

The nesting of the Lucifer Hummingbird in the United States.—Since the Lucifer Hummingbird (*Calothorax lucifer*) was first recorded from the United States, its status north of Mexico during the summer months has been uncertain. Van Tyne and Sutton (*Univ. Michigan, Mus. Zool. Misc. Publ.* 37, p. 43, 1937) indicated the possibility of its breeding in the Big Bend region of southwestern Texas.

While working in the Big Bend area in the summers of 1961 and 1962, we observed Lucifer Hummingbirds on several occasions. On 13 July 1962 the junior author was "buzzed" by a female as he hiked down a small canyon on the northeast side of Black Mesa in Section 99, Block G-5, approximately 10 km (6.5 miles) west-northwest of the ghost town Terlingua, in Brewster County, Texas. The refusal of the female to leave the immediate area and her generally aggressive behavior led to the discovery of a nest 2.5 meters (8 feet) up in a dry stalk of a dead lechuguilla (*Agave lechuguilla*) about halfway up the slope of the canyon at an elevation of approximately 1,150 meters (3,800 feet) in a lechuguilla-sotol (*Dasyllirion leiophyllum*)-ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) association. Other plants characteristic of the area were candelilla (*Euphorbia antisyphilitica*), catclaw (*Acacia greggii*), mormon tea (*Ephedra* sp.), yucca (*Yucca* sp.), and various species of cacti.

The nest was found to contain two young estimated to be four or five days old. They were naked except for a slight amount of down along the back. Their heads could be seen resting on the rim of the nest with the bills projecting beyond. The bills of the nestlings were straight and less than half the adult size, and the eyes were open. The young gave little response upon being handled.

On 19 July they were examined again; however, although they were still quite small, few bare spots could be seen. The rectrices and remiges were prominent but still sheathed. The young were very active when held in the hand, and one gave a fairly strong cheep-note and extruded some nectar from the mouth. Since the temperature at 1350 hours was well over 100°F (about 37°C), both nestlings hugged the shade of the lechuguilla stalk.

The female was present upon each observation but made no attempt to come directly to the nest. Except for flying nearby on one occasion she remained perched about 18 meters (60 feet) away. She used several perches, favoring none.

On 31 July we found that the young had left the nest but were still in the vicinity. The female was seen attending the young, and the junior author saw the female feeding one of the young out of the nest. We concluded that the young had fledged one or two days earlier. The time from hatching to fledging was estimated to be 21 to 23 days.

We tried to secure a young bird perched next to the female but, unfortunately, the female was taken instead. By coincidence or not, a male Lucifer Hummingbird then appeared, perched less than 10 meters (30 feet) away, and made no effort to leave the area. This bird was taken also and proved to be fully adult with testes measuring 2×1.5 mm.

On 2 August a second nest was located approximately 1.5 km (1 mile) west of the first nest and in similar habitat. It likewise was on a lechuguilla stalk but at 2 meters (6 feet) from the ground. Surprisingly, at this date, although the nest was incomplete, it held two fresh eggs. While the authors were less than 2 meters (6 feet) away, the female not only sat on the eggs but continued to bring spider webs and work them into the nest. She seemed unresentful of intrusion, even when the eggs and nest were collected. However, a short time later, she was observed vigorously chasing a second female or young male Lucifer Hummingbird from the nesting territory.

The first nest was built upon three dried pods attached to the lechuguilla stalk. Upon these pods the bird had placed the base foundation and built up the nest proper with external measurements of 53 mm (height) and 40 mm (diameter). The interior height was 23 mm and the thickness of the rim about 5 mm. The structure was composed primarily of plant fibers and down with a few dried grass seeds and several small twigs. Much plant down, intermixed with a few feathers, lined the nest, while the outside was beautifully decorated with small leaves. The entire nest was bound together compactly with spider webs, and it was difficult to see even at a short distance because of the leafy camouflage.

The second nest was constructed similarly on two dried pods attached to the stalk of a lechuguilla, and comprised mainly of dried grass seeds and pieces of leaves with a little plant down and one Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) feather in the lining. There were no leaves attached to the exterior spider webs, perhaps because the nest was still unfinished. The external measurements were 30 mm (height) \times 42 mm (diameter), and the internal depth was about 15 mm. This nest also was very compact and sturdy in construction. In neither nest was lichen found in the nesting material contrary to the statement in Bent (*U.S. Natl. Mus., Bull.* 176: 430, 1940).

It is interesting that both nests were in lechuguilla on the sides of the canyons; nests in the bottoms of the canyons might have been subject to flooding by the torrents, often of great force, resulting from the sometimes violent rainstorms of the southwestern desert areas.

The eggs were typical of hummingbirds, elliptical in shape, and dull white in color. The two eggs measured 12.9×8.3 and 13.1×8.5 mm, respectively.

The late nesting (August) date probably can be accounted for by the lack of spring flora and the comparative lateness of the summer rains, which may have delayed the nesting until the prerequisite flowers were available. Although there were scattered herbaceous plants bearing flowers, the principal source of food was cacti in bloom.

Other birds observed in the immediate areas were: Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), Crissal Thrasher (*Toxostoma dorsale*), Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*), Brown Towhee (*Pipilo fuscus*), Rufous-crowned Sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps*), and Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*).

To our knowledge these nests represent the first authentic records of the Lucifer Hummingbird nesting within the boundaries of the United States. Both nests, the set of eggs, and the female and male specimens are now in the possession of the senior author.—WARREN M. PULICH, SR., *Department of Biology, University of Dallas, Dallas, Texas, and WARREN M. PULICH, JR., Irving, Texas.*

Records of the Brown Creeper for interior Alaska.—Because of the paucity of records for the Brown Creeper (*Certhia familiaris*) for interior Alaska (See I. N. Gabrielson and F. C. Lincoln, *Birds of Alaska*. Washington, D. C., Wildlife Management Institute. 1959. Pp. 636–639.) the following seem noteworthy. In the period between 28 September and 14 November 1961 I observed Brown Creepers in the vicinity of Fairbanks, Alaska, on 16 dates. All observations were of a single bird except for 28 September and 2 October when two birds were recorded, one being secured on each date. An additional specimen was taken on 30 September. All three specimens, judged to be immature by their incompletely ossified skulls, were deposited in the Biological Collections, University of Alaska, College, Alaska.—WILLET T. VAN VELZEN, 432 W. Allegan Street, Otsego, Michigan.