the sexes, a point which apparently has not previously been noticed. Males have the pileum and hind neck darker and more slaty; females are browner in this respect, and with the dark area less extensive. These differences are rather noticeable in *gossii* and *hendersoni*, less so in *flaviventer* and *bangsi*.

Material is gratefully acknowledged from the Museum of Comparative Zoology and the United States National Museum. It is distributed as follows: *flaviventer*, Surinam, 2; *bangsi*, Colombia, 2; *gossii*, Cuba, 5, Jamaica, 8; *hendersoni*, Haiti, 3 including the type, Porto Rico, 1.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, June 30, 1934.*

Nests of the Townsend Solitaire.—While doing intensive field work for the U. S. Department of Agriculture in 1931, I experienced the good fortune of finding four nests of the Townsend Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*). These nests were all located on the headwaters of Guernsey Creek, sixteen miles east of Mineral, California.

As I walked slowly up a gradual slope on a ridge covered with both sugar and yellow pine, a solitaire flushed from almost beneath my feet. It fluttered on the ground for about twenty-five feet and then slipped off without uttering any noise. I found the nest near-by on the ground and within an open "catface" or fire scar of a small yellow pine. It was protected by the tree on three sides. The nest was made of grass, with a diameter of about four inches. Three young birds in the nest were without feathers. This was on June 29. As we were passing over a large territory that day I was forced to leave the site without making further observations. The elevation was approximately 5100 feet.

The next day while climbing a cliff about 200 feet lower than the above-mentioned elevation I discovered a solitaire's nest in the crevice in the cliff. The nest was almost inaccessible without ropes. The crevice was about thirty feet above a steep talus slope that gradually tapered off, until it was replaced by a mixed conifer forest that was separated in the center of the valley by the main highway. The crevice was so difficult to reach that I could not ascertain whether there were eggs or young in the nest.

On July 17 I again found a solitaire's nest in a niche in a cliff that rose fifteen feet vertically from a talus slope that headed a small dry draw. The elevation was approximately 4650 feet. The bird slipped off the nest without a sound and flew, rather nervously but silently, from one tree branch to another. These perches always commanded a view of the face of the cliff and the nest.

My fourth solitaire's nest was in a very picturesque location. It was located on the ground under a boulder that formed a roof over it, the boulder being partly exposed on a steep slope. The nesting site was surrounded by firs and pines that towered silently above a spring which made the small canyon, surrounded by cliffs, a sight that would make the most calloused mountaineer want to linger a moment.

The nest was three and one-half inches in diameter, and constructed of pine needles. There were two young birds in the nest. They had brownish down and red bodies with a black stripe down the back. It took many hours of patient watching to locate this fourth nest. The silent solitaires, flying from branch to branch, watching me, an intruder, made the silence of the woods more silent, and left an impression that will long be remembered.—ARTHUR F. HALLORAN, *Berkeley, California, January 9, 1934.*

The American Knot in the San Francisco Bay Region.—The American Knot (*Calidris canutus rufus*) is a rather uncommon migrant in the San Francisco Bay area, particularly in the spring months. In general, it occurs in limited numbers or singly. It was a distinct surprise, therefore, to find Knots in numbers, this May, along the bay shore of Alameda and Contra Costa counties, California. Groups of from six to thirty individuals, aggregating about one hundred birds, were found along a mile of mud flat between Fleming and Isabel Points, from May 4 to 11, 1934. This region lies within the city limits of Albany, Alameda County, and El Cerrito, Contra Costa County.

The Knots flocked mainly in the company of Western Sandpipers (*Ereunetes mauri*), Red-backed Sandpipers (*Pelidna alpina sakhalina*), and Sanderlings (*Croce-*

thia alba). They were easily approached, and, on May 4 and 7, several examples were collected. Both sexes were represented. Most of the birds had attained practically full nuptial plumage. Two male specimens, however, were still in winter plumage, just beginning the prenuptial molt. Most of the birds observed in the field were in breeding plumage but several were noticed which still possessed the winter plumage.—JAMES STEVENSON and WILLIAM B. DAVIS, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, August 18, 1934.*

Group Vernacular Names.—May a newcomer who could not take part in the earlier discussions on vernacular names offer his views?

If we are to have an English name for every subspecies then Dr. Grinnell's suggestion (Condor, 36, 1934, pp. 165-166) is certainly well worth following. Descriptive or geographical names are far preferable to the present hodgepodge of meaningless personal names.

My experience, however, with beginners, leads me to believe that vernacular subspecific names are a complete nuisance, hindering progress, and causing endless confusion. Anyone who has tried to explain to a novice why the Texas Woodpecker in his old bird book is now called the Cactus Woodpecker, in southern Arizona, will appreciate the difficulties.

The beginner has no use for subspecies, whatever. They belong to the serious student of systematics and animal distribution, and in this type of research the scientific name is sufficient.

It is time that subspecific identifications be restricted to collected specimens. Basing identifications on the published ranges alone is always hazardous and never scientific.

Why not adopt group vernacular names for use in sight identifications? That is, all of the subspecies which collectively constitute a species would be known by one name. In the four examples of the Paridae given by Dr. Grinnell the beginner would have only the four group names to learn. Change of locality would not necessitate learning a new name for a bird indistinguishable from the one he already knows. We can eliminate approximately 600 useless names from the 1931 A. O. U. Check-list, by carrying out this plan.

I know this suggestion is not new, but, so far as I can find, the chief objection to group names is that we are not yet sure of the definition of a species, and further changes would occur as our knowledge advances. I believe, however, that the number of such doubtful cases is comparatively small and will soon be reduced to an insignificant figure.

This condensation into group names will give us a rational uniformity in nomenclature. Its simplicity will encourage the beginner in bird study, and our elusive subspecies will be left for those who are competent to handle them.—ANDERS H. ANDERSON, *Tucson, Arizona, August 24, 1934.*

Ten-year-old Passerines.—In the July, 1934, number of the Condor, p. 170, E. L. Sumner, Sr., in recording his ten-year-old Wren-tit, states that he "can find no other record of a passerine bird in a wild state living to this age." I have found records of seven such birds of five species as follows: male Purple Finch (*Carpodacus p. purpureus*) 10 years (Magee, Bird-Banding, 1, 1930, p. 191); two male Cardinals (*Richmondena c. cardinalis*) 10 years (Lincoln, Fifty Years' Progress of American Ornithology, 1933, pp. 86-87, and Ganier, Wilson Bull., 45, 1934, p. 152); Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta c. cristata*) 12½ years (Bird-Banding Notes, 2, no. 10); Starling (*Sturnus v. vulgaris*) nearly 16 years (Jirsik, Der Zug des auf dem Gebiet der cechoslovakischen Republik nistenden Stares *Sturnus v. vulgaris*, Massarykova Akademie Práce, 1933); and Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*), the male at least 11 years old, the female at least 13 (Poncy, Alauda, 1932, pp. 398-406; also a letter). All of the above birds were banded except the crows, which, being permanent residents in the *Jardin des Anglais* at Geneva, were positively identified by injuries to their feet in 1924 and 1922 respectively. Fuller details as to all of these birds, except the Purple Finch, have been given in the April and July, 1934, numbers of Bird-Banding in the reviews on longevity.—MARGARET M. NICE, *Amherst, Massachusetts, September 1, 1934.*