

REMARKS ON COLORADO BIRDS.

BY WILLOUGHBY P. LOWE, M. B. O. U.

THE following notes relate to some birds occurring in Pueblo or Huerfano Counties about which a few observations made between the years 1888 and 1901, may be of interest to future workers on Colorado ornithology. At that time when the country southwest of Pueblo was free range and my daily occupation was to ride it, gun in hand, I had exceptional opportunities to study the birds. Since those days it is much changed and farms and farming have taken the place of a free, wild expanse of country and bird and animal life must necessarily change also. Birds like the Wild Turkey were practically extinct in 1888 and are now never likely to be seen again in a wild state. On the other hand artificial ponds and increased vegetation will no doubt attract birds not seen in those days. The late Prof. W. W. Cooke and Mr. Wm. Selater have written most useful works on Colorado birds. In these books there are mentioned some species whose occurrence at certain times of the year or whose nesting in this district is doubtful or unrecorded. It is in such cases where possible that I have given a note on the subject trusting that they will be acceptable to those who are still working on Colorado birds.

Pelecanus erythrorhynchos. AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN.— I have a fine female killed on Lake Minnequa, Pueblo. This species formerly occurring quite plentifully on migration has been so persecuted on arrival that very few if any survived to continue their journeys to and from their breeding grounds so that latterly it was less often seen.

Pisobia maculata. PECTORAL SANDPIPER.— Usually very common during wet seasons in Pueblo County out on the open plains where large sheets of water often remain for a month or two in the spring and fall.

Callipepla squamata. SCALED QUAIL.— Previous to my recording the capture of this species in 'The Auk' in 1895 I had on two occasions four years before put up quail on dry hillsides which I believe belonged to this species and I therefore have no doubt that Prof. Cooke's statement that it had been known to the cowboys many years ago is quite correct.

Meleagris gallapavo merriami. MERRIAM'S TURKEY.— The only time I met with the Wild Turkey in Pueblo Co. was in the spring of 1895

in some thick piñon trees. Unfortunately I was not able to shoot it, but it probably belonged to this subspecies.

Columba fasciata fasciata. BAND-TAILED PIGEON.—During the breeding season and summer months these birds are usually seen singly or in pairs, but during the autumn in the Red Cañon, Wet Mts., Huerfano Co., they congregate in large flocks of several hundred birds prior to their departure south.

Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis. AMERICAN ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK.—This species is not plentiful in Pueblo Co., and I have not observed it in Huerfano Co. I have seen it chiefly in the spring and fall, usually perched on a fence post.

Thrasaetus harpyia. HARPY EAGLE.—This is only an accidental visitor to Colorado. One was shot by Geo. Cress of Lees, Pueblo Co., some years ago and preserved by Doertenbach of Pueblo, who informed me upon inquiries that there was no doubt as to its identification. A short notice mentioning its capture appeared in the "Field and Farm" newspaper of Denver.

Haliaeetus l. leucocephalus. BALD EAGLE.—Seen on only two occasions in Pueblo Co. during the spring, flying along the edge of a mesa.

Falco mexicanus. PRAIRIE FALCON.—Occurs in Pueblo Co. at all times of the year. I have taken a specimen in January.

Pandion haliaetus carolinensis. AMERICAN OSPREY.—I have only noticed these birds in Pueblo Co. during the spring at which season I obtained a nice specimen in the St. Charles Cañon.

Otus asio maxwelliae. ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCREECH OWL.—Both *maxwelliae* and *aikeni* occur in Pueblo Co. Nests may be found in holes of juniper trees. I agree with Mr. Selater who doubts whether these two subspecies can be kept separate, and a large series if collected would probably prove them to be synonymous. They feed on mice and grasshoppers.

Speotyto cunicularia hypogæa. BURROWING OWL.—In Pueblo Co. I have never met with these birds during the winter months and I do not believe that they winter here.

Dryobates scalaris bairdi. TEXAN WOODPECKER.—This is probably the rarest woodpecker of the district and in its habits differs from all the others by its love for cactus bushes which it climbs readily, being quite indifferent to the terrible spikes. It is also found, though more rarely, in the juniper and piñon trees.

Cypseloides niger borealis. BLACK SWIFT.—I have never seen these birds in Pueblo Co., but I once saw a single individual on the plains at about 6,000 feet in Huerfano Co. during June, 1892.

Selasphorus platycercus. BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD.—Nests regularly in Pueblo Co., usually in scrub oak bushes.

Pica pica hudsonia. AMERICAN MAGPIE.—This variety differs in its habits from the European bird by its excessive noisiness.

Corvus corax sinuatus. WESTERN RAVEN.—Nests regularly in the St. Charles Cañon, Pueblo Co.

Cyanocephalus cyanocephalus. PIÑON JAY.—A common resident in Pueblo and Huerfano Cos., resting in colonies in the piñon trees. When the corn is ripe large flocks do considerable damage.

Molothrus a. ater. COWBIRD.—Common and breeds regularly in Pueblo Co., where the young may be seen yearly fed by Gnatcatchers. It is rather strange that I have never known them to lay their eggs in the nest of any other species though they doubtless do so.

Hesperiphona vespertina montana. WESTERN EVENING GROSBEAK.—Occurs regularly every winter though some years more abundantly than others feeding on the kernels of juniper berries. They frequently remain until quite late in the spring.

Cardinalis cardinalis cardinalis. CARDINAL.—I have a fine male obtained by the late Capt. Ingraham near Beulah, Pueblo Co. Whether it was an escaped bird or not it is impossible to say.

Guiraca caerulea lazula. WESTERN BLUE GROSBEAK.—Nests regularly in the St. Charles Cañon, but never very plentiful.

Calamospiza melanocorys. LARK BUNTING.—During some years these birds nest by countless thousands in Pueblo Co., where their pleasing song and pied plumage must attract the most casual observer. At other times very few are to be seen.

Stelgidopteryx serripennis. ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW.—Scarce in Pueblo Co. I have only seen and taken one specimen.

Bombycilla garrula. BOHEMIAN WAXWING.—Occurs both in Pueblo and Huerfano Cos. The enormous quantities that visit Pueblo Co. during some winters is astonishing, densely packed flocks two miles long and a quarter of a mile wide occur. When a Pigeon Hawk dashes into their midst the sound of their wings must be heard to be appreciated. They feed on juniper berries which grow along the edges of the mesas, and by preference those that have a southern aspect.

Bombycilla cedrorum. CEDAR WAXWING.—A very scarce bird which I have obtained occasionally in the fall in Pueblo Co.

Dendroica townsendi. TOWNSEND'S WARBLER.—In Mr. Drew's excellent paper on Colorado birds published in 'The Auk' in 1885, this species is included in the breeding birds which is doubtless quite correct. In the Wet Mts., Huerfano Co., though I have unfortunately never visited the district early enough to find nests, I have found old birds at the end of the summer together with young, which were no doubt reared there. They frequent the lonely pine forests in company with tits, vireos, nuthatches and other warblers.

Oreoscoptes montanus. SAGE THRASHER.—Curiously I have only noticed these birds in the fall in Pueblo Co., at which season they are very abundant in the juniper country. They are remarkably tame and I have known them to come into my tent for a drink of water.