

rare or local as a breeding bird in the general region (see Sutton and Phillips, Condor, 44, 1942:60).

Salpinctes obsoletus. Rock Wren. Ten birds seen, one pair of which was accompanied by full-grown young, establish the breeding of this wren.

Poliotilta caerulea. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Rather common, not only on the ridges, but down almost to the very mouth of Alamo Canyon, where one was taken near the windmill and corral. A family of young, not long out of the nest, was encountered a little farther up the canyon, but still in Lower Sonoran Zone surroundings. We saw a total of seven pairs.

Phainopepla nitens. Phainopepla. Although "abundant" and breeding earlier in the spring (Huey), these birds had largely left by late May. We saw but few (total three to five individuals), and these mostly on our first day in camp.

Aimophila ruficeps. Rufous-crowned Sparrow. We found at least a dozen singing males and four or five females, all well up in the mountains. This, with the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, was the only definite Upper Sonoran Zone indicator species of bird that we noted.

Three males collected on our trip, with seven specimens collected by Phillips and E. R. Tinkham in late October, 1947, show that the birds of the Ajo Mountains are darker both above and below than *A. r. scottii*. Although their bills average larger, they are otherwise identical with *A. r. rupicola* van Rossem (Auk, 63, 1946:562) of the Harquahala Mountains, from which the Ajos are separated by some 125 miles of low, hot desert. This is particularly interesting in view of van Rossem's finding that the birds of the Baboquivari Mountains (only 60 miles east of the Ajos) are slightly paler than typical *scottii*. Our one June male from the Baboquivaris appears darker than average *scottii*, but is probably not representative of its population.

Amphispiza bilineata. Black-throated Sparrow. By no means common; a single bird was heard singing at camp. They were more numerous, but wild, near San Simon, a little farther northeast. A pair taken here, like three birds taken by Tinkham and Phillips on the hillside above the mouth of Alamo Canyon, October 21, 1947, are more purely (grayer) brown on the back, less reddish brown, than *A. b. deserticola*, which Huey found in winter at Bates Well to the west. Curiously, the birds of the Ajo Mountains and San Simon do not appear separable from *A. b. confinis* of the north Mexican plateau, although they occur far to the west of that region and apparently are completely isolated from other populations of *confinis*. Even more puzzling is the fact that several specimens from near Ventana Ranch are good *deserticola*, including one from seven miles south-southwest of Ventana Ranch. This last locality is less than 15 miles, air-line, north of where our San Simon pair was taken, and with no apparent barrier intervening! Our only conclusion is that much remains to be learned about these sparrows in southwestern Arizona.

It seems worth recording that the Arkansas Kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*), Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), Lucy Warbler (*Vermivora luciae*), Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*), and Chipping and Black-chinned Sparrows (*Spizella passerina* and *S. atrogularis*) were not found in the Ajos on our trip.

Most of the transients seen were of common species. On May 20, while Phillips was making camp just after our arrival, he was surprised to see a Ground Dove (*Columbigallina passerina*) fly through, very low, going west out of the canyon. An Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Nuttallornis borealis*) was seen on May 21 a little above the mouth of Alamo Canyon. The same day, in the upper part of the canyon, we found a flock of about eight Pine Siskins (*Spinus pinus*) feeding in the composite shrubbery just above the canyon bottoms. A young Green-backed Goldfinch (*S. psaltria*) was taken from this flock. Siskins were also heard twice at camp on May 22.—ALLAN R. PHILLIPS, Tucson, Arizona, and WARREN M. PULICH, Phoenix, Arizona, July 1, 1948.

Attempted Coition of Rock Dove with Mallard.—Covel's observations of a female California Quail (*Lophortyx californica*) courting certain male Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) at Lakeside Park, Oakland, California (Condor, 50, 1948:165), has prompted the following note: During the month of February, 1948, Mr. Walter H. Boyce of the Westchester County Park Commission and I observed a Rock Dove (*Columba livia*), obviously a male, actively courting certain female Mallards by the Bronx River in Scarsdale, New York. The Rock Dove strutted and cooed in typical courtship fashion, even pecking at the Mallard drakes. The female duck being courted paid no attention to the courtship antics other than to move out of the way when the dove became too excited, whereupon he would divert his attentions to another female Mallard. Many times the dove mounted a female Mallard

in an attempt to copulate, and when this occurred, the duck in question would either fly a short way to rid herself of the dove or enter the water for the same purpose. None of the male Mallards bothered the dove at any time.

At this same location, a winter feeding area, there were usually three Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*), two females and one male. The dove completely ignored these female ducks, even when there were no female Mallards in the immediate vicinity. The Rock Dove was the only individual of his species in the area. Perhaps this was the reason for the dove's mis-matched mating attempts, although I can offer no opinion why he ignored the female Wood Ducks.—JOHN L. WOLFF, *Linnaean Society of New York, New York, N. Y., July 31, 1948.*

Songs of the Brown Towhee Evoked by Nest Robbing by Scrub Jays.—About noon on June 6, 1948, hearing a harsh, high-pitched note in the backyard of my home in Berkeley, California, I went out to find four Brown Towhees (*Pipilo fuscus*), presumably two pairs, fighting with two Scrub Jays (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*). Each pair of towhees attacked the jays, fluttering wide-spread wings and tails and uttering this harsh note. They then dropped to the ground a few feet away from where I stood, showing no fear of me. In their excitement the resident towhees intermittently attacked the other pair of towhees in what I took to be a defense of territory. One jay was driven off, but the second, after being driven from the nest bush three times, was no longer molested.

In a few moments I moved within a short distance of the nest bush and observed the jay eating from the nest before it flew away. Upon examining the nest two eggs were seen, one of which was partly eaten. I then withdrew about ten feet and observed the actions of the towhees upon their return to the nest. One of the towhees arrived and nervously hopped around in the surrounding shrubs before moving up near the nest, where it gave a few faint "tsip"s. It then went to the nest and removed the broken egg in two trips. The last time, as it hopped to the rim of the nest, it sang a high-pitched, warbled song not unlike that of a House Finch, but so faint that I could barely hear it. I could see the bird making singing movements with its bill and throat, and I checked the surrounding bushes to be sure no other birds were present. The bird then sat on the nest, which now contained but one egg. Meanwhile the other bird of the pair was chipping nearby and occasionally uttering a wheezy note that I had heard commonly during the preceding week, and which Quaintance (Condor, 43, 1941:152-155) has called the "mate call." The next day the birds were not heard in the yard and a check of the nest on the following day showed the other egg to be missing and the nest deserted. The towhees were also missing, and they have not been seen in their territory to this date.

A summary of the notes and songs used on this occasion is as follows: a *chip* used commonly and varied with excitement of territorial and nest defenses, a thin *tsip* on approaching the nest, the mate-call, a harsh distress note uttered during the attack on the jays, and a high-pitched, warbled note by a bird on the rim of the nest, resembling the song of a House Finch. These last two are in addition to those reported by Quaintance (*op. cit.* and Condor, 40, 1938:97-101).—HENRY E. CHILDS, JR., *University of California, Berkeley, California, June 16, 1948.*

The Cowbird Moves Northward in California.—Until recent years the humid coast belt of northern California has been free of the Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). The writer had never expected that this parasite would reach the dense groves of fir and redwood in Humboldt County. However, sufficient data from Humboldt County have now accumulated to warrant listing the Cowbird as at least a casual summer visitor in this section. Observations on six nests each containing an egg of the Cowbird and sight of a pair at close range seem to indicate that this species is more common than thought even though it still is more or less localized. It occurs on suitable open river bars, avoiding the heavy timber.

Two Cowbird eggs were noted in June of 1941, on the Eel River Bar, in the vicinity of Fernbridge, Humboldt County, California. One was in the nest of either a Pileolated Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) or an Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata*). The single egg was in the nest and no other eggs were present. The other egg was found in the nest of a Western Flycatcher (*Empidonax difficilis*), which contained one egg of the flycatcher as well. These two eggs could well have been deposited by the same female. A third Cowbird egg was noted that same year in June on the Van Duzen River Bar at Alton, Humboldt County, California.

Observations were discontinued during the war years, but in June of 1947 another Cowbird egg