

the nest lining in the same species. A high positive correlation is observed between these characteristics and the kind of cover at the nest site and the general climatic ranges of the birds. Apparently those kinds of birds which nest in exposed situations and which live in hot regions have pale or pallid nestling plumages and nest linings which reflect and counteract the harmful effects of sun rays. Kinds which live in opposite conditions are dark in both these respects and thus are able to absorb and take advantage of warmth from the sun.

*Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, February 27, 1936.*

## THE ORANGE-BELLIED REDSTART OF WESTERN CENTRAL AMERICA

By A. J. VAN ROSSEM

Thanks to the investigations of Hellmayr (see Catalogue of Birds of the Americas, Part 8, 1935, p. 460), who has recently determined the status of Hartlaub's type of *Setophaga intermedia*, it is possible to provide, it is hoped, names which will be permanent for the three geographic variations of *Myioborus miniatus* which inhabit the mountains of central and northern Central America.

These three races are, briefly, one of relatively small size and orange-red or flame-scarlet underparts in the central and eastern parts of Guatemala, one of larger size and reddish orange or "bittersweet orange" underparts in the Pacific Cordillera of Guatemala and western El Salvador, and, finally, one of small size (in this respect similar to the race of central Guatemala) but with underparts similar to the western Guatemala birds in color, though averaging even more orange in series. The names applied to these races have been, respectively, *flammeus* Kaup, *intermedius* Hartlaub, and *connectens* Dickey and van Rossem. (In regard to the application of these names see Griscom, Distribution of Bird Life in Guatemala, 1932, pp. 341-342.) Hellmayr, however, has shown conclusively that Hartlaub's type of *intermedius* belongs to the smaller, central Guatemala race and, since this name has priority, *flammeus* Kaup of course becomes a synonym. This leaves nameless the Orange-bellied Redstart of western Guatemala and I therefore propose for it

### *Myioborus miniatus hellmayri*, new subspecies

Pacific Orange-bellied Redstart

*Type*.—Breeding male adult, number 19050 Dickey collection; Volcan de Santa Ana, Depto. Sonsonate, El Salvador, altitude 6000 feet in the Humid Upper Tropical Zone, May 8, 1927; collected by A. J. van Rossem, original number, 11927.

*Subspecific characters*.—Nearest in color to *Myioborus miniatus connectens* Dickey and van Rossem, of the interior Cordillera of El Salvador and south central Honduras, but underparts averaging even more orange in series; size, however, larger, with particularly longer tail.

*Range*.—Mountains of western Guatemala and extreme southwestern El Salvador.

*Remarks*.—Dr. Hellmayr referred specimens from the range of *hellmayri* to *connectens* because of the similarity in color. The only two specimens of true *connectens* available to him were two from Volcan de Puca—scarcely enough to bring out what is so apparent in series, namely the decided size differences between the two races. In addition to the original series of *connectens* I have recently (November, 1933) had the advantage of inspecting, in company with Mr. Ludlow Griscom, a splendid series of that race from the mountains of south-central Honduras in the Museum of Comparative Zoology.

MEASUREMENTS OF MALES IN MILLIMETERS  
(Females average slightly smaller)

|  | Wing  | Tail  |
|--|-------|-------|
| 8 <i>intermedius</i> from interior Guatemala | 58-65 | 56-64 |
| 7 <i>connectens</i> from El Salvador         | 62-64 | 60-64 |
| 11 <i>connectens</i> from Honduras           | 58-66 | 60-66 |
| 3 <i>hellmayri</i> from El Salvador          | 66-67 | 69-71 |
| 10 <i>hellmayri</i> from western Guatemala   | 65-69 | 67-70 |

The nomenclature and ranges of the three Central American races which, collectively, link the red-bellied *miniatus* of Mexico with the yellow-bellied forms of Costa Rica and southward now stand as follows:

*Myioborus miniatus intermedius* (Hartlaub)

*Setophaga intermedia* Hartlaub, Rev. et Mag. Zool., (2), 4, Jan., 1852, p. 5 (Guatemala = [probably] Alta Vera Paz).

Range.—Guatemala, east of the Pacific Cordillera, and north to Chiapas. Chiapas birds, however, should be critically re-examined.

*Myioborus miniatus hellmayri* van Rossem

Range.—Pacific Cordillera of Guatemala, south to southwestern El Salvador (Volcan de Santa Ana).

*Myioborus miniatus connectens* Dickey and van Rossem

*Myioborus miniatus connectens* Dickey and van Rossem, Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., 41, Oct. 15, 1928, p. 189 (Los Esesmiles, Dept. Chalatenango, El Salvador: alt. 8000 feet).

Range.—Mountains of the interior Cordillera of El Salvador and south-central Honduras.

*San Diego Society of Natural History, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, February 3, 1936.*

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**An American Egret Roost.**—Convincing evidence of the "come-back" that has been made in California by the American Egret (*Casmerodius albus egretta*), since the passage of protective laws, is offered by the increasing population of an egret roost on the grounds of my home at Point Loma, San Diego. About four years ago a few egrets began roosting each evening during the fall, winter and spring months in some tall eucalyptus trees near my residence. Since then, the number of birds that come to this place for the night has been consistently growing. On an evening in December, 1935, Mr. L. M. Huey and I made an accurate count of the egrets arriving at their roost, and reached a total of 96 individuals—a thrilling sight, as company after company of the snowy white beauties sailed in against the darkening sky. A remarkable phenomenon is the manner in which these large white birds fade away into the foliage of the trees, once they get settled. In a tree containing dozens of birds it is difficult to pick out one at a distance of one hundred feet.

In February, 1936, the egrets changed their roosting place to another group of eucalyptus trees in a lower part of the grounds, about fifty yards distant from the first. This was, I believe, due to two things: First, the arrival of new birds not yet accustomed to the movement of people and automobiles about the grounds and, second, to the fact that the days were stormy and the birds sought shelter from the prevailing winds. On the night of February 25 the egrets came in fairly early. I heard their squawking and went down among the trees, whereupon they all took off, circled around and returned. This they did twice. It was impossible to count them on the wing, but I checked off blocks and made an estimate of well over 150 birds.

There was a time when the roost was shared by a number of Black-crowned Night Herons and an occasional California Blue Heron. For several months a couple of Turkey Vultures slept in the tree tops along with the snow-white egrets. But as far as I can see the roost is now occupied solely by American Egrets. From December to March has been the period of greatest abundance. Last year there were but 45 evenings during the summer when no egrets came to my trees.