

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Microscopic Subspecies.**—While collecting along the Kern River, Greenhorn Range, Southern Sierras, about 45 miles from Bakersfield, Kern County, California, I secured several vireos which upon comparison were determined to be *Vireo huttoni*. Upon sending them to Mr. H. C. Oberholser, however, he identifies them as *V. h. oberholseri* Bishop.

In discussing *V. h. oberholseri* in November CONDOR, described by Dr. L. B. Bishop (CONDOR September, 1905, pp. 142-143), Mr. Grinnell states that his series of 47 skins from Los Angeles County (inclusive) to Siskiyou County, are distinctly *V. huttoni*; but the specimen from Escondido, San Diego County, is different, and referable to *V. h. oberholseri*, as described by Dr. Bishop.

Doesn't it seem a bit curious that *Vireo huttoni oberholseri* be found fairly common in February and March in Kern County, with *V. huttoni* on all sides?

Of course, being an amateur in ornithology, I can only open the question and leave it to more advanced ornithologists to elucidate. I wish to add, however, that Mr. Oberholser identified my Santa Cruz Island Vireos (*Vireo mailliardorum* Grinnell) as *V. huttoni*. Mr. Grinnell identified my Kern County specimens as *V. huttoni*! My specimens from Los Angeles County they both identified as *V. huttoni*.

I do not mean this to be discourteous to the gentlemen who are responsible for these subspecies. It is merely an example of existing conditions regarding the microscopic differences upon which many subspecies are based; and to show the position in which young ornithologists are placed thereby. I have a large number of subspecies that have been variously identified by leading ornithologists.—C. B. LINTON, *Long Beach, California*.

**The Virginia Rail (*Rallus virginianus*) Breeding in Mexico.**—While carrying on field investigations for the Biological Survey near Lerma, in the Valley of Toluca, State of Mexico, I obtained a Virginia Rail and three sets of eggs (5, 4 and 6 respectively), July 8-10, 1904. The nests were placed among tules (*Scirpus*) and cat-tail flags, in the large marshes forming the headwaters of the Rio de Lerma, at about 8600 feet altitude.

This is the first record of the nesting of *Rallus virginianus* in Mexico.—E. A. GOLDMAN, *Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

**A Correction.**—The "Mexican Black Hawk" recorded by me in the July, 1907, CONDOR, page 110, from San Diego County, California, is now determined to be a typical *Buteo abbreviatus*. This specimen is, I believe, the second record for California. The first was taken by Dr. J. G. Cooper in 1862, also in San Diego County. I secured this specimen within the city limits of National City, San Diego County, California, November 26, 1906.

I may add in self defence, that the identification as *Urubitinga anthracina* was made by several ornithologists. Later Mr. Grinnell pronounced it *Buteo abbreviatus*. I then sent it to the National Museum; it was returned labeled *Buteo borealis calurus*, melanistic phase. Mr. Oberholser now determines it to be *Buteo abbreviatus*, confirming Mr. Grinnell's decision.—C. B. LINTON, *Long Beach, California*.

**The Western Tanager in San Francisco.**—On May 6, 1908, while passing thru Lafayette Square (a park two blocks square in this city), I noticed a pair of unfamiliar birds flying from tree to tree in a eucalyptus hedge. I walked cautiously in their direction and was rewarded by being able to get within ten feet of the male bird, a Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*); that the other was a female I am not quite so certain. This species was not included in Ray's "Summer Birds of San Francisco County", a paper which appeared in THE CONDOR for March, 1906.—CLARK C. VAN FLEET, *San Francisco, California*.

**Otocoris alpestris insularis on the Mainland Coast.**—On December 4, 1907, I observed a large flock of *O. a. insularis* at Alamitos Bay, Los Angeles County, California, and secured one adult male. I was positive of the identity of the specimen myself, but to be doubly certain I forwarded it to Mr. H. C. Oberholser, who confirms my identification.

There is no doubt, in my mind, that *O. a. insularis* is a regular winter visitant to the mainland coast district of Los Angeles County, at least.—C. B. LINTON, *Long Beach, California*.

**The Southern Limit of the Chestnut-backed Chickadee (*Parus rufescens*) on the California Coast.**—From my knowledge of the character of the humid coast belt of southern Sonoma County, and its similarity to the most southerly recorded habitat of *Parus rufescens*, I have long suspected that this form of chickadee extended much further south than was ordinarily supposed. Yet it was not until last May (1908) that I went into this doubtful region to prove

the supposition correct. This chickadee is recorded as inhabiting the Redwood and Douglas Fir forests, known as the Northern Humid Coast Belt, extending along the coast from Del Norte County down to Mendocino. As this same forest extends continuously along the coast of Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, practically without a break, and with but comparatively little variation in temperature or humidity, it seemed reasonable to assume that any chickadee found in this belt as far south as it might continue with unchanged characteristics, would be referable to this form. To prove this I visited the coast last May in the vicinity of Fort Ross, the site of the early Russian settlement, which is only a few miles north and in plain sight of the mouth of the Russian River, and there found the Chestnut-backed Chickadee breeding abundantly. It has never been recorded south of Mendocino County heretofore. This forest extends about twenty miles south of where I found these birds, and almost reaches Marin County, when the character of the coast abruptly changes from high hills and deep canyons to low rolling country, and the forest is succeeded by open, wind-swept grass lands, with plenty of fog but comparatively light rainfall. This treeless portion extends for something like twenty miles south along the shores of Bodega and Tomales Bays, and forms a most distinct dividing line between the northern form of *rufescens* and the central one, *neglectus*, which latter commences in the northern edge of the wooded coast belt of Marin County some ten miles north of San Geronimo.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *San Geronimo, California.*

**Is not the San Clemente Shrike (*Lanius l. mearnsi*) identical with the Island Shrike (*Lanius l. anthonyi*)?**—The following measurements (from birds in the flesh) seem to disprove the claim for smaller size, for the Clemente form. In the specimens examined (16 in all), there has been found no appreciable difference in coloration. A few specimens of *Lanius l. anthonyi* have been taken along the coast of Los Angeles County.

San Clemente Island specimens				Santa Cruz Island specimens			
	Length	Wing	Tail		Length	Wing	Tail
ad. ♀	9.	4.	4.	im. ♂ ?	8.40	3.80	3.80
♀	8.46	3.75	3.75	ad. ♂	8.50	3.80	3.90
♂	8.47	3.75	3.75	ad. ♂	8.72	3.85	3.90
im. ♂	7.87	3.72	3.75	♀ ?	8.	3.77	3.72
im. ♀ ?	7.87	3.75	3.70	im. ♀	8.	3.70	3.70
ad. ♀	8.	3.80	3.70	ad. ♀	8.27	3.80	3.75
				♀	7.70	3.75	3.50
				ad. ♀	8.	3.77	3.63
				♀	8.25	3.95	3.87
				♂	8.87	4.	4.18

Measurements in inches

—C. B. Linton, *Long Beach, California.*

**A One-legged Red-winged Blackbird.**—On April 5, while collecting in the vicinity of Littleton, Arapahoe County, Colorado, I took a Red-winged Blackbird from a good sized flock in a tall cottonwood tree. Upon picking the bird up I found that the right leg was entirely missing. The bird was carefully skinned and it was found that the leg had been severed from the body at the knee joint. There was no scar or abrasion of any kind in the skin to indicate where the skin of the leg was attached to that of the body, the wound having healed perfectly.

The question was raised as to whether the bird had been hatched with the one leg missing; but this seems hardly reasonable from the fact that the first joint or that above the knee was perfectly formed.

That this bird handled itself almost as easily as his more fortunate companions is without question, as the flock was watched some time before the bird was taken and his actions were not such as to attract attention. In fact this particular bird was collected especially on account of the fine condition of its plumage. Upon skinning, the bird was found to be a male, in perfect condition and with a well nurtured body.—R. B. ROCKWELL, *Denver, Colorado.*

**Forbush Sparrow in Southern California.**—February 12, 1908, I secured three specimens of *Melospiza lincolni striata* (Forbush Sparrow), in the meadows bordering the Los Angeles River, near Long Beach, California. I also observed several others in this vicinity in company with *Melospiza cinerea cooperi* (San Diego Song Sparrow).—C. B. LINTON, *Long Beach, California.*