

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Observations on the Spotted Sandpiper.**—Mr. A. J. van Rossem's paper in the April *Auk* (XLII, 1925, p. 230) under this title is opportune in drawing attention to the practice of so many non-collecting observers in ascribing the female sex to the most solicitous individual of a nesting pair. In the case of the Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*), many published photographs of the sitting "female" are, obviously, from the more sparsely spotted breast, of the male bird. The following corroborative incident will illustrate how little the female has to do with the raising of the young.

One day in late July, 1919, wishing to make some life studies of the downy young of this species, I spent about an hour watching a male bird which I knew had recently hatched young. During the whole period the female remained indifferent, some hundred yards away. Finally locating two young birds, I confined them in a deep basket while I drew them. The male fluttered nearby in an agony of solicitude, and his cries attracted the attention of a migrating male which joined him and was almost as excited and solicitous as the actual parent. Not till then did the female join the group, and her actions were solely to attract the attention of the males. Puffing out her breast she ran from one to the other of the distracted males, stretching herself to her utmost height and uttering her courting trill, perfectly indifferent to the peepings of her offspring. It is probable that the reversal of the sexual duties in the Scolopacidae is much more prevalent than at present assumed to be, especially where the female is notably larger than the male.

At the present time, the middle of July, migrating Spotted Sandpipers in one's and two's are passing along the shores of Okanagan Lake. Nearly all are adult females, which have probably abandoned their spouses to the upbringing of their broods. The species in the more open portions of this region is reduced to about one-fifth of its former abundance, solely due to the depredations of Crows and Magpies. My friend Mr. C. deB. Green lives on a small lake admirably adapted to the Sandpiper's requirements; under the date of May 28 he writes me: "Practically all the Spotted Sandpipers left this lake after the Crow persecution. I see one solitary bird this year to date, and there used to be fifteen pairs on my lake alone. Three times last year I saw Crows capture large-sized young and tear them to pieces before the eyes of the screaming parents."—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, July 17, 1925.*

**Lewis Woodpecker Abundant in Napa County, California.**—In Pope Valley and for a distance of several miles along Putah Creek, in Napa County, Lewis Woodpeckers (*Asyndesmus lewisi*) were present in very large numbers on March 28 and 29, 1925. We drove to the ranch of Mr. A. A. Shupp, about three miles beyond Pope Valley, in the afternoon of the 27th, going by way of Rutherford and Chiles. The 28th was spent on and in the vicinity of the Shupp ranch. While the weather was generally unfavorable for both birds and observer, being cold and rather windy, with occasional rains, Lewis Woodpeckers were everywhere in numbers. By actual count as many as twelve birds were in sight at one time. The country is well wooded and near the mountains. There are orchards and cleared fields near the highway in the flat land. In the fields there are many large oaks. Even in the meadows and fields, where Western Meadowlarks were present, they did not exceed in numbers the Lewis Woodpeckers in the trees. Meadowlarks alone compared with the woodpeckers in numbers, and then only in the more open places. Woodpeckers equalled all other observed birds combined, excepting meadowlarks, and taking in the whole terrain far exceeded the meadowlarks. Our friends on the Shupp ranch had arrived there about the middle of February. They said these birds had been present in about the same quantity ever since. While Lewis Woodpeckers are not rare in any part of California, they are generally a more northern species and I had not expected to find them abundant, even profuse, in central California. But here they were the predominant species. Their presence everywhere gave a very good opportunity to learn something about them.

Lewis Woodpeckers are easily identified in the field by readily recognized and conspicuous diagnostic features: large size, solid dark green back, gray collar and throat, pinkish breast, long dark bill and short tail. As soon as a few were identified and observed no one could mistake the others. They do not always perch vertically