

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Notes on Two Nests of the Beardless Flycatcher near Tucson, Arizona.—On the morning of April 20, 1946, at Binghamton Pond, northeast of Tucson, Arizona, we saw a Beardless Flycatcher (*Camptostoma imberbe*) carrying nest material. It flew to a tent caterpillar nest, about fifteen feet up, that had been woven around a slender upright fork of a willow tree. This tree grew conspicuously alone in a grassy field fifty feet from the dense mesquite hedge which covered the main dike. While we watched, in the shade of the hedge, the bird disappeared completely through a small hole near the top of the caterpillar web. From the inside it arranged the nest material with such vigor that the entire branch shook and, once, the head of the builder, with wide open bill, broke through the thin web. Immediately it pulled back, closing the break in the wall. On each trip to the nest the bird suddenly appeared from a group of trees 200 feet away and then flew directly across the open field to the willow tree. A second bird, evidently its mate, usually stayed in the tree, following the other about, but took no part in the work at all, at least not while we were present. Now and then we heard a three- or four-syllable whistled call note.

Subsequent visits to the area were of necessity brief like the first visit. As we approached on April 27 we heard the characteristic call notes from one or two birds in the mesquite growth. In our twenty-minute stay we recorded only one trip to the nest. So far as we could see these birds behaved at all times like other flycatchers, not like kinglets or vireos, as has been reported in the literature. Perhaps the foliage-gleaning habit is pursued chiefly in colder weather when flying insects are not so abundant. Typical flycatching, with short quick flights within the rather thick mesquite canopy and from the top of the willow tree, was the rule here. When they perched quietly, their posture was upright and the slightly raised feathers at the back of their heads suggested a crest. The peculiar call-note or song consisted of from three to five syllables, the notes clear and distinct and of equal length. At close range it had an explosive, consonantal, hard *t* or *p* at the beginning of each note: *teeee teeee teeee teeee*. Once we heard an additional brief twitter.

On May 4 the calls ceased as we came in sight of the tree. Probably our presence caused some uneasiness. We watched the nest for half an hour before we saw one of the flycatchers enter. Evidently incubation had begun, for the bird remained inside. Its mate perched in the tree top most of the time, darting out occasionally after passing insects. Sometimes it stationed itself upon the wires of the nearby fence from which it scanned the field for prey. Oddly, it seemed to pay no attention to its mate when it entered the nest.

On May 18 we saw both adults carry food to their nest. We heard only one call. Perhaps because of the fact that there were no other Beardless Flycatchers in the vicinity there was no defense of any extended territory. They drove away an English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) that edged too close, but a Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*) which paused in the tree received no threatening gestures. A female Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) had now almost completed her nest in the lower part of the willow, eight feet below and on the west side of the nest of the Beardless Flycatcher. Evidently she had not been seriously molested. She perched repeatedly in her lower horizontal plane, her mate usually not far away, while the other two flycatchers confined their housekeeping activities to the upper half of the tree. On the following day we heard the calls of the Beardless Flycatchers more frequently as both of the adults continued their regular trips with food to their nest. Again one of them chased an English Sparrow. Quick sallies by the flycatchers within the tree crown itself provided much of the food. On one of these erratic flights a Beardless Flycatcher approached as close as two feet to the nest on which the female Vermilion Flycatcher was sitting. At once the male Vermilion Flycatcher drove the trespasser back into the top of the tree. We saw no further interference on this day. On our next visit on May 25 we found the female Vermilion Flycatcher incubating undisturbed while the upper story birds still carried food to their nest.

A week later as we approached we heard numerous calls from the adjacent mesquites. The adults made several flights to the willow tree but they did not go near the nest. Presumably the nestlings, if they had left, were somewhere in the nearby trees but our careful search of the vicinity was unsuccessful. We saw another inadvertent intrusion which again produced a brief defensive chase by the Vermilion Flycatcher.

Apparently the extension of the breeding range of the Beardless Flycatcher into the Binghamton Pond area is recent, for we saw no individuals there in the preceding twelve years.

On May 26, 1946, we were fortunate in finding a second nest. It was located eight miles south of Tucson near the dry bed of the Santa Cruz River. Like the first one at Binghamton Pond, it also was built in a tent caterpillar nest in a vertical fork of a willow tree, although somewhat higher, about twenty feet above the ground. However, the tree grew in a wide arroyo crowded with tall cottonwoods and willows so close that their branches interlaced. A tangle of second growth mesquites fringed and overhung the high dirt bank. Were it not for the unmistakable call notes, we would not have discovered the two adults carrying food to their nest. They showed no alarm as we watched them a short distance away. Ten or twelve feet below, on a horizontal branch, a Ground Dove (*Columbigalina passerina*) sat undisturbed in her nest on two eggs. On our final visit on June 2 we observed a young Beardless Flycatcher perching in the upper part of the tree close to its nest. In a few minutes the parents arrived and one of them fed the begging fledgling.—ANDERS H. ANDERSON and ANNE ANDERSON, *Tucson, Arizona, January 18, 1948.*

A Second Record of the Cassin Auklet at Portland, Oregon.—On January 13, 1948, Jack Marks, Director of the Portland Zoo, brought to my office a very emaciated and very weak Cassin Auklet (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*). The bird had been captured by hand during the night before as it wandered about on the Terminal Docks along the Willamette River in the northern part of the city. Marks had tried to force-feed the auklet without success. It died on the morning of January 13. The stomach was entirely empty. The specimen proved to be an adult female in good winter plumage but without a trace of fat on skin or body. It has been prepared as a study skin.

The only previous record of the occurrence of the Cassin Auklet inland from salt water in Oregon with which I am familiar is of a bird found on the Willamette River near the above location which was brought to me on October 4, 1921 (*Birds of Oregon, 1941:316*).—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, January 29, 1948.*

An Early Record for the Barn Swallow in the San Francisco Bay Area.—An early spring occurrence of the Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) was recorded on February 29, 1948, on Bay Farm Island, Alameda, California, by Mr. D. H. Beeson of San Leandro. One adult male was observed. Subsequently, on March 6, the writer observed four birds there. To my knowledge, the February date constitutes one of the earliest records for this species in the San Francisco Bay area.—JAMES A. YOUNG, *Alameda, California, March 17, 1948.*

Frigate-bird Bested by Brown Booby.—On November 29, 1947, off Moku Manu Island on the southeast coast of Oahu, Mr. David Woodside and I witnessed a reversal of the Frigate-bird's usually successful privateering. Our attention was drawn to the swift chase of a Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*) by a Frigate-bird (*Fregata minor*). Following immediately behind, and closely approximating the fast maneuverings of the first two birds, was a Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*). The chase had gone on for at least 200 yards and was close over the water when the Red-footed Booby was seen to disgorge what presumably was a fish. The Brown Booby, about even with and slightly below the Frigate-bird, dived down, snatched the fish from the water, and was away before the apparently confused Frigate-bird could even give chase.—FRANK RICHARDSON, *University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii, April 6, 1948.*

Water-surface Feeding of Robins.—While observing birds in the vicinity of Credit Island Harbor in Scott County, Iowa, on September 25, 1946, I saw about a dozen Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) behaving in a manner I had never before observed. The Robins flew low over the water and then made awkward and ungraceful dives to emerge with large insects of undetermined species in their mandibles. A few of the birds were able to skim over the surface of the water and pick up the insects without getting wet but most of them plunged into the water and emerged shaking their feathers and giving their scolding call. I watched these Robins and their manner of feeding for about an hour until the light failed at sunset, making the insects invisible to the birds and causing the birds to roost. A limited search of the literature revealed no report of such feeding tactics by Robins. However,