

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Sun-bathing Linnets.—The current studies of Dr. G. W. Salt (MS) on heat tolerance by members of the genus *Carpodacus* suggest that the following observations be placed on record. The fact that notes were so brief and that no recurrence has been observed has prevented their earlier publication.

On July 27, 1943, during an especially hot spell in Los Angeles, California, several California Linnets (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*) were noticed in a peculiar behavior pattern on the rough brick ledge outside my window.

The birds would settle on the window ledge and "sun bathe" seemingly with much enjoyment. The bath would last at least half a minute, then be interrupted by flight. No more than four birds were on the ledge at one time and both sexes were represented. Once an English Sparrow joined the group for a brief time. It was impossible to tell whether or not the same individuals returned repeatedly, but the performance lasted fully thirty minutes and it probably included a number of repeats.

After landing the bird would quickly assume one or another of the following positions or modification thereof:

1. On one side, wing and tail spread, head rotated about 90° to one side, crown feathers erected.
2. On the belly, tail and wings spread, head retracted over the back, beak pointed skyward.
3. Semi-erect, head rotated to side, wings spread, crown feathers erected, eye half closed.

Other postures were not captured in my hasty notes. Respiration was very rapid so that the whole body palpitated. There were frequent interruptions for preening. The beak was either open or closed. There was frequent display of "peck dominance."

The window faces southeast and is unshaded; the ledge of rather dark klinker brick had been exposed all morning to full glare of the sun with perhaps additional heat reflected from the plate glass surface of the window. The time was 12:30 to 1:00 p.m. and air temperature within the room stood at 83°F. Humidity was not measured but these hot spells (in sight of the sea in west Los Angeles) are due to a drift of air from the interior which nullifies the customary sea breeze of summer. The relative humidity is therefore fairly low on such occasions and sun temperatures are high.

It would appear then that the California Linnet is a species that is adapted to a considerable degree of heat and aridity and that those individuals occurring in coastal southern California sometimes deliberately seek such conditions.—LOVE MILLER, *University of California, Los Angeles, June 15, 1951.*

Sprague Pipit and Black Rosy Finch in North-central Wyoming in Summer.—During a visit to the Big Horn Mountains, August 5 to 21, 1949, we observed two species whose occurrence there is of considerable interest.

Anthus spragueii. Sprague Pipit. The presence of this species was surprising. While it was less numerous than the American Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*), we saw the Sprague Pipit on several occasions from August 5 to 10, singly and in groups of three or four. All were seen about the extensive, gently rolling meadows, or parks, which lie above 9000 feet and cover most of the table-like peaks of the Big Horns in western Sheridan County and eastern Big Horn County. Cary (N. Amer. Fauna, No. 42, 1917:46 and map) treats these open areas as part of the Hudsonian Life-zone. The species was not seen on adjacent rocky outcrops above local timberline, although the American Pipit was common in both habitats. The Sprague Pipit nests on prairies to the northward in Montana, North Dakota, and the prairie provinces at moderate elevations. In Montana, according to Saunders (Pac. Coast Avif., No. 14, 1921:53), it "evidently prefers wet prairie lands, about the edges of alkaline ponds . . ." While those that we saw may have been early migrants, the remote but interesting possibility remains that *spragueii* may breed on the high meadows of the Big Horns. Other birds seen daily on these uplands were Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*), Marsh Hawks (*Circus cyaneus*), and Vesper Sparrows (*Poocetes gramineus*). On August 7 we saw a Sprague Pipit feeding along the wet, grassy border of a small stream, Beaver Creek, together with two Lincoln Sparrows (*Melospiza lincolni*). This pipit has apparently not heretofore been reported from Wyoming in summer; Otto McCreary (Wyoming Bird Life, 1939:80) and Knight (Birds of Wyoming, 1902:55) list it only as a spring migrant in the state.

Leucosticte atrata. Black Rosy Finch. On August 9 we saw 10 individuals of this species within

a distance of about 600 yards along the knife-like summit of Medicine Mountain (elevation about 9300 feet), 30 miles east of Lovell, Big Horn County. Two of these were full grown juvenal-plumaged birds of dull, grayish buffy coloration; they followed an adult, periodically begging for food. All were quite shy and flew about restlessly, giving a sharp, rattling call suggestive of that of the Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). Later on the same day an adult female was found dead among the boulders of a nearby rockslide. This bird was carefully sketched in color, and prepared as a skeleton. It is now in the skeleton collection of Harrison B. Tordoff at the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History. The long western face of Medicine Mountain forms a precipice some hundreds of feet in height and the eastern slope is littered with boulders and talus; hence the area would seem to be suited to the breeding requirements of this species. In fact, it appears to resemble closely the site of the first discovered nest of the Black Rosy Finch (Absaroka Mountains, Wyoming), as described by F. W. Miller (Condor, 27, 1925:3-7, see especially figure 1), but is somewhat lower in elevation. Medicine Mountain, and nearby Bald Mountain (elevation 10,500 feet), are among the highest points in the northwestern part of the Big Horns. Their rocky crests are virtually treeless. The peak of Medicine Mountain lies at the approximate level of the regional "true" timberline which here varies roughly from 9500 to 10,000 feet above sea level (Cary, *op. cit.*: 50). It is essentially alpine in nature. Very small patches of snow were present in sheltered spots during our visit; conies (*Ochotona princeps*) were numerous among the rocks. The Black Rosy Finch has apparently not previously been found in Wyoming in summer east of the Teton, Wind River, and Absaroka mountains, all of which lie in the western or northwestern part of the state (McCreary, *op. cit.*: 99). The Big Horns are therefore probably the eastern limit of the summer range of the species, being the easternmost mass of the Rocky Mountains attaining extensive alpine elevations.—ROBERT M. MENGEL, *University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan*, and JANE S. MENGEL, *Whitmore Lake, Michigan, May 5, 1951*.

Vaux Swift on Santa Rosa Island, California.—In midafternoon on October 7, 1951, while sitting on a rock at the head of a canyon on Santa Rosa Island, Santa Barbara County, California, I noticed a flock of perhaps one hundred Vaux Swifts (*Chaetura vauxi*) pass directly in front of me on the same level. The flock was loose in that the birds were so separated as to require at least a full minute to pass before me. They were all traveling toward the southeast. This species has heretofore not been recorded from this island and apparently the date is quite late for the fall migration.—J. R. PEMBERTON, *Los Angeles, California, October 11, 1951*.

The Hudsonian Curlew in Nevada.—On July 31, 1951, while driving across the Joshua tree-creosote bush desert of northern Clark County, Nevada, I flushed a crippled Hudsonian Curlew (*Numenius hudsonicus*) from the shoulder of the highway about one-half mile east of Cactus Springs. The bird, dangling one leg as it flew, moved about 20 yards off the road and settled among the cactus where it remained nearly motionless for several minutes while I carefully examined it with binoculars. The head striping and short bill were so prominent that there can be no doubt about the species. The bird was still standing among the cactus when I left.

This apparently is the first record for this species in the state of Nevada since Linsdale (Condor, 53, 1951:228-249) makes no mention of it in his recent paper on Nevada birds.—GORDON W. GULLION, *Nevada Fish and Game Commission, Boulder City, Nevada, October 1, 1951*.

Land Birds at Sea.—On two occasions, while some 15 to 20 miles off the coast near San Diego, California, a variety of land birds was observed about the motor vessel M. V. Paolina T. of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. At 2:00 p.m., Pacific standard time on May 10, 1951, about 20 miles west of San Diego, a pair of Yellow Warblers (*Dendroica aestiva*) was observed flying about the ship and alighting occasionally. The weather was very mild, with an overcast sky and light breeze from the northwest. At first the birds were quite nervous and allowed no approach but rapidly lost their fear and would alight quite near to personnel. One was reported as flying through an open galley window and perching briefly on the head of a member of the party. At 4:00 p.m. three more Yellow Warblers and a Pileolated Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) appeared. The Yellow Warblers seemed considerably more at ease in their strange environment than did the Pileolated. They climbed about the rigging and lines as if hunting food and seemed undisturbed by a noisy winch. After dark the birds could be seen flitting about the lighted areas but were not seen to land on board. Twittering calls were heard throughout the night and resembled those made by the warblers during the day.