

**A Comparison of *Pipilo ocai* and the Fossil *Pipilo angelensis*.**—A comparison of *Pipilo angelensis* of the Rancho La Brea Pleistocene and *Pipilo ocai* of Mexico was not made in the description of the fossil (Dawson, Condor, 50, 1948:57-63) due to the lack of comparative material of the latter. Through the kindness of Alden H. Miller, a specimen of *ocai*, recently acquired by the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, has been made available for my study. The comparison is of the premaxillary and associated parts which form the upper mandible, the element which serves as the type of *Pipilo angelensis*.

*Pipilo ocai* lacks the short longitudinal ridge found in the fossil just medial to the junction of the superior and inferior nasal processes on the superior process. The profile of the internarial bridge is more elevated than that of *Pipilo angelensis* and drops more abruptly to join the posterior part of the premaxillary. In addition to the marked differences in shape, *Pipilo ocai*, judging from the one specimen examined, seems to have a longer premaxillary and higher, though relatively shorter, nares than the fossil (see table). All measurements suggest that the Pleistocene towhee was a smaller bird than the Recent *Pipilo ocai*.

Measurements in mm.	<i>Pipilo angelensis</i>		<i>Pipilo ocai</i>
	Type	Cotype	(M.V.Z. no. 115341)
(a) Width across maxillaries	7.6	7.6	8.4
(b) Height at front of nares	3.1	2.9	3.8
(c) Length from anterior end of nares to tip of mandible	8.7±	8.7±	9.4
(d) Length of nostril	5.4	5.3	5.3
(e) Height of nostril	3.2	3.1	3.8
Ratios (in per cent)			
a to c	87.3	87.3	89.4
b to a	40.8	38.1	45.2
d to c	62.1	60.9	56.4
e to d	59.3	58.3	71.7

—WILLIAM R. DAWSON, *University of California at Los Angeles, August 8, 1949.*

**Heavy Winter Mortality in Pacific Coast Varied Thrushes.**—The severity of the winter weather during February, 1949, and its fatal effect on some species of birds, was brought forcefully to my attention in the course of a winter automobile trip, on February 6 to 8, from Reedsport, Oregon, over the Oregon coast and redwood highways to Laytonville, California. The trip was through intermittent storms of wind-driven snow, rain, sleet and hail. Near Pistol, Oregon, at 1700 feet elevation, the highway had just been made passable through a four-foot depth of fresh snow.

Arriving at Reedsport in late forenoon, I proceeded south over the Oregon coast highway and soon began to see dozens of Varied Thrushes (*Ixoreus naevius*) on and immediately adjacent to the highway. These birds seemed to be searching for food which they must recently have had great difficulty in finding. Many had made the not-normal, but fatal mistake of lingering too long on the highway before taking weak and slow flights to places of safety. After miles of continuing to encounter literally scores of car-killed thrushes, I made an occasional stop to examine them carefully. Their ordinarily rounded breasts had not a trace of fat and the breast muscles lacked the plumpness so common in healthy birds. The breast bones were sharp and altogether too prominent.

Considering that bad weather conditions prevailed not only during our trip but generally throughout the month of February and that great numbers of dead and very weak Varied Thrushes were so commonly seen, it seems safe to conclude that literally thousands of these birds must have perished. That any could have survived the winter, seems a wonder. It would be of much interest to learn whether observers who have visited southwestern Oregon and northwestern California since last winter have noted scarcity of Varied Thrushes. Certainly only extremely hardy individuals fortunate to find food in sufficient quantity to carry them through could have survived.

I recall a previous serious loss of Varied Thrushes in northwestern Washington in the winter of 1915-1916 when Bellingham experienced near-zero temperatures and a three-foot fall of snow that did not disappear for three weeks. Hundreds of Varied Thrushes invaded the city seeking food and the house cat population waxed fat at the expense of these unfortunate birds of the deep woods. When spring arrived, Varied Thrush feathers in considerable abundance were noted in sheds and under buildings having space for a cat retreat.—WEBSTER R. RANSOM, *Seattle, Washington, August 7, 1949.*