

everywhere, the accacia trees being often selected. The nest is usually a rude platform of dried twigs, with a round depression in the middle lined with fine roots, etc.; in this are laid three eggs, which vary considerably in color and marking; clutches are rarely found to be alike. The general color is pale green, spotted and blotched with brown; they measure $1.06 \times .74$.

72. *Merula gymnophthalma* (Caban.). YELLOW-EYED GRIEVE; THRUSH.—Not numerous; frequents the mango and other thick-leaved trees. Its notes, heard in the mornings, are very musical and varied; one note in particular is a liquid metallic tinkle. The nest is usually composed of dry roots and mud with no soft lining; the eggs are three in number, pale green thickly spotted with brown, and measure $1.06 \times .80$.

73. *Margarops albiventris* (Lawr.). SPOTTED THRUSH.—This bird was not seen here until after the terrible hurricane which devastated the neighboring Island of St. Vincent on 11 September, 1898, when numbers of them arrived, and it may now be considered as resident.

A NEW LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN FROM EAST-ERN NORTH AMERICA.

BY OUTRAM BANGS.

AT PRESENT there are confused under the name *Cistothorus palustris* (Wilson) two quite distinct birds; one, true *C. palustris*, breeding in the salt and brackish marshes of the Atlantic coast from Connecticut southward; the other inhabiting the inland fresh-water marshes and extending north to Massachusetts, Ontario and southern Manitoba. The former, a small bird, has the chin, throat and belly pure white and the breast is usually white also, though sometimes faintly clouded with pale brownish, with the rump, upper tail-coverts and scapulars dusky brown. The latter is a decidedly larger form, in which the chin, throat and belly are buffy or brownish white, the breast much more distinctly clouded with brownish and the rump, upper tail-coverts and scapulars reddish brown.

My attention was first called to the differences between these two Marsh Wrens by a series of winter specimens sent me by Mr. Arthur T. Wayne of Mount Pleasant, S. C. Familiar with the

fresh-water bird from my earliest collecting days, I at once recognized a stranger in the little white-bellied, dark-backed form that winters in the coastal marshes of South Carolina. Since then, with the help of Mr. Wm. Brewster's large series and what other specimens could be borrowed, I have worked out the distribution of the two, and find the little white-bellied form to be peculiar to the salt marshes of the coast and the larger brownish-bellied bird to be restricted, in the breeding season, to the fresh-water marshes of the Atlantic watershed.

Certhia palustris Wilson was unequivocally based on the small white-bellied form, and the larger bird of the fresh marshes is the one in need of a name.

As with all Long-billed Marsh Wrens, there is some individual variation in color in both the eastern races; thus occasionally a bird taken in the breeding season in the salt marshes of Connecticut, or southward, will not be so white below as usual, or another will have the lower back rather redder than it ought; now and then, also, a bird from the fresh-water marshes of Massachusetts or elsewhere will slightly approach in color to true *C. palustris*; but size is an infallible test, and these slightly off color examples will always be found to agree in this respect with the more typical specimens of their own race. Were it not for this individual variation in color, rare as it is, I should unhesitatingly pronounce the two birds here treated distinct species, so sharply are their habitats defined, and so great is the difference in size between them.

From either of the western races, *Cistothorus palustris paludicola* Baird or *C. palustris plesius* Oberholser, the eastern forms can be told by many slight, though pretty constant characters as pointed out by Mr. Oberholser.¹

South of the range of true *C. palustris* and living under much the same conditions, the salt marsh of the coast, a very different bird — *C. griseus* Brewster — occurs. I can find no sign of intergradation between these two and most emphatically regard the latter as a distinct species. This bird breeds and is resident from the coast of South Carolina to Matanzas Inlet, Florida. At

¹ Auk, Vol. XIV, April, 1897, pp. 186-196. 'Critical Remarks on *Cistothorus palustris* (Wils.) and its Western Allies.' By Harry C. Oberholser.

St. Marys, Ga., I became very familiar with it. In early April the males were in full song and nest building had just begun, the great salt marsh teemed with them and their cheerful little songs could be heard everywhere. One peculiarity of *C. griseus* is that it sings low down in the grass wholly out of sight, whereas *C. palustris* usually sings from a high stalk in plain view above the marsh. At Mount Pleasant, S. C., *C. griseus* is the breeding form — much rarer now than formerly owing to severe storms of a few winters ago — and true *C. palustris* winters there in numbers, but in spring retires northward to breed. Mr. Wayne occasionally gets also in winter an individual or two of the new form here described, which is very easily told at this time of year from either of the others.

The two forms of Long-billed Marsh Wrens, hitherto confused under the name *Cistothorus palustris*, can, I think, be recognized by the following brief diagnoses. Care must always be taken, however, in identifying specimens, that one has properly sexed specimens, as females are much smaller than males, and wrongly sexed skins (unfortunately too frequent even when made by good collectors) are confusing. In autumnal plumage the color differences between the two races are exaggerated and thus winter and autumn specimens are easiest to tell apart. In worn mid-summer plumage the difference in the color of the back is not so noticeable, but even then the much whiter underparts of true *C. palustris* is a strong color character. The difference in size is always constant, true *C. palustris* being a much smaller bird in every way — wing, tail, tarsus and bill — than its neighbor of the fresh-water marshes.

Cistothorus (*Telmatodytes*) *palustris palustris* (*Wils.*).

Type locality: Tidal marshes of the Pennsylvania rivers.¹

Distribution: Salt and brackish marshes of Atlantic coast from Con-

¹ Wilson did not give a definite type locality for his *Certhia palustris*, saying, "It arrives in Pennsylvania about the middle of May, or as soon as the reeds and a species of nymphæa, usually called splatter-docks, which grow in great luxuriance along the tide water of our rivers are sufficiently high to shelter it."

necticut southward to Maryland and Virginia; in winter to coast of South Carolina.

Characters: Size small: in ♂, wing 47 to 48 mm.; tail, 40.5 to 41.5; tarsus, 17.5 to 18; exposed culmen, 14 to 15; in ♀, wing, 43.5 to 46; tail, 35.6 to 38; tarsus, 17 to 17.5; exposed culmen, 13.5 to 14; bill slender in proportion. Pale areas of under parts—chin, throat and middle of belly—pure white, the breast usually white also, but sometimes faintly clouded with Isabella color; rump, upper tail-coverts and scapulars dusky brown—Prout's brown to mummy brown.

***Cistothorus (Telmatodytes) palustris dissaëptus*,**
subsp. nov.

Type, from Wayland, Mass., No. 9796 coll. of E. A. and O. Bangs, adult ♂ taken May 31, 1879 by E. A. and O. Bangs.

Distribution: In the breeding season fresh-water marshes of eastern United States and parts of Canada, certainly from the Middle States north to Massachusetts, Ontario and southern Manitoba. Winters from Massachusetts southward, perhaps to eastern Mexico.

Characters: Size large: in ♂, wing 50.5 to 52; tail, 40 to 42; tarsus, 19.5 to 20.5; exposed culmen, 15 to 15.5; in ♀ wing, 48 to 49; tail, 40 to 40.5; tarsus, 18 to 19.5; exposed culmen, 14 to 15; bill stout in proportion. Pale areas of under parts—chin, throat and middle of belly—buffy white to pale wood brown, the breast usually much clouded with wood brown; rump, upper tail-coverts and scapulars reddish brown—russet to burnt umber.

According to my views of the relationships of the Long-billed Marsh Wrens, the various forms of the subgenus *Telmatodytes* should be arranged as follows.

Cistothorus palustris palustris (Wils.). Salt marshes of Atlantic coast from Connecticut to Virginia, in winter to South Carolina.

Cistothorus palustris dissaëptus Bangs. Fresh-water marshes of eastern United States and parts of Canada, breeding from Middle States to Massachusetts, Ontario and southern Manitoba, wintering from Massachusetts southward, probably to eastern Mexico.

Cistothorus palustris paludicola Baird. Pacific coast region of United States and southern British Columbia. Probably nearly non-migratory.

Cistothorus palustris plesius Oberholser. Western United States and interior British Columbia from the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mts. to the Rocky Mts., south to southern Mexico. Probably only migratory at

northern parts of its range. Probably also breeds in southern Mexico, as I have an adult ♀ taken at Jalapa April 15, 1897, by Mr. C. B. Isham.¹

Cistothorus mariaæ Scott. Salt marshes of western Florida, non-migratory.

Cistothorus griseus Brewster. Salt marshes of Atlantic coast, from South Carolina to Matanzas Inlet, Fla., non-migratory.

SICKLE-BILLED CURLEW.

BY C. W. WICKERSHAM.

THE NAME Curlew, or Curlieu, is applied to this genus as an imitation of its long, short-ending call note and originates with the French, whence the second name mentioned above. Species of Curlew are met with all over the known world, but none, except, perhaps, the Australian Curlew, can vie with our Sickle-bill either in size, shyness or cunning.

The Sickle-billed Curlew (*Numenius longirostris*) is found in almost every part of North America but it is only in the west and extreme south that it is met with in considerable numbers; the southwest in winter and the northwest in summer. On our Atlantic seaboard it is famous for its littoral habits, nesting in the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida, on the beaches and keys, spending his days probing the sand, wet from the retreating tide, for his food and generally supplementing the proof furnished by his long curved bill that he belongs, body and soul, to the shore birds.

But in the interior he leads quite a different life; for here we

¹ The occurrence of this species at Jalapa is recorded by Mr. F. M. Chapman (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., X, 1898, p. 23) as follows: "On the outskirts of Jalapa there is a small marsh grown with high grasses and reeds, in which there were about a dozen individuals of this bird, which has apparently not before been recorded from Mexico. The three specimens secured are evidently to be referred to the interior form of Long-billed Marsh Wren recently distinguished by Mr. H. C. Oberholser under the above name [*Cistothorus palustris plesius*]. They were females, and on dissection the ovaries showed no signs of enlargement."