

return of the female, and I must admit that it was with some difficulty that I was able to discover the nest again, so well was it hidden. The female again hurriedly flushed which helped me out from further search. In late summer and early fall it is a tedious matter to make these little mouse-like sparrows flush, and once put up they pitch down into the grass apparently only a short distance away, and evidently worm their way through the tangled grass to a distant part of the field. In 1905 I saw the first bird April 30, and the last Oct. 1; in 1904 the last was secured Oct. 2. In 1906 I noted the first May 6; in 1908, May 6; and in 1909, May 12. — B. H. SWALES, *Grosse Isle, Mich.*

The Impaling Instinct in Shrikes.—The shrike habit of impaling its prey on thorns is mentioned in nearly every book on birds, but the greatest diversity exists as to the reason given for the habit, some maintaining that it is done out of an innate love of torture, others, to lure other victims, still others, that it serves only as a fork to hold the prey, while most seem to agree with Audubon that it is "quite a mystery."

As I can find, in the literature at my disposal, only three references to its returning to feed on its victim (Condor, IV, also quoted in Bailey's 'Handbook of the Birds of the Western United States'; Bull. 9, U. S. Dept. of Agric., Div. of Biol. Sur.; and Knight's statement in 'Birds of Maine' that "sometimes they do" return), it seemed desirable to put the following observation on record.

The shrike (*Lanius ludovicianis excubitorides*) in the vicinity of Albuquerque, New Mexico, feeds, during the late fall and winter, quite frequently on the lizards (*Uta stansburiana* and *Holbrookia maculata*) which usually are about in some numbers during the warmer hours of an average winter day. These the shrike impales on thorns, etc., according to its usual custom with small birds and grasshoppers. But the month of December, 1909, was unusually cold and the lizards did not appear.

While riding over the mesa early in January I both saw and heard a shrike perched on a desert willow (*Chilopsis*) feeding on some dry hard substance. Examination showed that the food was the extremely dry bodies of some lizards that had all the appearance of having been placed there several weeks before. The ground about was strewn with fragments and there were still many on the thorn-like branches of the *Chilopsis*. It was the noise the bird made in his attempt to break up this material that first attracted my attention. It is well to observe that in our dry atmosphere such an impaled animal does not decay as it would in a more humid climate but cures perfectly. In fact the native people regularly dry pieces of meat for future use by fastening it to the clothes-line where it is exposed to the almost tropical sun and desert wind.—J. R. WATSON, *University of New Mexico.*

Petrochelidon fulva pallida in Texas.—Among a number of skins collected at Kerrville, Texas, by Mr. Isadore Prions which I recently received