in the large burn at Bettles Field 4 June 1963. It weighed 337 g. The stomachs of the two birds taken were empty. Plumages and measurements of the specimens are typical of examples of *A. f. flammeus* in the U. S. National Museum.

Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus richardsoni*).—We have found this species to be most uncommon in summer in the central Range, although Irving (ibid.) reports an October specimen from the northernmost spruces on Savioyok Creek about 12 air miles south of the summit of Anaktuvuk Pass, as well as May and September sight records from localities north of the forest; and the Nunamiut Eskimos told me that the species is common in winter among the spruces of the John River near the mouth of Hunt Fork.

Our only certain regional record of the Boreal Owl is that of an adult female and four fresh eggs Morlan and I took from a nest on the Koyukuk River at Bettles Field 2 June 1963. The nest tree, a cottonwood in a mixed stand of cottonwoods and white spruces, stood 10 feet from the south bank of the River. The nest entrance was a natural opening 4 inches high, 3 inches wide, and 13 feet above the ground on the east side of the tree. The floor of the nest cavity, 7 inches in diameter, was 18 inches below the entrance.

The eggs lay on a bed of clean, dry wood punk, chips, and finely shredded cottonwood bark. Also present were quite a number of dry, leafy shoots of moss of the genus *Mnium*, a few dry basal tufts and stem and blade fragments of grasses (*Gramineae*), and several very small fragments of old fragile cloth. In addition the nest contained more than 300 fluffy breast and belly feathers of the parent, a few flank feathers of ptarmigan (*Lagopus* sp.), various feathers of Spruce Grouse (*Canachites canadensis*), Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), and Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*), and a few tufts of fur (probably of vole, *Microtus* sp.).

The stomach of the incubating female contained only mud and sand. The bird weighed 194 g and was quite fat. It is typical of specimens of *A. f. richardsoni* in the U. S. National Museum. An intensive search of the nearby woods failed to reveal the male. This is apparently the northernmost Alaska nesting record of the Boreal Owl.

I am indebted to Roxie C. Laybourne, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U. S. Department of the Interior, for determining the bird species found in the nest of the Boreal Owl; and to L. D. Potter, Chairman, Department of Biology, University of New Mexico, for determining the plants found in that nest. Among the several organizations that have aided in the field studies from which this report is derived, the Arctic Institute of North American and The Office of Naval Research, United States Navy, have extended nearly continuous support since 1956.—JOHN M. CAMPBELL, *Department of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106.*

The Blue-backed Tanager (*Cyanicterus cyanicterus*), a genus new to Venezuela, with notes on its plumages.—The little-known Blue-backed Tanager, *Cyanicterus cyanicterus* (Vieillot), sole member of its genus, has been recorded primarily as an inhabitant of the Guianas, with an outlying record in Brazil on the lower Rio Negro near Manaus (Meyer de Schauensee, The species of birds of South America, Narberth, Pennsylvania, Livingston Publ. Co., 1966: 483). It will undoubtedly be found eventually in the part of Brazil, ornithologically poorly known, lying south of the Guianas and north of the Rio Negro and the Rio Amazonas. Thus far it has not been reported from Venezuela.

Carnegie Museum has a pair of Blue-backed Tanagers the late M. A. Carriker, Jr.

collected on 2 April 1910 at the Río Yuruán, a tributary of the Cuyuni River in eastern Bolívar, easternmost Venezuela. A third specimen collected the same day, a female, was exchanged to the Royal Natural History Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1931. These three specimens have been overlooked by all compilers of checklists of South American or Venezuelan birds.

As this species is so rare in collections (the nine specimens before me represent the combined holdings of three of the most important South American bird collections in the United States), a few words about its plumages may be in order. Definitively plumaged males in freshly molted plumage have the entire head and chest a rich purplish blue. This same color extends onto the mantle, but here the blue is confined to the outer portions of the feather barbs. The medial portions of the mantle feathers are dull green. In North America we are used to brilliantly colored birds, such as the Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*), becoming progressively brighter as dull-colored feather tips or edgings wear away. In *Cyanicterus* the reverse is true. In worn males the head and chest continue to be rich blue, but the mantle becomes distinctly greenish, rather abruptly demarcated from the blue of the head.

By analogy with other tanagers, one would expect the sexes to be alike, or nearly so, in juvenal plumage. I have seen no juveniles to confirm this. In some sexually dimorphic tanagers, the first basic plumage is essentially female-like. Examples include nearctic *Piranga*, the tropical genus *Habia*, and the tropical *Hemithraupis flavicollis* (Parkes and Humphrey, Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, 76: 81, 1963). In others, *Tachyphonus* sp. for example, males molt directly from the juvenal plumage into a first basic plumage essentially like that of older males. In what I take to be a first-year male of *Cyanicterus* (Carnegie Mus. 61924, Tamanoir, French Guiana, 5 June 1917), several greenish or even yellow feathers are mixed in with the blue feathers of the rump. These appear under a hand lens to be looser in texture than the adjoining blue feathers, and are probably retained from the juvenal plumage. This specimen is in slightly worn plumage and shows no sign of molt. An adult male, also from French Guiana (Carnegie 65516, Pied Saut), was undergoing its complete prebasic molt on 24 December. I hypothesize that a complete first prebasic molt in this species takes males from a yellowish juvenal plumage to a first basic plumage essentially like that of definitive males. First-year birds may be recognized as such by retained juvenal feathers, if any, by somewhat paler and more greenish blue edges of remiges and wing coverts, and especially by distinctly narrower rectrices.

Females are of a paler, more greenish blue than males on the dorsum. Like males, they become progressively greener with wear, but in this case there is no contrast between the crown and the mantle. If I have identified correctly the age classes of the five females before me, the differences are similar to those of males, but less well marked. The rectrices of first-year birds are only slightly narrower than those of adults, and the wing edgings somewhat more greenish blue. Some females have white tips to the inner webs of the outermost pair of rectrices. This character has an "immature" look, but the amount of white appears to be independent of age, as the specimen with the most white (Field Mus. 120478, Itabu Creek, British Guiana, 26 September 1938) appears by wing color and rectrix shape to be an adult. This (and, in fact, most of the statements made here about plumages) must be verified with additional specimens of this rare bird.

I am indebted to Charles O'Brien of the American Museum of Natural History and Emmet R. Blake of the Field Museum of Natural History for lending me specimens of *Cyanicterus*.—KENNETH C. PARKES, *Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213.*