

Vermilion Flycatcher a Victim of the Dwarf Cowbird in California.—According to Herbert Friedmann, in his well known book, "The Cowbirds," our Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus mexicanus*) is seldom a victim of the Dwarf Cowbird (*Molothrus ater obscurus*). It is with considerable regret that I must report the following two nests as the first records for the State of California, these being in Coachella Valley, Riverside County.

A female flycatcher was flushed from a nest fifteen feet up in a screw-bean tree on April 27, 1935. At that time the nest contained one egg each of the flycatcher and the cowbird. Another visit to the nest was made on May 1, and the female flycatcher again flushed from the nest, which then contained one more egg of the cowbird. The egg of the flycatcher proved to be addled and the eggs of the cowbird showed slight incubation. The male flycatcher was especially active around this nest on each day.

On the same dates another nest was visited in a similar location about a hundred yards distant. This nest was discovered by seeing the beautiful male flycatcher trying to drive a female dwarf cowbird from the nest which then contained one egg of the rightful owner. On my next visit the female Vermilion Flycatcher flushed from the nest and I found that there was one more egg of the flycatcher as well as an egg of the cowbird.

It is of interest to record that the two cowbird eggs from the first mentioned nest were of different types and one of the eggs was much like the cowbird egg found in the second nest.—WILSON C. HANNA, Colton, California, March 20, 1936.

Notes on a Fight between Alaska Jays and a Weasel.—In early May, 1924, while residing on the upper regions of Lake Creek, a small stream which empties into Wild Lake in the Endicott Mountains (Arctic central Alaska), now renamed Brooks Range, I witnessed a fight between two Alaska Jays (*Perisoreus canadensis fumifrons*) and a full grown weasel (*Mustela* sp.).

One forenoon I started up the side of a hill to secure some firewood before the snow crust got soft. Much of the snow had already melted, especially around stumps of trees where fairly large spaces were entirely bare. The patches of snow between such places varied from a few feet to about twenty feet in diameter. These patches of snow were well crusted and glazed because of the warm sunshine during the days, and the nightly change to bitter cold. Here and there within a snow patch twigs and sticks protruded, making holes about the size of a silver dollar where the snow had melted to the ground. The snow under the crust was to a great extent "honey-combed," leaving spaces through which small animals such as mice and weasels could find easy passage.

From not far away I heard the shrieks of birds which seemed to be coming closer. I decided to wait. Soon I saw two Alaska Jays flying from tree to tree, diving frequently at something on the ground. I kept still in order to see what was the matter. Soon a weasel, evidently full grown and still in its white winter coat which, however, was soiled with blood, ran toward a patch of snow directly in front of me and disappeared under it. Both birds were close behind and they rested on a limb of a small tree under which I was standing. They were within an arm's length of my head and could not help but notice me. It became apparent that my presence gave them confidence.

The birds had lost sight of the weasel and seemed rather excited about this. First one, then the other, would fly out over the patch of snow under which the weasel had disappeared, always coming back to rest again on the same limb. This maneuver was executed several times until the bolder of the two flew to the patch of snow to rest. I could not see the weasel but evidently the bird on the patch located his whereabouts. The bird took wing; at the same time the bird on the tree did the same. Both flew excitedly over the patch of snow. They soon returned to the tree and to my astonishment ceased shrieking. All was quiet for possibly a minute or more when through one of the smaller holes in the snow there appeared the head and forepart of the weasel. The two birds became highly excited and again flew out over the patch.

They would swoop down over the weasel, first one, then the other, striking with its beak. The weasel seemed cowed and ducked low after each strike. There were blood spots on the snow and it seemed to me the birds were doing very effective work.

I now moved a little closer, but neither the birds nor the weasel seemed to notice me. I talked aloud and whistled but they paid no attention. At times one of the birds would fly out, almost stop over the weasel, using the wings to brake with, and try to see how close he could get to the weasel with his feet. Each time this was done the weasel would stretch out, sticking his head and front of the body into the air. However, he did not seem to snap at the birds. On the contrary, frequently the weasel's mouth was open and it seemed to be panting and fairly well worn out.

Again I wanted to see how close I could get to the weasel. I took a long step which brought me to within four feet of the scene. The two birds flew back to the tree. The weasel now seemed to smell the air. Evidently it did not see me but it did get hold of the strange scent, and went backward into the hole and disappeared. It stayed there for some time and I thought that it might have

escaped. The birds were very still again, sitting on the limb, and I moved back to my former position under the tree.

It seemed that not a single movement of the weasel was missed by the birds. At one place where the crust on the snow was thin, the weasel managed to work under and in doing so broke some of the crust. Both birds saw this and flew down to the place where the snow moved and crumbled. The fight was on again.

The weasel rushed out and made a few jumps, one a very long one of about four feet, with the birds after him at once. However, by now the weasel had reached a pile of brush. The last glimpse I had of his coat it seemed bloodier than ever. Very likely he was familiar with the brush pile, which was effective in concealing him. For a while the two birds rested on a low willow bush right over the brush pile. Slowly they quieted down. No more did they let me get as close as they had before. They seemed to understand the weasel was safe and would not venture from the brush pile. They seemed to understand that to wait would be a waste of time. Finally, flying separately one a little behind the other, they began to retrace their way.

Sensing that they were a pair with a nest nearby, I tried to follow the birds. However, I soon realized the futility of such an undertaking, for they led me up hill and down and nearly back again to where we had been first. About this time I realized that they did not intend to have their nest with eggs or young disturbed again. They were certainly entitled to peace; for had they not put up a firm fight, possibly to protect their young from an animal which is known as one of the fiercest small fighters of the woods?—OTTO WM. GEIST, *University of Alaska, College, Alaska, March 21, 1936.*

Mockingbird in Eastern Montana.—On May 14, 1935, near Miles City, Montana, Mr. E. J. Woolfolk and the writer saw a mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*). The place was a low sage-brush plain, part of the old Fort Keogh Military Reservation, just west of Tongue River. The bird was on a barbed wire fence, about 100 feet from us. It had the same long tail with white outer feathers, the same broadish wings with white patches, the same stance and manner of flight, the same characteristics of song, only perhaps a little more subdued, that the writer has observed many times in southern California. However, this bird may have been slightly duller in color and a trifle smaller.

The bird was wary, but not especially timid. Although it would not permit us to come closer, it stayed in the vicinity, swooping occasionally with leisurely grace from wire to ground and back to fence post. But after that day it was not seen again.

This may be a record for Miles City, and perhaps Montana. The mockingbird is not catalogued in Saunders' distributional list of Montana birds, although it is recorded in the 1931 A. O. U. Checklist as occurring in southern Wyoming. P. A. Taverner, in his "Birds of Canada" (1934), says, "Lately stray individuals have been seen in southern Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and in southwestern British Columbia"; and he lists this as one of several species which periodically expand their ranges from the south, and contract them again.—LINCOLN ELLISON, *Miles City, Montana, April 21, 1936.*

Bird Notes from the Papago Indian Reservation, Southern Arizona.—Over a period of five and a half months, from September 1, 1934, to February 15, 1935, the writer was employed by the United States Indian Service in making a range reconnaissance of the Papago Indian Reservation in south-central Arizona. During this time, approximately 100 days were spent in the field, permitting the writer to make ornithological observations in every part of the Reservation, and thus to gain a cross-section of the fall and winter bird-life of the area.

The Papago Reservation has an area of approximately four million acres, and is almost entirely Lower Sonoran in flora and fauna. Practically all field work was done in this zone, which is characterized by such desert plants as creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), salt-bush (*Atriplex* spp.), giant cactus (*Carnegiea gigantea*), cholla cactus (*Opuntia fulgida*), palo verdes (*Parkinsonia microphylla* and *Cercidium torreyanum*), ironwood (*Olneya tesota*), and bur sage (*Franseria deltoidea*). The elevation ranges from 2000 to 4000 feet, the terrain consisting of small, rugged mountain ranges with intervening broad valleys.

The following 24 species of birds may be classed as the most common fall and winter birds of the Reservation, most of them being seen throughout the two seasons, and recorded on more than 40 days of the 100 spent in the field. Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura teter*), Western Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo borealis calurus*), Desert Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius phalaena*), Gambel Quail (*Lophortyx gambelii gambelii*), Western Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura marginella*), Red-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes cafer collaris*), Gila Woodpecker (*Centurus uropygialis uropygialis*), Cactus Woodpecker (*Dryobates scalaris cactophilus*), Say Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), Horned Lark (*Otocoris alpestris* subsp.), White-necked Raven (*Corvus cryptoleucus*), Arizona Verdin (*Auriparus flaviceps*), Northern Cactus Wren (*Heleodytes brunneicapillus couesi*), Common Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus obsoletus*), Palmer Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre palmeri*), Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila* sp.), Western Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula cineraceus*), Phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*