

Notes from the Lower Rio Grande Valley.—The writer passed the period, November 7, 1936, to April 28, 1937, in the Brownsville region. Extracts from his notes, with regard to forms the status of which, in the light of previously published material, seems to have changed, are given below. A few other items of apparent interest are also presented.

LOON, *Gavia immer* (race?).—Dr. J. A. Hockaday, of Point Isabel, showed me a photograph of a mounted bird which he had shot at that place in the autumn of 1931. The specimen was destroyed in the hurricane which later visited that region.

EASTERN BROWN PELICAN, *Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis*.—This species is decidedly not common now on that part of the Laguna Madre lying within Cameron County.

WATER TURKEY, *Anhinga anhinga*.—A group of from twenty to thirty birds, from which specimens were obtained by D. J. Bullock, was present near the southwestern border of Cameron County throughout the period covered by our observations.

AMERICAN EGRET, *Casmerodius albus egretta*.—This species, once reported rare and local, may be considered as fairly common at this time.

SNOWY EGRET, *Egretta thula thula*.—Outnumbering any other species of this order now to be found in the region, *Egretta thula* should figure as abundant.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL, *Ajaia ajaja*.—Local observers informed us that large numbers visited the "resacas" about the city in late summer. We saw but one, January 13, feeding with a mixed company of herons, egrets and ducks. When the birds flew the spoonbill joined a flock of Black Ducks and continued with it until it passed from view.

BLACK BRANT, *Branta nigricans*.—A bird of this species, not heretofore recorded from the region, was seen on the coastal plains, in company with three Lesser Snow Geese (*Chen hyperborea hyperborea*), November 18, 1936. One of the latter had a crippled leg and another was in immature plumage and scarcely larger than the brant. Except in the case of this oddly assorted group, seen within twenty-five yards of the highway, snow geese were difficult of approach. This quartet seemed loath to fly in the cold and rain and faced us directly where we stopped our car. The extensive black area on the breast and belly of the brant was advantageously observed.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, *Anser albifrons albifrons*.—No longer a common winter resident. It was confidently looked for because of reports of its former abundance at this season but we saw it only twice. A flock of thirty, February 24, and a flock of six, March 16, were seen on the coastal prairies.

RED-LEGGED BLACK DUCK, *Anas rubripes rubripes*.—Not on all occasions were we able to get a satisfactory view of occasional flocks of Black Ducks; but a flock of about twenty, preening and resting on a ditch bank, January 13, was seen to have bright-red tarsi.

WHITE-TAILED KITE, *Elanus leucurus majusculus*.—Uncommon. The first one was seen January 31, after which a few were present up to the time of our departure. Our notes show that it was observed on eleven occasions and in four separate localities. On February 13, two were seen together.

AMERICAN ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, *Buteo lagopus s. johannis*.—Dr. J. A. Hockaday, of Point Isabel, gave me a photograph of a mounted bird of this species which he had shot in that locality in the autumn of 1931. His collection, of which it was a part, was destroyed in the hurricane which later visited the region.

OSPREY, *Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis*.—Seen but once, December 8, 1936, at Point Isabel.

APLOMADO FALCON, *Falco fusco-coerulescens septentrionalis*.—Dr. Hockaday

showed me a photograph of a mounted bird which he had shot in the autumn of 1931, the specimen itself having been destroyed. W. H. Blanchard, Audubon warden, told me that he had not seen this falcon for four years.

KING RAIL, *Rallus elegans elegans*.—One was seen March 19, 1937, some miles northwest of Point Isabel, in a freshwater ditch.

PIPING PLOVER, *Charadrius melodus*.—Noted on three occasions near Boca Chica beach, November 8, December 4 and March 18.

SNOWY PLOVER, *Charadrius nivosus* (race?).—One was recorded on the flats near Boca Chica beach, March 5, 1937.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER, *Pluvialis dominica dominica*.—One was seen March 19 and another March 29.

HUDSONIAN CURLEW, *Phaeopus hudsonicus*.—Flocks of from ten to fifteen were seen on the higher parts of the prairies, east and north of Brownsville, March 11, April 10, April 25 and 27. Specimens were obtained by Mr. Bullock, March 3.

EASTERN WILLET AND WESTERN WILLET, *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus semipalmatus* and *inornatus*.—Specimens obtained by Mr. Bullock in winter, March 5 and March 10, refer to the western form. Spring birds collected, April 10 and April 23, are referred to typical *semipalmatus*.

RED-BACKED SANDPIPER, *Pelidna alpina sakhalina*.—Not found to be uncommon after March 29. Prior to that date it was seen December 4 and March 19.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE, *Steganopus tricolor*.—Birds in full breeding plumage were seen April 25.

HERRING GULL, *Larus argentatus smithsonianus*.—Previously reported uncommon in winter, this species, in immature plumage was found everywhere, during the period of our residence in Brownsville. The city dump, the 'resacas,' the ponds of the coastal prairies and the gulf beach were its chief resorts.

BONAPARTE'S GULL, *Larus philadelphia*.—Apparently not previously noted in this region. One was seen, December 4, swimming in a prairie pond, not far from the gulf in company of a Ring-billed Gull. Another, swimming, was seen in the harbor at Point Isabel, February 13.

GROOVE-BILLED ANI, *Crotophaga sulcirostris sulcirostris*.—Seen in small groups—five to seven—November 19 to March 8. After this we saw none; but W. H. Blanchard tells me that the birds are not rare as breeders in the Brownsville area. Mr. Bullock reports a small flock present September 8, 1937.

BUFF-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD, *Amazilia yucatenensis chalconota*.—Seen April 21 and 22, a pair in the garden. The bright red bill, common to several South American hummers, seems not to be mentioned in reference works describing the species.

DERBY FLYCATCHER, *Pitangus sulphuratus derbianus*.—A habit observed in the case of the Least Flycatcher, that of frequently preparing the nest some time in advance of occupancy, seems to be shared by the present species. A nest, complete, March 27, did not have a full set of five eggs until April 12. This date appears to represent an early laying.

WHITE-NECKED RAVEN, *Corvus cryptoleucus*.—The species was unprecedentedly abundant, according to local observers. It first appeared November 15 and individuals lingered until April 19. About the city dump there were hundreds. They were quite tame. One sat in a small mesquite, altogether unconcerned, while the observer stood at ten feet and talked to it for some minutes. The white at the base of the neck feathers, said to be concealed at all times, is frequently visible when a strong wind is blowing or when the bird, engaged in feeding on the ground, reaches well beneath its body to peck food held beneath its feet.

EASTERN BLUEBIRD, *Sialia sialis sialis*.—Seen regularly, November 13 to April 24. On the last date a pair was examining old woodpecker holes.

SHRIKE, *Lanius ludovicianus* (race?).—The Loggerhead Shrike was found to be abundant, November 7 to April 27. W. H. Blanchard, with field experience of more than thirty years in the region, tells me that he has never found a shrike's nest there. It is unlikely that he would have overlooked nests so conspicuous. Mr. Bullock reports that the species disappeared in May but returned by September 1.

RIO GRANDE VIREO, *Vireo griseus micrus*.—The finding of a nest of this species, with three eggs, on April 1, is presumably unusual. In another nest, found April 12, eggs had not yet been laid. In any event it is strange to northern experience to find a vireo nesting three weeks in advance of a raven. (The White-necked Raven did not depart for its nesting grounds until April 19.)

WORM-EATING WARBLER, *Helmitheros vermivorus*.—Not previously reported from the area as far as we have been able to discover. One was seen in the garden, April 13.

AUDUBON'S WARBLER, *Dendroica auduboni auduboni*.—The writer saw two on January 4 and one each on January 5 and February 5. Mr. Bullock collected one January 4.

CERULEAN WARBLER, *Dendroica cerulea*.—Seen but once, April 13.

RIO GRANDE MEADOWLARK, *Sturnella magna hoopesi*.—Mr. Bullock shot a number of meadowlarks which were examined by Dr. Max M. Peet of the University of Michigan and ascribed to this form.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK, *Sturnella neglecta*.—Encountered with certainty but once when a small perching flock was discovered, February 28. Our attention was drawn to them by their characteristic song.

SHARPE'S SEEDEATER, *Sporophila moreletii sharpei*.—Little has been published recently, regarding the breeding of this species. Two nests were found. In one case building began April 15, the nest was complete and contained one egg on the 22d and, on the 26th, there were three eggs, evidently a full clutch. Another nest with two eggs was found on the 26th; when revisited several days later, no eggs had been added. Nests were similar in situation, a few feet up in a slender shrub near the bank of a 'resaca.' They were composed chiefly of rootlets of a light-yellow color as were those described by Dr. Merrill in 1878.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW, *Melospiza lincolni lincolni*.—Astonishingly abundant and familiar. Occasionally, after rain, they could be seen drinking and bathing in puddles on street and sidewalk pavements, this, of course, in sections of the city outside the business district.—EDWARD R. FORD, *Chicago Academy of Sciences, Chicago, Illinois.*