

Measurements of *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* in Millimeters

	Males			
	Wing	Tail	Culmen	Tarsus
Ridgway's average for 10 <i>semipalmatus</i>	188	70.6	54.5	56.7
1 specimen from Cameron County, Texas (U.M.M.Z. 66171)	193	74	61	56
1 specimen from Cameron County, Texas (U.M.M.Z. 66172)	195	72	58	62
Ridgway's largest of 10 <i>semipalmatus</i>	195.5	74	58	58.5
Ridgway's average for 11 <i>inornatus</i>	205.2	79.4	59.4	64.9
Ridgway's largest of 11 <i>inornatus</i>	218	84.5	63.5	69
	Females			
Ridgway's average for 5 <i>semipalmatus</i>	187	70.1	56.2	55.1
Ridgway's largest of 5 <i>semipalmatus</i>	191	74	59	58
1 specimen from Cameron County, Texas (U.M.M.Z. 66173)	200	79	59	60
1 specimen from Tepehuaje, Tamaulipas (Sutton Collection)	204	76	65	63
Ridgway's smallest of 6 <i>inornatus</i>	209.5	74	63	66.5
Ridgway's average for 6 <i>inornatus</i>	213.5	80.9	64.1	68.3
Ridgway's largest of 6 <i>inornatus</i>	220	88	65	70

The bill length of the female from Tepehuaje, Tamaulipas, is exactly that of the longest-billed *inornatus* measured by Ridgway. Its tail length is greater than the shortest-tailed female *inornatus* measured by Ridgway. Its wing length and tarsus length fall between those of the largest *semipalmatus* and smallest *inornatus* measured by Ridgway, but are actually closer to Ridgway's average for *inornatus* than to that of *semipalmatus*. In size, then, we must call the Tepehuaje specimen *inornatus*.

The Cameron County birds appear to be intermediate between the two races in size, with a definite tendency toward *inornatus* evinced particularly in the female's tail length, which is almost as great as that of Ridgway's average for *inornatus*. In wing length and tarsus length also, this female bird is definitely large for *semipalmatus*, and its bill length equals that of the longest-billed *semipalmatus* measured by Ridgway. The male birds too are consistently very large for *semipalmatus*, only one measurement of the eight (tarsus length of U. M. M. Z. 66171) falling at all below Ridgway's average for the eastern race. On the basis of the above, I maintain that it is a mistake to call birds from Cameron County, Texas, *semipalmatus* without qualifying the statement. Assuredly they tend toward *inornatus* in size.

In color, the female from Tepehuaje, Tamaulipas, is obviously much paler both above and below than the birds from Cameron County, hence on a second count must be called *inornatus*. The Cameron County specimens are very similar in color to some *inornatus* in the series of breeding specimens in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, but on the whole they seem too heavily marked with black both above and below for that race.

More specimens must, of course, be collected along the coast of southern Tamaulipas before we can be certain that the whole breeding population there represents the western race. *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus inornatus* has heretofore been considered a bird of the interior. Further investigations may reveal, however, that there is a clinal trend toward largeness and paleness from the Texas coast southward. How much farther south than Tepehuaje, Tamaulipas, the Willet breeds is a question. Robert B. Lea, who visited the Tampico region in late May, 1947, informs me that he did not record the species there. Should the Tamaulipas population prove distinct from both *inornatus* and *semipalmatus*, the name *speculiferus* Cuvier apparently is available (Hellmayr and Conover, Cat. Birds Amer., part 1, no. 3, 1948:129).—GEORGE MIKSCH SUTTON, *Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 3, 1949.*

The Brown Pelican as a Scavenger.—On the afternoon of November 27, 1949, the research ship "Orca" of the J. W. Sefton Foundation was running in to San Diego from South Coronado Island. We had on board a large porpoise which was being dissected and fleshed. As all waste matter was thrown overboard as removed from the skeleton, the usual accumulation of hungry gulls was following the ship, screaming and fighting over every piece of viscera and flesh that hit the water. Among the gulls were three Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) which, to the surprise of everyone on board the ship, joined the gulls in their scramble for this waste. The pelicans did not dive but landed

on the water, bills open and wings held high, and fought with the gulls over chunks and strips of porpoise. In many cases they would flap and paddle right over one or more of the gulls to get at the meat and often took from the gulls large pieces which the gulls could not carry away or swallow quickly.

Prior to this time I had never known pelicans to act as scavengers, but their procedure in this case precluded any possibility that they mistook the refuse for live fish.—J. W. SEFTON, JR., *San Diego Society of Natural History, San Diego, California, December 1, 1949.*

Records of the Knot in the San Joaquin Valley, California.—A detailed survey of the available literature indicates that the Knot (*Calidris canutus*) has not been recorded for interior Oregon, Nevada, or California. Grinnell and Miller (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 27, 1944:150) give the geographic range in California as: "From one end of State to other, but strictly coastwise." Therefore, the following observations made about 65 miles inland from the Pacific coast should be of especial interest.

On August 2, 1949, Daniel W. Slater and I observed a rather compact flock of 60 to 65 Knots, still in breeding plumage, at the edge of a shallow pool in a grassy pasture about 2½ miles northeast of the town of Los Baños, Merced County, California. Some of the Knots were feeding with Avocets and Black-necked Stilts, but most of them were on a slightly elevated grassy area at the edge of the water in one inactive group. Later on this same date, in irrigated countryside, we also observed a similar flock of 15 Knots at the edge of a pool of seepage water in a grassy pasture. This site was near Mendota Pool, just northeast of Mendota in Fresno County. This smaller flock was observed an airline distance of about 33 miles from the larger flock seen four and one-half hours earlier.

Worthy of special note is the fact that both flocks were in breeding plumage and were observed in similar habitat, although these habitats are different than, and inland from, those previously recorded in the literature.

Perhaps shorebird observers have overlooked a major fall migration route of this species in California, since the large numbers noted in this instance indicate more than just accidental use of the San Joaquin Valley.—FRED G. EVENDEN, JR., *Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento, California, December 10, 1949.*

Nesting Record of the Vermilion Flycatcher in the Northern Mohave Desert.—On May 14, 1949, a male Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) was seen in Indian Wells Valley, northeastern Kern County, California. The observation was made on the old Stayer Ranch about five miles northeast of Inyokern at an elevation of 2300 feet. The ranch is now part of the United States Naval Ordnance Test Station, China Lake. A thorough survey of the ranch area on May 21 revealed that the male flycatcher was mated and that the female was incubating a clutch of three eggs. The nest, which was set in a horizontal fork near the lower periphery of the crown of a locust tree, was constructed mainly of course twigs. The lining consisted of plant fibres, string, soft paper and small leaves, all of which were also interspersed throughout the bowl.

Upon examination of the nest on May 31, only two eggs were found. Resting on the fork in which the nest was set was a stone weighing 22.9 grams, which I am quite certain was not there on the 21st. It was suggested to me that this might be the work of a pack rat. During the evening of June 2 and throughout the next day, a wind storm swept the desert area. According to the Aerology Office of the Naval Air Facility, N.O.T.S., gusts of whole gale velocity (58 m.p.h.) were recorded. It is possible that the nest of the flycatchers could not withstand winds of such intensity, for it was gone on June 5. However, inasmuch as the nest was located in a tree adjacent to a picnic area, its disappearance might well be attributed to vandalism. A male flycatcher was observed in the ranch area on July 25 but on five other visits between June 10 and August 6, when attempts were made to locate a second nest, neither the male nor female was seen.

According to the summary by Grinnell and Miller (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 27, 1944:264) of the distribution of the Vermilion Flycatcher, the breeding metropolis is in the Colorado Desert below 500 feet elevation. More recently, Jaeger (Condor, 49, 1947:213) reported that this species was known to breed near Camp Cady, San Bernardino County, California. The present record extends the breed-