

Ellicott, Andrew

Hints relative to Swallows. Second Supplement [1807], pp. 116-118. (Extracts on subaqueous torpidity of swallows from [Jean Francois] Regnard, Voyage into Lapland, 1681, Edition Stéréotype Vol. 5.)

Gregg, Amos

Memoranda on the natural history . . . of the Island of Hayti. II (II), 1806, pp. 18-23. (Birds, pp. 19-21.)

Peck, William D.

Tabula Avium alibi hiemantium tempore vernali adventum commonstrans. First Supplement, 1806, pp. 55-56. (Introductory remarks and table giving dates of arrival of 20 species at Kittery, Maine, during the years 1792 to 1800, inclusive.)

Vaughan, John, and Robert Milligan

Facts and observations relative to the North-American Woodcock. II (I), 1806, pp. 68-70. (Mating performance and song.)

Cessation of publication was for some unforeseen reason, as in the terminal section the Editor refers to a biographical sketch, "it is the intention . . . to give in a future number . . ."—W. L. McATEE, 3 *Davie Circle, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.*

Cassin's Kingbird in Canada.—On June 4, 1953, Mr. Alan Gordon, a forester with the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, observed a strange kingbird "lazily flycatching from the tall shrubs along the beach" of Grand Lake, at Achray, in northeastern Algonquin Park, Ontario. On the following day (June 5) he secured the bird and prepared it as a specimen which was forwarded to the Royal Ontario Museum (no. 81283). The specimen proves to be an example (sex not determined) of Cassin's Kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*).

Except for the tertials the flight feathers are worn and the outer primaries are not emarginate. The rectrices are worn and relatively narrow. These features suggest that the specimen is a yearling. In color, tone, and size, it agrees with specimens from Arizona and California with which it was compared. Measurements in millimeters are as follows: length (by collector), 215; chord of wing, 126; tail, 90; length of bill from anterior edge of nostril, 14; width of bill through nostril, 8.8. The specimen is accordingly referred to the nominate race.

The species has not been recorded previously for Canada, and its occurrence northeastward far beyond its normal range is apparently unique.—L. L. SNYDER, *Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology and Palaeontology, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto 5, Canada.*

Birds and Butterflies or Vice Versa.—During the third week in June, 1952, while driving along the Steece Highway (which runs in a north-easterly direction from Fairbanks to Circle, Alaska), I noticed a congregation of the Pacific Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio rutulus*) "drinking" at a damp spot a few yards off to one side of the highway. After stopping the car to investigate and "flushing" the butterflies, it was noticed that there were many detached butterfly wings scattered over the ground where the insects had gathered. The probable reason for the presence of the wings soon became apparent when a White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) was seen to make an unsuccessful attempt to catch one of the butterflies after the swarm had resettled on the damp patch of ground they had previously occupied.

Further evidence that birds actually catch and feed on butterflies assembling at favorite places, at least in this part of Alaska, was found a few days later while on a

collecting trip a few miles south of Fairbanks. In the bed of a stream or small river, swallow-tails were seen congregating in several different areas on the wet sand and gravel bars. Here, as before, many detached wings were scattered over the ground. In this case, however, there were more birds in attendance—White-throated Sparrows, Slate-colored Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*), and Alaskan Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*).

Since no bird was actually seen to catch a butterfly, the attention of birds around the congregated swarms of butterflies and the presence of numerous detached wings found in the damp areas where these insects had assembled might represent only circumstantial evidence. Nevertheless, there is little doubt, at least in the writer's opinion, that birds were solely responsible for the presence of the detached wings. The Swallow-tail is a relatively large insect with a wing expanse of approximately three to three and one-half inches. It is therefore evident that it would be difficult for a bird of the size of a White-throated Sparrow to swallow one of these butterflies without first stripping its body of wings.

The reader may think "What is there unusual about this"? Butterflies assembling at damp places, at sap exuding from tree trunks in the spring or at garbage dumps or even on dead or putrifying animal matter, are a common sight to almost anyone who has travelled in rural areas during the time that butterflies abound. This is true, at least of any suitable place in *temperate* or *subtropical North America*. Various species of swallow-tails are conspicuous because of their relatively large size and striking coloration. Yet, while they are usually common and well distributed, the writer does not know of a single authentic record of any species of bird in the United States or Canadian territory, catching and removing the wings of swallow-tails or other species of butterflies assembling in numbers at damp spots. Neither has he observed any similar circumstances although he has collected lepidoptera in all but a few states of the Union during a period of over forty years. Why, then, should birds in the Fairbanks area resort to this method of feeding when it does not appear to have been witnessed elsewhere? Could it be that in this part of Alaska food material is relatively scarce (late in June) causing birds to supplement their diet by catching butterflies assembling in large numbers and thereby providing a concentration of food obtained fairly easily, at least with acquired experience? If so, why is it that this does not appear to happen in the United States or perhaps elsewhere?

This is not all. North of the Arctic Circle, from the northern slope of the Brooks Range to the Arctic coast, no butterflies of any species were seen to collect at damp areas either singly or in groups in spite of the fact that fourteen or more species were seen and collected. In the mountains or drier portions of northern Alaska another species of swallow-tail butterfly (*Papilio machaon*) occurs in sufficient numbers to be easily seen if it were in the habit of settling or congregating at wet places on the tundra or along the edges of lakes or rivers, yet none was seen to do so. The reason for this might be more easily explained than the difference in the feeding habits of the birds. For instance, it may be that because of the lower ambient temperature north of the Arctic Circle, insect metabolism is slowed down or reduced and consequently the water balance or moisture content of the insect's body is more easily maintained without the need for taking up moisture at mud puddles, etc. To substantiate this hypothesis, it seems to be a rule that the higher the temperature and the lower the humidity (and probably the greater the activity also) the stronger is the tendency for butterflies to collect at wet places for the purpose of maintaining or restoring their water balance. It might be of interest to mention in this connection that all butterflies collecting at suitable places for the purpose of obtaining moisture or soluble food material are *invariably males* and freshly emerged from pupae at that.

How birds can adapt themselves to unusual concentrations of insects was observed while camping at Chandalar Lake on the northern slope of the Brooks Range of mountains. Mosquitoes collected in large numbers on the outside of a white canvas tent two of us were using as living quarters. Several small flocks of immature Alaskan Longspurs soon "caught on" to the fact that the tent acted as an ideal trap or concentration camp for mosquitoes and diligently fed on them both day and night. At first (before knowing what was causing the disturbance) the longspurs were quite perturbing because one or more would lose their footing and slide down the inclined roof of the tent causing a ripping sound suggestive of someone or something trying to rip open the canvas.—GEORGE W. RAWSON, 180 Summit Avenue, Summit, New Jersey.

The Laysan Albatross (*Diomedea immutabilis*) on the Oregon Coast.—On January 30, 1953, Ralph Swan, Fisheries Biologist with the Oregon Game Commission, and I were beachcombing at Sunset Beach, just south of the Columbia River mouth in Clatsop County, Oregon, when Swan found a dead albatross, recently cast ashore and in an excellent state of preservation.

The bird was presented to Stanley G. Jewett who prepared it as a study skin. It proved to be an adult female in fine plumage. Jewett reported the stomach was empty and that the right wing was broken near the outer tip. This broken wing tip may have resulted in the death of the bird by starvation, and the Japanese Current may have carried the bird a considerable distance towards the Oregon coast in this interval. Jewett also noted that the bird's body was much emaciated, without any fat on the skin.

So far as the published records are available to us, this is the first record of the occurrence of this species on the North American coast north of southern California and constitutes a new bird record for Oregon. The specimen is now number 16,616 in the Stanley G. Jewett Collection.—TOM McALLISTER, 3374 S. W. Fairmount Blvd., Portland 1, Oregon.