

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Clark Nutcracker in Nuevo Leon, Mexico.—On July 16, 1945, I collected a specimen of Clark Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*) on Cerro de Potosí, some 25 kilometers northwest of Galeana, Nuevo Leon. The species apparently has not been reported heretofore from northeastern Mexico. Neither Ridgway (Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., 50, pt. 3, 1904:281) nor Hellmayr (Publ. Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Zool. Ser., 13, pt. 7, 1934:9) list any records of occurrence south of the regularly occupied range in New Mexico and Arizona, nor does van Rossem (Occas. Papers Mus. Zool. Louisiana State Univ. No. 21, 1945) include the species in his list of birds of Sonora. Apparently the only nutcrackers taken in Mexico have been in the San Pedro Mártir Range in Lower California where the species is designated as "sparingly resident" by Grinnell (Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., 32, 1928:148).

My specimen, which is now no. 94785 in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, was one of a flock of three birds encountered near the top of Cerro de Potosí at an elevation of approximately 11,300 feet. It proved to be an immature female still retaining much of the dull, pale brownish juvenal plumage typical of young birds in summer. The bill is short (exposed culmen, 32 mm.), which is also a characteristic of young nutcrackers. The alimentary tract was crammed with small dung beetles, and encrusted fecal material on the bill suggested that this was a regularly sought food.

Presumably the three nutcrackers which I saw were vagrants from New Mexico or some other part of the breeding range 800 miles to the northwest. Both Ridgway and Hellmayr cite scattered records of occurrence from the central United States (Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, etc.), indicating that nutcrackers do at times wander great distances from their normal range. However, the upper reaches of Cerro de Potosí support a typical boreal forest of the type frequented by nutcrackers in the Rocky Mountains, and I do not entirely dismiss the possibility that the species may breed there.—A. STARKER LEOPOLD, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, June 26, 1946.*

"Tunnel Fliers" and Window Fatalities.—The recent note by Ross (Condor, 48, 1946:142), inspired by Willett's query (Condor, 47, 1945:216), appeals to me as a logical explanation of the window fatalities of Russet-backed Thrushes. Birds that habitually make swift flights through restricted passages in heavy cover would seem to be guided by the view of light ahead and are quite naturally deceived by an obstruction of transparent glass.

In looking over the accession records of the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology for the past few years, it has been possible to list a rather large number of migrant birds known to have been killed in the Toronto region by flying against windows, or those supposed to have been killed in that way on the basis of circumstantial evidence. The Oven-bird tops the list. The thrushes follow in this order—Olive-backed, Hermit, Gray-cheeked and Veery. Other birds known to have met death by striking windows are Ruffed Grouse, Woodcock, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Ruby-throated Hummingbird. All these would seem to fall in the class of "tunnel fliers."

Second only to the Oven-bird, but not associated with window fatalities, is the death rate of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. This woodpecker is a night migrant, which circumstance might be supposed to increase likelihood of accident in urban areas, but so are many other species which have, according to our records, a much lower rating. What factors are affecting the mortality rate of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker?—L. L. SNYDER, *Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology, Toronto, Ontario, July 22, 1946.*

Feeding Habits of the White-breasted Wood-swallow.—The White-breasted Wood-swallow (*Artamus leucorhynchus*) is of widespread distribution among the islands of the western and southwestern Pacific. It is a common bird in the littoral coconut plantings of the Philippines where it has welcomed the introduction of telephone poles and their intervening strands of wire. In chattering rows on these man-provided perches the Wood Swallows await passing insects, after which they sally forth much in the manner of feeding tyrant flycatchers.

Occasionally they select as potential meals insects much too large for a single bird to cope with and in such instances the capture of the prey becomes a community project. In the city of Zamboanga, Mindanao, I watched from within a few feet a group of four wood-swallows systematically destroying a four-inch long grasshopper which crawled across the ground. The first bird swooped down to deal the insect a sharp blow with its beak and one by one its companions dropped like dive bombers to further maim their victim. Despite the speed with which they flew, never once did a bird overshoot its target. The toughness of the grasshopper's horny exoskeleton required many blows before the insect was sufficiently injured to allow one of the birds to carry it away.—KEN STOTT, JR., *San Diego Zoo, California, July 12, 1946.*