

and thicker brush and buckthorn on the steeper ridges of the rugged mountains. These birds are not like the Western Mockingbird and some of our other birds which are silent for several months during the year, for their call can be heard at intervals by the bird student on a calm cloudy day in winter as well as on a bright warm sunlit morning in spring, but not with such frequency.

But to return to the nesting habits, of which I feel that I really know very little as I have never found many of their nests. The few that I have discovered were back in the mountains north of here. The notes that I have of one found last year are interesting. On May 15, while on a fishing trip near Dell's Camp (altitude about 4500 feet) in San Antonio Canyon (and I might say that I caught thirty-five beauties that day), I came across a nest of this little bird. It was situated among thick branches and near the top of a scrub oak bush perhaps two and a half feet up, and is a gem of bird workmanship, composed, as it is, of bleached weed fibres such as fine grasses, an abundance of soft plant down, a little weed bark, and fine hairy threads of bark of the yucca plant, with a few wider blades of grass intermixed and woven about thru the whole thick-walled structure. A thick mat of horse hair makes the lining. To more firmly bind and hold together the nest, which even without would have been unusually strong and serviceable, these ingenious little birds used cobwebs as an outer covering to make their house doubly strong. The dimensions of the nest are: Depth, outside, five inches; inside, two inches. Diameter, outside, four inches; inside, two inches.

As the bird flushed from her three fresh eggs she fell to the ground where she remained for a few moments fluttering about and uttering a hissing sound intermingled with sharp croaks. Then seeing that I could not be enticed from her home she flew up into a small bush and gave forth her whistle call, and very soon Mr. Wren-tit joined his mate in her song. Since on the next morning when I approached the nest again the bird went thru these same actions I feel that I am safe in saying that they are very characteristic of the nesting Wren-Tit.

On every spring day that I have been in the haunts of this bird, I have been looking for a chance to observe more of its home life; but, so far, I have not been very successful in locating the nests, probably because of the skill with which the birds conceal them among the thick bushes. But as I wander about, even tho I do not find any of the Pallid Wren-Tit's nests, I am able to observe and study one or another of the numerous nature subjects which are found so abundantly in our Southern California fields—the sweet voiced birds, with their peculiar habits and different songs, the many colored and shaped insects, and the brilliant and sweet-scented flowers; so that for any time that I spend in such pursuits I always feel well repaid.

*Claremont, California.*

## SOME BIRDS OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO

By M. FRENCH GILMAN

HAVING spent a little more than a year in southwest Colorado—to be exact, from December 23, 1905, to January 31, 1907—I contribute to THE CONDOR what few bird observations I was able to make. My base of operations was Fort Lewis, an Indian school located in La Plata County at an altitude of about 7,500 feet. Unless otherwise stated, all records refer to this place.

Mr. E. R. Warren of Colorado Springs kindly furnished me with some data

from the counties of Montezuma, Montrose and San Miguel, which is specified as it occurs in the text. My location was unfavorable for water birds so no account is taken of them.

Fort Lewis school is situated on a terrace a few feet above the La Plata River. On each side of the river is a more or less level mesa covered with a growth of pine (*Pinus flexilis*), pinyon (*Pinus edulis*), juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*) and scrub oak (*Quercus undulata* and *Quercus u. gambeli*). The river bottom sustains a heavy growth of narrow-leaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), black birch (*Betula occidentalis*), paper-leaf alder (*Alnus tenuifolia*), two kinds of willow, some aspens (*Populus tremuloides*), a few pines (*P. flexilis*), and an occasional blue spruce (*Picea pungens*). Two trips were made to the top of the La Plata Mountains, something over 13,000 feet elevation, and vegetation already noted was found to gradually give way to more of the blue spruce and aspen.

I am indebted to ex-Supt. W. M. Peterson and Supt. J. S. Spear, of the Fort Lewis School, for opportunity for study and observation. The list is by no means complete but may prove of interest to some CONDOR readers.

**Dendragapus obscurus.** Dusky Grouse. Said to be common on the north slopes of the La Plata Mountains. I picked up a dead one December 20, on the snow near La Plata City, altitude 10,000 feet. It had been partly eaten, by an owl, perhaps.

**Pediceetes phasianellus columbianus** or **campestris.** Sharp-tailed Grouse. A few scattered on the mesas at about 7,500 feet. Resident thruout the year. In winter their tracks are frequently seen on top of snow 3 or 4 feet deep. I have seen where they roosted in the snow—a short tunnel with two openings; apparently only one bird in each, however. Two birds secured had crops full of acorns. The greatest number seen was a flock of 18, the usual number being 6 to 10. On May 11, 1906, Mr. W. M. Peterson found a nest containing 11 eggs, situated on the ground under a small scrub oak. He drove over the bush in a buggy but the nest escaped harm. Not so the brood, however, which hatched two weeks later; for an Indian killed the mother before the young were old enough to shift for themselves. The nest-cavity was lined with grass and feathers. I identified two birds secured as variety *campestris*, but afterward noting what Cooke's "Birds of Colorado" had to say on the subject I became uncertain. They are now in California and must await authoritative identification.

**Zenaidura carolinensis.** Mourning Dove. Not numerous at this altitude. A few noted in summer. Several seen in January near Navajo Springs on the Southern Ute reservation near the New Mexico line, altitude about 5,500 feet. Probably a few winter there. Mr. Warren reports them near Cortez April 8, and common at Coventry, Montrose County, about April 20.

**Meleagris gallopavo merriami.** Merriam Turkey. Mr. Warren tells me that C. H. Smith of Coventry saw a turkey, probably this variety, in January, 1899, in San Miguel Canyon and heard of them a year or two later in the same locality. While down in the Navajo reservation in New Mexico I helped eat two wild turkeys killed by Indians in the Carriso Mountains, somewhere near the Four Corners. They sold them to a post trader but had all the feathers picked off before bringing them in. I was not expert enough to identify the subspecies after they had been brought on the table but judged they were hatched at least five years before being bitten into.

**Circus hudsonius.** Marsh Hawk. Seen once near the New Mexico line. Mr. Warren reports it at Cortez in April.

**Cathartes aura.** Turkey Vulture. An occasional buzzard was seen floating along in spring and summer, but I saw no signs of nesting.

**Accipiter velox.** Sharp-shinned Hawk. Only two seen.

**Accipiter cooperi.** Cooper Hawk. Probably six seen during the season.

**Buteo borealis calurus.** Western Red-tailed Hawk. A few breeding in the locality.

**Buteo swainsoni.** Swainson Hawk. One seen occasionally.

**Aquila chrysaetos.** Golden Eagle. Only one seen.

**Falco mexicanus.** Prairie Falcon. One seen in the fall.

**Falco sparverius.** Sparrow Hawk. Common, nesting in deserted flicker and Lewis woodpecker holes. Saw sets of from 3 to 5 eggs during the latter part of May. One bird noticed in January. Mr. Warren says it is common in Montezuma County, and at Coventry.

**Strix pratincola.** Barn Owl. One seen near Mancos, and one often seen at a barn half a mile below Fort Lewis.

**Asio wilsonianus.** Long-eared Owl. More numerous than the other owls. Breeds in deserted magpie nests. Found set of 4 eggs April 25.

**Syrnium occidentale.** Spotted Owl. Two seen in the spring.

**Megascops flammeola.** Flammulated Screech Owl. I saw one of these little owls in a black birch one morning, but did not secure it.

**Bubo magellanicus pallescens.** Western Horned Owl. Heard frequently, but seen rarely. Resident.

**Speotyto cunicularia hypogæa.** Ground Owl. I saw one below Cortez, and Mr. Warren reports one from Cortez.

**Glaucidium gnoma.** Pigmy Owl. I found a dead young one in a deserted flicker's nest.

**Ceryle alcyon.** Belted Kingfisher. Two seen during the season.

**Dryobates villosus monticola.** Rocky Mountain Hairy Woodpecker. Fairly common resident, tho not seen unless quietly looked for.

**Dryobates pubescens homorus.** Batchelder Woodpecker. Seen occasionally along the river bottom.

**Sphyrapicus varius nuchalis.** Red-naped Sapsucker. Their "drawn-work," on birch and alder trees, was noticed frequently. One pair raised a nest of young just outside the school grounds in a tall cottonwood tree.

**Melanerpes torquatus.** Lewis Woodpecker. Saw four pairs during the spring. I found a nest completed in a dead pine tree, but when I returned, a few days later, woodcutters had felled the tree. Another pair nested in a pine tree a short distance from Mr. Peterson's "rubber camp" and raised a brood of four.

**Colaptes cafer collaris.** Red-shafted Flicker. Numerous along the river bottom, and some on the pine mesas. Mr. Warren reports them from Montezuma County and Coventry in Montrose County.

**Phalænoptilus nuttalli.** Poor-will. An occasional Poor-will was seen at dusk along the roads. None heard.

**Chordeiles virginianus henryi.** Western Nighthawk. Seen in flocks of 10 to 30 several evenings, probably migrating.

**Aeronautes melanoelucus.** White-throated Swift. Seen once in the La Plata Mountains.

**Selasphorus platycercus.** Broad-tailed Hummer. Four or five seen during the year. One caught.

**Tyrannus tyrannus.** Kingbird. One seen on a wire fence at Navajo Springs in June.

**Tyrannus verticalis.** Arkansas Kingbird. Five seen one day and none afterward. Probably stragglers to that altitude.

**Tyrannus vociferans.** Cassin Kingbird. A pair nested on the Fort Lewis mesa.

**Myiarchus cinerascens.** Ash-throated Flycatcher. One seen in spring.

**Sayornis saya.** Say Phoebe. Common, nesting on porches. Mr. Warren saw them at Coventry, and in Montezuma County.

**Contopus borealis.** Olive-sided Flycatcher. A few seen.

**Contopus richardsoni.** Western Wood Pewee. Two seen during the spring.

**Empidonax hammondi.** Hammond Flycatcher. A few noticed and one nest found.

**Otocoris alpestris** { *leucolæma* } Horned Lark. Just what part of our alphabet  
                                   { *arenicola* } to annex here I do not know. I saw horned  
                                   { *arctica* } larks in the spring between Cortez and Navajo Springs. In winter I saw flocks of them at 9500 feet in the La Plata mountains. I secured a few specimens but they were accidentally destroyed. The summer birds I placed as *leucolæma* and the winter birds as *arctica*.

**Pica pica hudsonica.** Black-billed Magpie. Found along all streams in southwestern Colorado.

**Cyanocitta stelleri diademata.** Long-crested Jay. Numerous at and near Fort Lewis during winter of 1906. In 1907 up to January 31, only three were seen. Three pairs nested on the Fort Lewis mesa, but most of them went to higher altitudes. Early in May I found a nest near the end of a limb of a pine tree. It was about 10 feet from the tree trunk and 15 feet from the ground. May 13, the bird, a close sitter, was flushed from the nest and four eggs uncovered, one slightly cracked. Nest similar in construction to that of the Blue-fronted Jay. June 24, I saw young birds, just from the nest, at 10,000 feet altitude in the La Plata Mountains.

**Apelocoma woodhousei.** Woodhouse Jay. Very numerous during months of January, February and March, 1906. All except one bird disappeared during April. I saw none during the nesting season. Up to January 31, 1907, none were seen except two down the La Plata River near the New Mexico line.

**Perisoreus canadensis capitalis.** Rocky Mountain Jay. Seen only at timber line on the La Plata Mountains, and not common there. Saw a pair, with four young, flying about searching logs and fallen trees for food. Young were very tame but adults shy. This was on July 22.

**Corvus corax sinuatus.** American Raven. A few spent the winter at Fort Lewis sharing with magpies and crows stolen scraps from the pig-pen. Two or three pairs seen during the breeding season but no nests found. Mr. Warren states that they are common at Cortez and Coventry.

**Corvus americanus.** American Crow. Common all winter and a few seen in spring and summer tho no nests found. Some of the birds were quite tame in severe weather. Mr. Warren reports them common at Coventry at times in the fall.

**Nucifraga columbiana.** Clark Nutcracker. Occasionally noticed in the winter. March 11, 1906, I saw a pair in Pine Gulch about two miles west of Fort Lewis and at about the same altitude. One of them was busily engaged in assaulting a pair of Red-tailed Hawks that sat in the top of a dead pine tree. More than a foot of snow covered the ground at this time. May 1, I saw in the same locality a pair of nutcrackers accompanied by three young ones. They followed the old birds begging for food in tones that could be heard half a mile or more. I saw them again a week later, discovering them both times by the vociferous begging of

the young birds. In June I saw several of the birds above timber line in the La Plata Mountains.

**Cyanocephalus cyanocephalus.** Pinyon Jay. Several small flocks seen during early spring. Seemed always on the go. Mr. Peterson told me he saw young birds in the Carriso Mountains, near Four Corners, during the month of June. Mr. Warren says the birds are common residents at Coventry.

**Molothrus ater.** Cowbird. A few noticed with Brewer Blackbirds in the spring. I found an egg in a nest with two eggs of the Tolmie Warbler. In summer an immature bird was sometimes seen with the blackbirds.

**Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus.** Yellow-headed Blackbird. Two seen at Fort Lewis and a small colony were apparently nesting in a pond of tules near Cortez.

**Agelaius phoeniceus.** Red-winged Blackbird. Not uncommon, nesting in small willows.

**Sturnella neglecta.** Western Meadowlark. Several noticed during nesting season and a few found in January near Cortez.

**Icterus bullocki.** Bullock Oriole. Two pairs nested at Fort Lewis in the season of 1906.

**Scolecophagus cyanocephalus.** Brewer Blackbird. Numerous during the breeding season and for a few weeks afterward. First one arrived April 11. They nested in willows, pines and scrub oaks, and, most surprising to me, on the ground. Three nests were discovered so situated: one in a deep horse track at base of a clump of grass; another at base of a small wild rose bush, and the third under a bushy wild cherry. After nesting was over the birds, old and young, congregated in flocks and made war on the multitude of grasshoppers infesting the alfalfa fields.

**Carpodacus cassinii.** Cassin Purple Finch. Two seen April 22 and three a week later.

**Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis.** House Finch. Two seen on the La Plata River about ten miles below Fort Lewis in October, and a pair seen near Cortez in May. Mr. Warren saw them at Ashbaugh's ranch in the McElmo Canyon country.

**Loxia curvirostra stricklandi.** Mexican Crossbill. A female seen May 13, on Fort Lewis mesa, and a pair seen just below timber line on the La Plata Mountains, July 22.

**Leucosticte australis.** Brown-capped Leucosticte. Two seen January, 1906. A pair seen on summit of the La Platas June 24, and July 22 a pair seen and young heard faintly calling, near the same spot. In January, 1907, about a dozen remained around Fort Lewis several days.

**Astragalinus tristis pallidus.** Pale Goldfinch. Several seen from April 29 on during the season. Apparently nesting tho none found.

**Astragalinus psaltria.** Arkansas Goldfinch. Seen two or three times; not common and apparently not breeding.

**Spinus pinus.** Pine Finch. Seen first on March 30, becoming numerous soon after. About June 1, they nearly all left. On June 24 I found them quite common at 10,000 feet in the mountains.

**Passer domesticus.** English Sparrow. A flock of 25 or 30 stayed all winter about the barn and corral at Fort Lewis in 1906, four or five pairs remaining to breed. In the winter of 1907 the number was about doubled. Mr. Warren reports them at Cortez, and at Durango they fairly swarm.

**Calcarius ornatus.** Chestnut-collared Longspur. Mr. Warren secured one at Cortez, April 5, 1906.

**Poocetes gramineus confinis.** Western Vesper Sparrow. First seen April 3,

soon becoming common. Nest and five eggs found May 6. Mr. Warren says they appeared about April 15 in Montezuma County.

**Chondestes grammacus strigatus.** Western Lark Sparrow. A few seen during the nesting season. Not common.

**Zonotrichia leucophrys.** White-crowned Sparrow. A number seen during early spring, and a pair seen all thru nesting season tho no nest located. Two pairs seen in a mountain meadow just below timber line.

**Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli.** Gambel Sparrow. Seen during migration. Mr. Warren reports it from the McElmo district, April 13.

**Spizella monticola ochracea.** Western Tree Sparrow. Several seen during the winters of 1906 and 1907.

**Spizella socialis arizonæ.** Western Chipping Sparrow. Abundant. Found nesting at Fort Lewis, Cortez and Navajo Springs.

**Junco hyemalis.** Slate-colored Junco. One seen several times during March, 1906, and another seen in January, 1907.

**Junco hyemalis connectens.** Intermediate Junco. Numerous all winter.

**Junco mearnsi.** Pink-sided Junco. Abundant during the winter months, leaving about the second week in April. A partial albino secured.

**Junco caniceps.** Gray-headed Junco. Numerous at Fort Lewis during winter and early spring. Seen at timber line in July.

**Amphispiza bilineata deserticola.** Desert Sparrow. Seen in the La Plata River valley near the New Mexico line and at Navajo Springs. Mr. Warren saw the bird in the McElmo district in April.

**Amphispiza belli nevadensis.** Sage Sparrow. Seen near Navajo Springs. Mr. Warren reports it as taken at Coventry.

**Melospiza melodia montana.** Mountain Song Sparrow. Three seen in the spring of 1906 at Fort Lewis.

**Melospiza lincolni.** Lincoln Sparrow. One secured at Fort Lewis.

**Passerella iliaca schistacea.** Slate-colored Sparrow. Three seen in the spring of 1906.

**Pipilo maculatus arcticus.** Arctic Towhee. Several noted in January and February, 1906.

**Pipilo maculatus megalonyx.** Spurred Towhee. Nesting abundantly all over the mesas, and among scrub oak, wild roses and wild cherries.

**Pipilo aberti.** Abert Towhee. Between Cortez and Navajo Springs I saw what I believed to be this bird but had no gun with which to secure it.

**Oreospiza chlorura.** Green-tailed Towhee. Arrived April 28 at Ft. Lewis. Nested on the mesas in bushes usually near a small stream.

**Zamelodia melanocephala.** Black-headed Grosbeak. Arrived May 15. A few nested in the locality.

**Cyanospiza amœna.** Lazuli Bunting. Rather common, nesting in the small wild cherry shrubs and in the wild roses.

**Calamospiza melancorys.** Lark Bunting. Seen from near Cortez to Navajo Springs in May. A nest found at Navajo Springs, June 1, contained four fresh eggs and a broken one just outside the nest. This was beneath a clump of grass and quite similar in appearance and location to that of a Lark Sparrow. The birds were quite numerous and not at all wild. The flight song is very pleasing, the bird flying upward at an angle approaching 50° and then fluttering slowly to the ground uttering his song nearly the whole time he is in the air. Six or eight of the oddly colored males in the air at once going thru their maneuvers is something worth seeing, and possesses a fascination for one.

**Hirundo erythrogastra.** Barn Swallow. Seen at Ft. Lewis and found nesting at Cortez.

**Piranga ludoviciana.** Western Tanager. Not common; breeding.

**Stelgidopteryx serripennis.** Rough-winged Swallow. Seen a few times.  
(*To be concluded in November*)

## THE RUFIOUS-CROWNED SPARROW IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

By NELSON K. CARPENTER

IT was another one of those dark foggy mornings that were so plentiful last spring in southern California. I was standing on the east slope of a steep gulch watching a pair of Costa Hummers feeding their two fully grown young. I stepped to one side to get a better view but in doing so startled something in the grass about five feet away. Catching a glimpse of a small brown object as it shot into the thick brush ahead I completely forgot my hummingbirds.

Whether it was bird or mammal I could not tell. My first guess named it a wood-rat but a moment's reflection changed my mind. It must be a bird. Perhaps a Spurred Towhee. I parted the weeds and almost the first thing I saw was a nest containing three fresh "white" eggs. Not a Spurred Towhee but probably a Rufous-crowned Sparrow. I waited for a few minutes but did not get another glimpse of the bird.

My next visit to the gulch was made on June 2, just four days after I had first found the nest. I wound my way thru the thick brush as quietly as possible, but when I came to the nest the sparrow was gone, and all looked just as I had left them. My hopes vanished. Yes, a valuable find but probably an incomplete sett and uncertain identity. I took several exposures with a kodak and went to the other side of the ravine to await the uncertain. It was fully half an hour before I saw anything encouraging. The sun was getting hot and I was pretty well disgusted, when of a sudden two sparrows came flying over the hill and lit in a sumac bush about forty feet from the nest. They did not make a sound but quietly plumed their feathers. Finally one of them slipped to the ground and disappeared. About two minutes later it reappeared in the top of a bush about ten feet nearer the nest, but quickly slid down the stem into the grass and was again lost to view. This was repeated at least half a dozen times, the bird having completed almost a semi-circle around the nest, but at the same time drawing nearer. Finally its last survey of the country was taken from a small bush about three feet from the nest. This time she did not climb to the top but only about half way up. She stayed but a moment and was again lost from view. A few seconds and I saw her standing on the edge of the nest looking at its treasures. She slipped on and completely hid from sight. All this time her mate did sentinel duty from the top of the sumac, which was just out of reach of my light charges of dust shot.

I thought it was my next move, but while figuring the surest way by which I might collect her, Mrs. Sparrow appeared on the edge of her nest and quietly slipped away to her nearest outlook. I shot quickly but she was quicker, for all I could find upon crossing the gulch was broken twigs. Her mate was gone also and I was just where I had been an hour before, only with the birds badly scared and perhaps one injured.