

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Unusual Nesting Site of the Cactus Wren.—A ten years' experience with the cactus wren (*Heleodytes b. brunneicapillus*) has left a memory of fleeting glimpses and hard approaches that characterized the attempts to get better acquainted with this wary bird. They have a way of sliding out of the nest just before one gets a glimpse of it, then appearing momentarily as they dive out of sight behind some clump of brush or tangle of cactus. If followed persistently it becomes a case of hide and seek in which the observer gets little satisfaction. I found a remarkable exception on June 27th this year (1903) when taking a camping trip into the San Gabriel canyon. The road, which crosses the San Gabriel River wash, near Azusa, is bordered by a row of poles carrying high power wires. The two cross arms, carrying twelve wires, are about thirty feet from the ground. A cactus wren had selected the lower of the arms and built a typical nest on the north or shady side of the pole, filling the whole space between it and the large insulator. The beginning of such a nest on the smooth arm would be possible only in a country remarkably free from winds, but after completion, the insulator acted as a set screw to hold it in place.

The road which this line of poles borders is the main travelled road to Pomona, San Bernardino and Redlands, and probably used more than any other long distance road in southern California. In some cases, for instance, a driver on a load of hay would be brought about face to face with this shy bird. While we haulted under the wires to investigate, the female alighted on the cross arm, with food in her bill for the young, which the nest contained.

Often birds are forced to adapt themselves to new conditions by the settlement of a country, which may destroy their natural nesting sites, but in this case there was no apparent reason, as the wash for miles contained hundreds of perfect nesting places, in cactus such as is usually chosen by the cactus wren.

That the bird sometimes does the unusual was noted in another instance, when I found a nest located in an apricot tree. It was the corner tree of an orchard which projected into a large wash, where the cactus and brush for some distance had been cleared. —FRANK S. DAGGETT, Pasadena, Cal.

Records of the Black-throated Sparrow.—So far as published records go the black-throated sparrow, *Amphispiza bilineata deserticola*, is only an accidental visitor to the Pacific slope of Los Angeles county. Joseph Grinnell records, in "Birds of the Pacific Slope of Los Angeles County," a specimen taken in the Arroyo Seco wash near Pasadena, Cal., April 10, 1897, and I learn today of an unrecorded specimen taken by Harry Swarth, in the spring of 1898 in the San Fernando Valley.

On September 12, 1903, while camped by an irrigation ditch on the road between two olive orchards, near Pacoima, a station on the S. P. R. R., a mile north of the Big Tejunga Wash in the San Fernando valley. I noticed a small sparrow moving about among the weeds on the roadside. It darted into the grove as I approached, playing hide and seek behind the low spreading olive branches. It proved to be a young male of the year, with black throat patch still incomplete. —FRANK S. DAGGETT, Pasadena, Cal.

Records from the Vicinity of Watsonville, California.—The following more or less rare birds were taken or seen in the region about Watsonville, California, during the summer and autumn of 1903:

Aythya collaris, Oct. 19, shot; seen several times.

Gymnogyps californianus, seen several times in mountains on north side of Pajaro Valley.

Elanus leucurus, seen, but not shot, Oct. 23.

Archibuteo ferrugineus, observed quite often during fall.

Falco anatum, Oct. 3, shot.

Coccyzus americanus occidentalis, observed in May and June along Pajaro River.

Cotaptes auratus luteus, shot Nov. 15.

Phalacroptilus nuttalli californicus, observed Oct. 25.

Chætura vauxi, Aug. 14, shot.

Aeronautes melanoleucus, observed in mountains on north side of valley.

Tyrannus verticalis, June 1, shot.

Pica nuttalli, Sept. 27, shot.

Corvus americanus hesperis, Oct. 21, shot.

Spinus pinus, quite abundant in September; many shot.

Melospiza lincolni, abundant in September and October; many shot.

Dendroica townsendi, common in fall; many shot.