

*Dryobates villosus picoideus*. Queen Charlotte Woodpecker. Though I referred the hairy woodpecker of the island to *Dryobates villosus sitkensis*, I find upon examination of a specimen taken in August, 1915, that the white underparts characteristic of *sitkensis* are entirely lacking, and that it is less extensively white on the back. As it was in the molt and the outer tail feathers not yet grown out, comparison in this regard could not be made. As it is clearly not *sitkensis*, but possesses the characters ascribed to *picoideus*, I now refer it to the latter form, a course that is further justified by the geographical position of Forrester Island.

*Corvus corax principalis*. Northern Raven. Although I had spent three previous seasons in southeastern Alaska and had found the raven common at all points visited, until the summer of 1915 I had never succeeded in locating the nest. I was rather at a loss to account for this fact as quite a little time had been spent in the search. The solution of the problem was arrived at in 1915. The raven proves to be the earliest nesting bird of the region, the young being almost large enough to leave the nest by early May, at which date the bald eagles and falcons are commencing incubation. A nest containing two nearly full grown young ravens was found on Forrester Island May 14, 1915. It was compactly built of sticks, and well lined with moss, and was about forty feet up in a spruce tree in dense woods. The parent birds were very bold and noisy, flying within a few feet of my head while I was near the nest. Several other similar nests were seen later, from all of which the young had departed. After the young leave the nest in early May they remain in the woods until the middle or latter part of June, when they come to the beach with their parents.

*Loxia curvirostra sitkensis*. Sitka Crossbill. Specimens of this bird taken in various parts of southeastern Alaska during the summer months showed no signs of nesting, a fact which always seemed puzzling to me. Consequently I was much interested to find that birds shot by Mr. W. D. McLeod at Howkan in early September, 1916, showed from the condition of their reproductive organs that they would have bred in about two or three weeks. I had noted a similar condition in two specimens taken at Sitka in September, 1913, but had supposed them to be exceptional cases. It would seem, however, from the above facts that the nesting season of the Crossbill in southeastern Alaska is in late September or early October. This seems the more extraordinary when we consider that at this time the bad weather has generally commenced and that it must be well along into early winter before the young leave the nest.

*Elephant Butte, New Mexico, November 24, 1916.*

## THE SUBSPECIES OF *HESPERIPHONA VESPERTINA*

By JOSEPH GRINNELL

(Contribution from the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California)

THE WRITER'S attention was first called to the systematic status of the Evening Grosbeaks of western North America by Mr. Allan Brooks who stated in a letter that he had found certain peculiarities in his series gathered in British Columbia. Subsequently Mr. Brooks sent his material to the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology with full permission for me to make use of it in any revision I might care to undertake. Attempts to secure additional material from certain critical localities have not proven very successful. However, a total of 113 skins of Evening Grosbeaks has been brought together, from the following sources: Private collections of Messrs. J. Eugene Law, Allan Brooks, H. S. Swarth, G. F. Morcom, and J. Grinnell; the United States National Museum, through Dr. Chas. W. Richmond; the American Museum of Natural History; and the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

Study of the assembled specimens has been under way for over two years,

though prosecuted quite intermittently. Repeatedly, after long intervals, I have gone back to verify earlier impressions, and by this method I feel sure that my appreciation of the facts has been clarified; characters have been detected which were not seen at the start, and fortuitous variations have come to be recognized as such. *Hesperiphona* is subject to but one molt per year; yet there is much variation in certain respects owing to wear and possibly, also, to age. To weed out these variations of non-phylogenetic significance is of course a necessary process in working up any group of birds.

The characters of Evening Grosbeaks which I have found serviceable in sub-specific discrimination are as follows: (1) Proportions of bill; (2) width of frontal yellow band in male; (3) color tone of sides, and lower surface generally, in female; (4) color tone of top of head and back in female; (5) color tone of upper and under parts in male. With the color tones, the student has to keep continually in view the probable degree reached in the process of wear, and even then some variation is to be found which he must deal with in mass-effect so as to determine the mean condition.

As a result of my study, it is found that *Hesperiphona vespertina montana*, the "western" subspecies recognized in current literature, is a composite of four distinguishable races. To provide names for these, correct according to the rules of nomenclature, it has been necessary to restrict the current name within narrower limits. The following discussion goes into more detail than might otherwise be needed, because my conclusions as to the basis of the name *montana* are at variance from those of other authors (*e. g.*, Mearns, 1890, and Chapman, 1897), and I wish to anticipate as fully as I can any queries that may arise on the part of future students.

The original characterization of *montana* by Ridgway (*in* Baird, Brewer and Ridgway, 1874, p. 449) unmistakably fits the extreme Mexican race, in comparison with *vespertina*, as does also the figure on plate XXII of the same work, even if the source of the specimen from which the drawing was made had not been indicated (as it was). In fact, birds from the "Pacific Coast to Rocky Mountains", as well as from "North America east to Lake Superior" (*loc. cit.*, p. 450), are all included under "var. *vespertina*"; while *montana* is stated to be found in "Guatemala, Mexico, and the southern Rocky Mountains". It was only long subsequent action that extended the range of *montana* to cover the whole of "Western North America" wherever *Hesperiphona* occurs at all.

I am aware that a specimen in the United States National Museum (no. 11,960), from Cantonment Burgwin, New Mexico, has been considered the type of *montana*; but this specimen was not *published* as the type until 1890 (Mearns, p. 247); and, as just pointed out, a virtual type had already been designated, no. 35150. This latter specimen, from which the drawing of the bill in both Cooper's Ornithology (1870) and Baird, Brewer and Ridgway (1874) was made, bears the following data: Mirador, Mex. (near Vera Cruz); pine forests; June 64; Dr. C. Sartorius; ♂, 180 (punctuation different on tag). This, it now seems clear, is the real type of *Hesperiphona vespertina montana* Ridgway; and the name *mexicana* Chapman, based also on a bird from the state of Vera Cruz, becomes a pure synonym of *montana*. Through the courtesy of the custodians of the National Museum I have been permitted to examine both of these specimens, of such critical importance. The one from Fort Burgwin, near Taos, in northern New Mexico, belongs to the subspecies here called *warreni*.

It is clear from canons xxxiii and xli of the A. O. U. revised (1908) Code of

Nomenclature that the subsequent action of the author himself in designating a type cannot affect the original typeship, and that the "recognizable published figure" occurring in the same work as the original diagnosis must be accepted as pertaining to the real type. In this case the locality and museum number are plainly stated (Baird, Brewer and Ridgway, 1874, pl. xxii, fig. 4) as "Mex., 35150." What is still more noteworthy in this connection is that this is also the only actual specimen of *montana* referred to in the whole work. Although the nomenclatural points here involved may not be exactly covered in the more recent International Code, American ornithologists will doubtless agree in abiding by the A. O. U. Code in so far as the latter is not in conflict with the International Code.

I regret to say that it is impossible with the material and information in hand to satisfactorily define the breeding ranges of the various races of *Hesperiphona vespertina* here pointed out. The majority of the specimens are winter birds, very probably a greater or less distance out of their summer habitat. The breeding ranges indicated under each heading must be considered largely hypothetical. Even the breeding area of the eastern *H. vespertina vespertina* has never been outlined; nests and eggs of that form remain unknown. To the best of my knowledge authentic eggs of any form of Evening Grosbeak have been found only in California, Arizona and New Mexico.

***Hesperiphona vespertina vespertina* (Cooper)**

Eastern Evening Grosbeak

*Type locality*.—Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan (Cooper, Ann. Lye. Nat. Hist. N. Y., i, 1825, pp. 220-222).

*Diagnosis*.—Bill relatively shortest and thickest as compared with all the other subspecies; nearest like *brooksi*, but distinctly shorter, though basal thickness about the same. Color-tone of body of male relatively dark, though not as dark as in *brooksi*. Frontal yellow bar of male averaging widest, as compared with all other subspecies; nearest *brooksi* and *warreni*. Color-tone of both upper and under surface of female averaging decidedly more grayish, less brownish, than in any of the other subspecies; top of head and back not so blackish as in *brooksi*, and less brownish than in *californica*, *warreni*, and *montana*.

*Summer range*.—Probably restricted to central portions of Canada east of the main divide of the Rocky Mountains: Alberta (Preble, N. Amer. Fauna no.

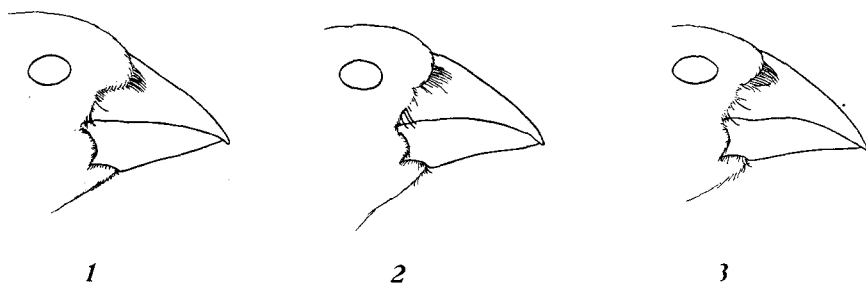


Fig. 5. No. 1: *Hesperiphona vespertina vespertina*, male; Lake George, Indiana; December 5, 1886; coll. G. Frean Morcom. No. 2: *Hesperiphona vespertina brooksi*, male; no. 24517, Mus. Vert. Zool.; Okanagan, B. C.; November 13, 1913; Allan Brooks. No. 3: *Hesperiphona vespertina montana*, male; no. 917, coll. J. E. Law; Chiricahua Mountains, near Paradise, Arizona; April 25, 1913.

27, 1908, pp. 413-414). Winters irregularly, "south of the Saskatchewan and east of the Rocky Mountains", south to Kentucky, Pennsylvania, etc. (A. O. U. Check-list, 1910, p. 241).

***Hesperiphona vespertina brooksi*\***, new subspecies

British Columbia Evening Grosbeak

*Type*.—Male; no. 24517, Mus. Vert. Zool.; Okanagan, British Columbia; November 13, 1913; collected by Allan Brooks.

*Diagnosis*.—Bill thick as in *vespertina*, but longer and hence relatively slenderer; slightly less slender on an average than in *californica* and *warreni*, but decidedly thicker than in *montana*. Color-tone of body of male decidedly the darkest as compared with all the other subspecies; as a result, line of demarcation between black cap and hind neck not sharply defined. Frontal yellow bar of male averaging much broader than in any other subspecies except *warreni* and *vespertina*, and but slightly narrower than in the latter form. Color-tone of body of female darker than in any other subspecies; more sooty on top of head and back, and darker brown beneath; decidedly less ashy about head and on lower surface than in *vespertina*, most nearly as in *californica*.

*Summer range*.—Not known, but probably west of the Rocky Mountain divide, in British Columbia, Canada. The series at hand was taken on various winter dates at Okanagan and Chilliwick, B. C., and Tacoma, Washington.

***Hesperiphona vespertina californica***, new subspecies

California Evening Grosbeak

*Type*.—Male; no. 25638, Mus. Vert. Zool.; Crane Flat, 6300 feet altitude, Mariposa County, California; June 15, 1915; collected by Tracy I. Storer; orig. no. 1257.

*Diagnosis*.—Bill of intermediate degree of relative thickness, more nearly as in *brooksi* and *warreni*; distinctly thicker than in *montana*. Color-tone of body of male intermediate in depth, much as in *vespertina* though averaging yellower beneath; in latter respect approaching *montana*. Frontal yellow bar of male relatively narrow, much narrower than in *vespertina*, *warreni* and *brooksi*. Color-tone of body of female light brownish gray, more brown than in *vespertina*, less blackish on crown and back than in *brooksi*; near *montana*, but not quite so yellowish brown beneath; somewhat darker than in *warreni*.

*Summer range*.—Chiefly in Sierra Nevada of California, south at least to Yosemite National Park; but also Warner Mountains, Modoc County, and thence north at least to Bear Creek, Wheeler County, Oregon (see L. H. Miller, Condor, vi, 1904, p. 104). Winters irregularly in adjacent territory south to Mount Wilson, Los Angeles County, California.

***Hesperiphona vespertina montana*** Ridgway

Mexican Evening Grosbeak

*Type*.—No. 35150, U. S. Nat. Mus.; from [Mirador, near Vera Cruz], "Mexico" (Ridgway, 1874, p. 449 and fig. 4 on pl. 22); male, orig. no. 180; collected by Dr. C. Sartorius; June, 1864.

*Synonym*.—*Coccothraustes vespertinus mexicanus* Chapman (1897, p. 311); type from Las Vigas, Vera Cruz, Mexico.

*Diagnosis*.—Bill much slenderer than in any of the other forms, with decided curvature downward, involving especially the gonys and commissure; the antithesis of the condition in *vespertina*. Color-tone of body of male light, averaging

\*Named in recognition of Allan Brooks's contributions to northwestern ornithology.

more yellowish even than in *californica*. Yellow frontal bar of male very narrow, averaging narrower than in any other form. Color-tone of body of female browner than in any other form, sharply different from the gray cast in *vespertina* and the sooty tone above in *brooksi*; paler in tone of brown beneath than in *californica*, most nearly as in *warreni*.

*Summer range*.—Specimens at hand only from the following places, all probably breeding localities: Mirador and Las Vigas, both not far from Vera Cruz, Mexico; Huachuca and Chiricahua mountains, Arizona. I am unable to distinguish the birds of extreme southern Arizona from the Vera Cruz birds.

***Hesperiphona vespertina warreni*\***, new subspecies

Rocky Mountain Evening Grosbeak

*Type*.—Male; no. 1399, Colorado College Mus.; Bear Creek, near Colorado Springs, Colorado; June 19, 1898; C. E. Aiken.

*Diagnosis*.—Bill of moderate degree of thickness, seemingly identical in this respect with *californica*; therefore much thicker than in *montana*, and yet unmistakably slenderer than in *vespertina*. Color-tone of body of male averaging the same as in *californica*. Frontal yellow bar of male broad, very nearly as broad as in *vespertina*, therefore decidedly broader than in *californica*. Color-tone of body of female averaging nearest *montana*, slightly paler perhaps, therefore notably different from the usual case in *vespertina*; slightly paler about the head than in *californica*, and decidedly paler than in *brooksi*.

*Summer range*.—Southern Rocky Mountain region, at least in Colorado, New Mexico and north-central Arizona. Specimens in the American Museum of Natural History taken by Mearns in the vicinity of Fort Verde, Arizona, belong here, and not to the form represented in the Chiricahua and Huachuca mountains, in the same state, these latter being unequivocally *montana* as here understood.

IMPORTANT LITERATURE RELATING TO SYSTEMATIC STATUS OF WESTERN  
EVENING GROSBEEKS

Baird, S. F.

1870. In Cooper's Ornithology of California (Geol. Surv. Calif.), Land Birds, Volume I, pp. xi+592, numerous figs. in text.

Technical paragraph (pp. 175-176) setting forth differences between "two strongly marked varieties", but no new name given, both being included under *Hesperiphona vespertina*; also two figures (pp. 174, 175), one, small-billed, with "Mexico" printed beneath, these being the same woodcuts as subsequently used in Baird, Brewer and Ridgway, 1874, plate XXII.

Ridgway, R.

1874. In Baird, Brewer and Ridgway's History of North American Birds. Land Birds, Volume I. Pp. xxviii+596+vi, pls. xxvi, many figs. in text.

Original designation of "var. *montana*" (pp. 449, 450), with figure (pl. XXII, fig. 4, the same cut as in Cooper's Ornithology, p. 175) labeled: "Mex., 35150". Otherwise no particular specimen mentioned.

Mearns, E. A.

1890. Descriptions of a New Species and Three New Subspecies of Birds from Arizona. Auk, VII, pp. 243-251.

Extended account (pp. 246-249) of "*Coccothraustes vespertina montana* Ridgway" with full discussion of this form as then understood, "inhabiting Mexico and the southern Rocky Mountain region." A "type" is for the first time specifically mentioned as such and is stated to have come from Cantonment Burgwin, New Mexico.

\*Named in recognition of Edward R. Warren's contributions to the ornithology of Colorado.

Chapman, F. M.

1897. Preliminary Descriptions of New Birds from Mexico and Arizona. *Auk*, xiv, pp. 310-311.

Brief diagnosis (p. 311) of "*Coccothraustes vespertinus mexicanus*", from Las Vigas, Vera Cruz, Mexico.

Ridgway, R.

1901. Birds of North and Middle America. *Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus.* no. 50, part 1, pp. xxx+715, pls. xx.

Diagnoses (pp. 38-39), of three races of *Hesperiphona*—*vespertina*, *montana*, and *mexicana*—and descriptions and synonymies of same (pp. 39-44).

*Berkeley, California, December 5, 1916.*

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Western Belted Kingfisher Breeding in San Diego County, California.**—it is not an uncommon occurrence to meet with an occasional Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon caurina*) near some river, slough or lake in this county; but not until this year have I succeeded in locating a nest. This was quite accidental.

On the 20th of April, 1916, while driving along a road bordering a lagoon near Oceanside my curiosity was aroused by noting some dirt bluffs which formed the walls of a steep narrow canyon. It at once suggested to me an ideal home for a Duck Hawk. Without waiting to debate the question with myself I at once tied the horse and made my way to the canyon. A few shots I knew would bring forth the falcons if present. Imagine my surprise, however, as the echo from the report died away to hear the cackling screeches of a Kingfisher. In a few moments it was joined by its mate coming in from the lagoon.

I dropped behind a bunch of brush and in a few moments one of the birds flew directly to a small hole in the bluff and disappeared, while the mate returned to the lagoon.

The nesting cavity proved to be ten feet below the top of the bank and twenty feet from the bottom. I soon secured a pick and shovel from a ranch a few miles distant and started what proved to be a real task. Two hours of hard digging and a warm sun on my back helped me to decide that it was too early anyway for a full set, so I left it for a couple of weeks.

On May 6 I returned resolved to reach the nest. After four hours of manual labor I at last reached the soft stratum of sand in which the nest cavity was located. I had dug my pit so that it would be to one side of the nest chamber, for by so doing I hoped to reach the nest from the side, but I had not calculated on a winding tunnel and when about a foot above the entrance my pick broke into the extreme end of the passage. I cleaned away the loose sand and soon exposed a nest full of young fully feathered and nearly ready to leave for the lagoon. There were six in all. They were very quiet and made no remonstrance when removed from the nest and examined. They were all returned to their underground passage which was carefully closed with a resolve that if I ever found another Kingfisher's nest in San Diego County I would not wait until May before investigating.—N. K. CARPENTER, *Escondido, California.*

**Another Alaska Record for the Mourning Dove.**—On September 1, 1916, while standing on the dock at Hydaburg, Prince of Wales Island, Alaska, a Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*) flew by within twenty-five feet. This is the first time that I have met with the species in the region.—GEORGE WILLETT, *Elephant Butte, New Mexico, November 24, 1916.*

**The Florida Gallinule in San Francisco County.**—On October 12, 1916, it was reported to me that a Rail had appeared on Middle Lake, one of the Chain-of-Lakes, Golden Gate Park, which did not resemble any of those most commonly seen. Accordingly I