizaba, San Andres, also at an elevation of 11,000 feet.

15. *Pipilo fuscus* (*Sw.*). BROWN TOWHEE.—One specimen taken at the city of Orizaba and one taken at the lower timber line of the Peak.

16. *Pipilo orizabæ* *Cox.* ORIZABA TOWHEE.—(Auk, Vol. XI, 160, April 1894.).

"Sp. Char.—Most like *P. maculatus* *Sw.*, but no black whatever on upper parts, which are plain grayish brown; white markings of scapu-

lars and wing feathers nearly obsolete, sides and flanks much paler in color, and size somewhat greater.

"*Adult male* (132,720, U. S. National Museum, Mount Orizaba, Mexico, alt. 11,000 feet; Ulysses O. Cox): Above uniform dull grayish brown, slightly tinged with olive, scarcely darker on the head; outermost scapulars with marginal elongated spots of white, and lowermost middle and greater wing-coverts with more roundish terminal spots of the same; no white markings on the remiges, but primaries edged with light brownish gray; tail (except middle feathers) very dark brown, the three outermost feathers with a large, abruptly defined white spot terminating the inner web, that on the lateral feather nearly one inch long. Chin, throat, and chest blackish brown, gradually lightening on the sides of the head and grading gradually into color of the crown, the throat spotted with white beneath the surface; sides, flanks, and under tail-coverts ochraceous buff, somewhat deeper anteriorly; median lower parts white, broadest and purest anteriorly next to blackish brown of the chest. Bill black; legs light brown, toes darker. Total length (skin), 8.30; wing, 3.35; tail, 3.85; exposed culmen, 0.60; tarsus, 1.17; middle toe, 0.78."

17. *Aphelocoma sieberii* (*Wagl.*). SIEBER'S JAY.—Two fine specimens were taken near San Andres at the beginning of the timber on Peak Orizaba. Others were seen.

18. *Corvus corax sinuatus?* (*Wagl.*). MEXICAN RAVEN.—One was seen and heard about midway between lower timber line and snow line on Peak Orizaba.

19. *Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides* *Sw.* WHITE-RUMPED SHRIKE.—One specimen was taken near the timber line at the foot of Peak Orizaba. No others were seen.

20. *Dendroica olivacea* (*Gir.*). OLIVE WARBLER.—Two specimens, a male and a female, were taken at an elevation of 11,000 feet. No others were seen.

21. *Ergaticus ruber* (*Sw.*). RED WARBLER.—One specimen was taken at an elevation of 11,000 feet. Several others were seen.

22. *Troglodytes brunneicollis* *ScL.* TAWNY-THROATED WREN.—Two specimens were taken at an elevation of 11,000 feet and a number of others were seen.

23. *Certhia familiaris alticola* *Mill.* MEXICAN CREEPER.—Two specimens taken at 11,000 feet.

24. *Sitta pigmæa* *Vig.* PYGMY NUTHATCH.—One specimen was taken at the city of Orizaba and two at snow line, 14,000 feet, on Peak Orizaba. They were quite abundant at the latter place.

25. *Sitta carolinensis mexicana* *Nels. and Palm.*—One specimen, taken at an elevation of 9000 feet. Not common.

26. *Parus meridionalis* *ScL.?* MEXICAN CHICKADEE.—This can only be reported as doubtful for the specimen taken was so mutilated that it was not preserved.

27. *Regulus satrapa aztecus* *Lawr.* ?—Can only be reported as doubtful, since the specimen was not preserved. Others were seen.

28. *Sialia mexicana* *Sw.* MEXICAN BLUEBIRD.—One specimen, a young bird, was taken at the snow line, 14,000 feet. Several others were seen.

In addition to the above species a flock of Parrots was seen and their notes distinctly heard, above the deep pine forest about midway between upper and lower timber lines on the Peak.

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### AN HISTORIC LETTER.

BY JOHN H. SAGE.

MR. GEORGE W. CONCKLIN, of Portland, Conn., recently presented me with a letter which I think of historic interest enough to be published. It was written by Mr. John L. Gardiner of Gardiner's Island, N. Y., to Alexander Wilson, and dated April 30, 1810. The date as given is erased in pencil and June 5 (also in pencil) written over it. The letter is superscribed: "Mr. Alexander Willson, Author of the American Ornithology, Philadelphia," but there is nothing to show that it was ever sent, being kept probably as a copy. In Wilson's account of the Fish Hawk he speaks of his "worthy friend Mr. Gardiner," and quotes practically from this letter in many instances. When writing of the Bald Eagle, Wilson refers to "Mr. John L. Gardiner, who resides on an island of three thousand acres, about three miles from the eastern point of Long Island, from which it is separated by Gardiner's Bay," words almost identical with those written in the letter before me. The gentleman who gave me the letter is well along in years and a relative of the Gardiner family. He tells me that the precious document had been in the possession of his father for many years previous to his death.

"Gardiner's Island April 30th 1810.

"Mr. Alexander Willson.

"I have received so much instruction & amusement from reading your first and second volume of Ornithology and as a real American am so well pleased with the execution of the work