FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Another Hibernating Poor-will.—The first hibernating Poor-will (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) to be found in Arizona was brought to the Arizona Desert Trailside Museum, near Tucson, on January 5, 1953. It was discovered by Alan Blackburn and Lupé Rodriguez as they were collecting an agave in the Silverbell Mountains some 35 miles northwest of Tucson. Rodriguez struck a pick into the ground to loosen the plant and noticed some feathers fly. On investigation, the men found the bird from which they came and which they thought was badly hurt inasmuch as it was dormant. However, there was no mark of injury—only a patch of feathers missing on the neck.

The Poor-will had been sitting under a lower leaf of the agave plant next to the ground. The agave was growing on a gentle north slope at 3000 feet elevation and the bird was on the south side of the plant where the leaves grew close to the sloping earth. Other plants of the hillside were palo verde trees, creosote, hedgehog cactus, barrel cactus and moss. Saguaros grew on neighboring hillsides.

Southern Arizona enjoyed very warm weather during January and February of 1953. The temperature was 73°F. at Tucson on the day that the Poor-will was found, and it was 87° on January 10.

The men placed the Poor-will in the truck cab while they went on with their work of plant collecting for two hours. The warm sun, and perhaps the previous handling, caused the bird to open its eyes and become somewhat active. During the ride home, which took another hour, the bird was covered with a sweater and by the time the Museum was reached it was asleep. It did not waken while being observed by several people nor while having its picture taken in the sun.

For five days the Poor-will was kept in an unheated adobe building. Nights were cool but days quite warm. The bird would be inert or torpid in the morning but it showed signs of wakefulness during the warmth of the day. It was then moved outside the building to a box set half underground. Here it again resumed its dormant state.

On January 25 the Poor-will weighed 34.1 grams. On January 29 a cloacal temperature was taken with a quick-recording thermometer which read 13.2°C. (55.8°F.). The outside temperature was 15°C.

Moths were quite numerous around an outside light during most of January and February and it seems possible that Poor-wills may arouse from their torpid condition and feed in these warm periods. Two Poor-wills were seen in the road in the Tucson Mountains on November 20, 1952, one was seen on February 13, and one on February 26, 1953.

On the morning of January 31 the captive Poor-will was found dead. Cause of death is not known; the bird was not emaciated, nor did examination reveal any injury.—FLORENCE THORBURG, *Tucson, Arizona, March 9, 1953.*

The Brown-crested Flycatcher in the Florida Keys.—On January 1, 1953, at Big Pine Key, Monroe County, Florida, I collected a specimen of *Myiarchus* which evidently was not *Myiarchus crinitus,* for the yellow of its under parts was much too pale for that species. I encountered the bird among the mangroves, about three hundred yards back from the outer shore and at a slightly greater distance from the open pinelands which are so characteristic of much of the island's interior. The flycatcher flew up in response to my "squeaking," alighting well below the tops of the mangroves. Its *pip* or *quip* callnote was not familiar to me. I was not able to determine its sex as the gonads had decomposed by the time I examined the viscera.

Suspecting that I had a new bird for Florida, I compared the skin with a considerable series of the Brown-crested Flycatcher of the race *Myiarchus tyrannulus nelsoni* in my collection from Mexico. Series of *M. t. tyrannulus, M. t. magister,* and *M. t. insularum* were borrowed from the Carnegie Museum through the courtesy of W. E. Clyde Todd. With this material at hand, it was evident that the bird from Big Pine Key was far too large for *M. t. tyrannulus,* not nearly dark-backed enough for *M. t. insularum,* and too small-billed for *M. t. magister*; it was, indeed, *M. t. nelsoni.* The specimen's measurements are: wing, 101 mm.; tail, 95; exposed culmen, 20.5; tarsus, 23. It is, apparently, the first specimen of its species for Florida; and, being a race which breeds in the lower Rio Grande Valley and in parts of eastern Mexico lying just to the south of that area, it is another of the many western birds which have made their way to the peninsula of Florida and the

Florida Keys. The specimen is no. 11543 in my personal collection.—GEORGE MIKSCH SUTTON, *Department of Zoology, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, March 23, 1953.*

Summer Foods of the Burrowing Owl.—An investigation of the food habits of the Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*) in the agricultural region of Mesa Valley, Maricopa County, Arizona, in the summer of 1944 involved the collection and analysis of 405 pellets. The technique for analysis of the pellets followed the procedure described in United States Department of Interior Wildlife Leaflet Number 222 (1942) for food remains of this type. The writer is indebted to Dr. H. H. Knight, of Iowa State College, for his assistance in identification of insect remains.

A total of 48 food items occurred 1,355 times in 405 pellets collected in the months of June, July, and August. The five major food items in order of frequency of occurrence were: scorpions (Scorpionida), 284 (63 per cent); lamellicorn beetles (Scarabidae), 277 (62 per cent); locusts (Locustidae), 250 (55 per cent); ground beetles (Carabidae), 149 (33 per cent); pocket mice and kangaroo rats (Heteromyidae), 101 (22 per cent).

The occurrences of food remains in the pellet samples by months in per cent were as follows: June (245 pellets), Scarabidae, 71, Scorpionida, 70, Locustidae, 60, Carabidae, 44, Heteromyidae, 18; July (104 pellets), Scorpionida, 76, Locustidae, 75, Scarabidae, 71, Carabidae, 34, Heteromyidae, 30; August (56 pellets), Scorpionida, 61, Scarabidae, 54, Heteromyidae, 46, Locustidae, 45, Carabidae, 11.

A comparison of the summer foods by months showed a general similarity in the foods taken. The relative standing of the food types probably reflected the variation in availability. Such food items as scorpions, lamellicorn beetles, and grasshoppers continued to be staple foods throughout the summer.

In an agricultural area such as the Mesa Valley, the beneficial effects of natural insect control, as exercised by the Burrowing Owl, represented an asset rather than a liability to the land owner. As a result it seems logical to assume that the encouragement of the presence of Burrowing Owls, rather than their persecution, should be a part of any wise land use program.—FRED A. GLOVER, *Wildlife Management Department, Humboldt State College, Arcata, California, January 10, 1953.*

Evidence for the Suppression of the American Race of the Pintail.—The American Ornithologists' Union Check-list and many other current reference works continue to divide the Pintail, *Anas acuta,* into two subspecies: *A. a. acuta* Linnaeus of the Old World and *A. a. tzitzihoa* Vieillot of the New World. According to Hellmayr and Conover (Cat. Birds Amer., 1 (2), 1948:357), "the American Pintail is supposed to differ from the European and Asiatic bird by larger size, longer bill and tail, and more greenish speculum." These authors present measurements of 12 adult males from Europe and Asia and of 18 from North America. They concluded that *tzitzihoa* was not separable on the basis of size. They also found the variation in color of the speculum to be unrelated to geographic distribution.

Hørring and Salomonsen (Medd. om Grønland, 131, 1941:8), although having only five American specimens available, were also unable to distinguish *tzitzihoa.* Several other ornithologists have come to the conclusion that *tzitzihoa* is invalid but have not published their findings, and the name continues to appear in much of the current literature.

In his "Key to the Wildfowl of the World" (2nd Ann. Rept. Severn Wildfowl Trust, 1949:pl. 9), Peter Scott considered *tzitzihoa* "very doubtfully distinct." In a later, revised edition (1951) of this key, Scott granted recognition to the American subspecies on the basis of larger size. I have been informed by Mr. Scott that this change was based on inadequate evidence and that he now agrees that *tzitzihoa* cannot be separated from *acuta.*

In order to satisfy my own curiosity as to the taxonomic status of New World Pintails, I measured a somewhat larger series than that available to Hellmayr and Conover. These birds comprised the full-plumaged adult males in the collections of Cornell University, the American Museum of Natural History, and Carnegie Museum, a total of 31 Old World and 23 New World birds. The measurements obtained are shown in the accompanying table. It may readily be seen that although New World birds average slightly greater in tail length, overlap is such that identification of single specimens is impossible. None of the other measurements shows any significant difference. Like Hellmayr and Conover, I was unable to find any consistent difference in the color of the speculum.