

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Pygmy Nuthatches Take Arboreal Bath.—At about 9:30 a.m. on January 26, 1941, I noted five Pygmy Nuthatches (*Sitta pygmaea*) frolicking among dripping bough tips 25 feet up in a young Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*) at Libby, Montana. The tree stood in mixed broadleaf and conifer forest, at this point 20 yards from bordering yellow pines (*Pinus ponderosa*). The excited romping among the needled branchlets was accompanied by an uncommonly large amount of loud, boisterous twittering, which first attracted my attention to them. I observed the nuthatches at this procedure for several more minutes.

A light snow had fallen during the night. The sun now shone through fast-breaking clouds. Temperature in the shade was 40°F. Melting snow on evergreens, larches and deciduous broadleaves hung every branch and needle tip with crystal droplets that sparkled brilliantly in the bright sunshine. The spirited clambering of the birds among the dripping boughs appeared to be a very wet activity. The nuthatches seemingly sought the wettest needle tufts of the heavily foliated fir. I had never seen this species bathing at a stream or pool. But here without doubt they were engaged in taking a mid-winter "fir-needle bath."

All the nuthatches had well dampened plumage. They would shake their feathers violently, then plunge again into the soaking branchlets. One or two shook themselves quite dry and flew on ahead. —JOHN L. BLACKFORD, *Libby, Montana, May 2, 1955.*

An Apparent Hybrid between the Ring-necked Pheasant and the Blue Grouse.—In July of 1951 a male gallinaceous bird, apparently a hybrid between a Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) and a Blue Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*), was sent to the Conner Museum at Washington State College by Mr. William W. Wadkins of the Spokane Game Farm, Deer Park, Spokane County, Washington. This bird appeared outside the cages at the game farm in January, 1948. It was captured and kept in an enclosure for about three and a half years until it died in July, 1951. According to Mr. Wadkins this bird showed no indication of sexual activity.

When this specimen was delivered to me, it was considerably decomposed. It was preserved as a flat skin and skeleton (weight 1144 gms., length 596 mm., extent 766 mm., tail 185 mm.). The lateral rectrices are about two inches shorter than the central ones, giving the tail a wedge-shaped appearance.

Features resembling the Ring-necked Pheasant were: some bare red skin on sides of face; bright reddish-brown edgings to some feathers of the neck, breast, flanks and under tail coverts; buffy-white barring and freckling of primaries and secondaries; grayish-buff barring and freckling of basal two-thirds of rectrices; tarsi scutellate on about the distal two-fifths and behind; presence of adductor digiti II muscle in the foot.

Features resembling the Blue Grouse: throat buffy freckled with black; tail black distally; dorsum barred much as in a female Blue Grouse; tarsi feathered on basal three-fifths anteriorly; no tarsal spurs; tail rather short.

Jewett (Condor, 34, 1932:191) has recorded four hybrid specimens involving the Ring-necked Pheasant and Blue Grouse.—GEORGE E. HUDSON, *Department of Zoology, State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington, May 4, 1955.*

Old-squaw Duck at Lake Tahoe, California.—Grinnell and Miller (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 27, 1944:86-87) give the status of the Old-squaw Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) in California as "Midwinter visitant, mostly November to January; . . . 'rare'." No record is given of its occurrence in interior California. However, Marshall and Alcorn (Condor, 54, 1952:321) give recent records of the Old-squaw Duck for western Nevada.

On the surprisingly late date of May 16, 1955, a male Old-squaw Duck was observed near the mouth of the Upper Truckee River at the south shore of Lake Tahoe in Eldorado County, California. The bird, when first observed, was alone on open water in a deep part of the channel that meanders through the marshlands near the lakeshore. As I attempted to move closer, it flushed, made a take-off

run of about 30 feet, and left the area, heading north across the lake. The bird appeared to be in a healthy condition; it was in first-year or immature plumage.—FRED G. EVENDEN, *California Junior Museum, Sacramento, California, May 27, 1955.*

The Taxonomic Status of the Maroon-fronted Parrot.—The Maroon-fronted Parrot (*Rhynchopsitta terrisi*) was described by Moore (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., 1947, 60:27-28) from the Sierra Madre Oriental (mistakenly published as Occidental) in west-central Nuevo León, México. A related species, the Thick-billed Parrot (*Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*) ranges widely in México in the Sierra Madre Occidental.

Rollin H. Baker, J. Sheldon Carey, and Robert W. Dickerman of the University of Kansas recently collected five parrots (KU 31530-31534) in Coahuila which, judging only by published descriptions, seemed to be intermediate between the two species. The localities of collection of these five specimens are as follows: four birds from 13 miles east of San Antonio de las Alazanas, Coahuila; one specimen from the Mesa de las Tablas, Coahuila. Three of the Coahuilan birds were sent to Dr. Robert T. Moore for comparison with the four known specimens of *R. terrisi*. Our birds were compared also with 15 specimens of *R. pachyrhyncha* made available by the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology and the United States National Museum.

Upon examination of the Coahuilan specimens and comparison of them with *terrisi*, Dr. Moore concluded that our birds are typical *R. terrisi*. Since, in our judgment, the Coahuilan birds did not agree with the published description of *terrisi*, the following analysis of similarities and differences between *pachyrhyncha* and *terrisi* seems desirable.

	Measurements					
	<i>pachyrhyncha</i>		<i>terrisi</i> (Coahuilan series)		<i>terrisi</i> (type series)	
	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀
Wing mean (no.)	262.0 (8)	253.3 (6)	275.1 (3)	282.5 (1)	288.8 (3)	283.4 (1)
range	258.5-270.0	248.5-264.5	260.5-285.5			
Tail mean (no.)	177.6 (8)	171.7 (6)	192.7 (3)	181.9 (1)	190.5 (3)	189.1 (1)
range	172.5-186.5	159.0-179.5	172.1-207.1			
Exposed culmen mean (no.)	39.7 (8)	38.4 (6)	41.2 (3)	40.0 (1)	42.0 (3)	41.0 (1)
range	39.0-40.5	37.0-39.5	40.2-43.0			
Tarsus mean (no.)	20.4 (8)	20.3 (6)	21.7 (3)	21.5 (1)	23.6 (3)	22.6 (1)
range	18.5-21.5	19.5-21.0	21.0-22.2			

According to the original description of *terrisi*, this species differs from *pachyrhyncha* in having "the entire green of upper parts and under parts very much darker, about Cosse Green." Upon re-examination of the type series, Moore (letter to Hardy, February 3, 1955) wrote: "Upper parts: In our specimens coloration exceedingly variable, depending on whether the feathers are badly worn or freshly molted.—Oil Green [bright] on the former, Cosse Green [dark] on latter." He further indicates that the color of the underparts varies with wear, but in the fresh-plumaged birds these areas are lighter green, the worn ones darker. Our Coahuilan birds are in fresh plumage and are bright green as in *pachyrhyncha*. It seems to us that the supposed difference in green coloration between the species is mostly dependent on wear and may not be of taxonomic value in separating the two forms.

The color of the anterior lesser wing coverts in *pachyrhyncha* is bright red, in *terrisi* (Moore's specimens) dark red. This is given in the published description of the latter as a distinguishing character, although Moore points out in his letter that in his *R. terrisi* these feathers are worn. In our Coahuilan birds which Moore assigns to *R. terrisi* these unworn coverts are bright red as in *R. pachyrhyncha*.