

Manuel (Phil. Jour. Sci., 63, 1937:176) had previously listed Lumbucan and Comiran islands as the home of typical *C. v. griseogularis* without comment. Unfortunately, the Bureau of Science specimens were destroyed in Manila during World War II. On the basis of these two specimens, we believe that it is valid to resurrect and recognize the name *anthracina* for the population of the Metallic Wood Pigeon from the small islands off Palawan, namely Lumbucan and Comiran, and presumably the neighboring islands.—S. DILLON RIPLEY and D. S. RABOR, *Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, October 8, 1957.*

A White-winged Dove Record for Northern California.—At 2:00 p.m., on September 14, 1957, I observed a White-winged Dove (*Zenaidura asiatica*) as it flew across the Arcata-Samoa road one mile west of Arcata, California. The bird was about the size of a Mourning Dove and had noticeable white wing patches and white in its rounded tail.

Later, on November 8, 1957, a White-winged Dove was collected on the Arcata bottoms approximately four miles northwest of Arcata. The bird was seen to fly from a roadside marsh into a patch of teasel (*Dipsacus sylvestris*) where it was shot. The tail and wing feathers show no signs of wear similar to those of a bird that had been caged. The specimen is now in the Humboldt State College collection.

This appears to be the first record for this species from northern California. Grinnell and Miller (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 27, 1944:77) refer to a record of a White-winged Dove that was seen five miles west of Watsonville, Santa Cruz County, in 1939; this is the northernmost record cited by these authors.—CHARLES F. YOCOM, *Division of Natural Resources, Humboldt State College, Arcata, California, November 19, 1957.*

Occurrence of the Yellow-shafted Flicker in Northern California.—On May 1, 1957, a single male Yellow-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) was recorded on the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, Siskiyou County, California. This bird flushed ahead of my vehicle and flew across a wide canal to alight on the crest of the opposite bank. It remained there for several minutes, turning its head and hopping about rather nervously, before disappearing behind the farther slope. During the time the bird was in sight, it was observed through 20×60 binoculars secured to a vibration-free window clamp. With this magnification, and at a distance of only about 100 feet, every distinguishing feature was evident. The red triangle on the back of the head was conspicuous as were the yellow wing linings. When the flicker held its head at the proper angle the black "whiskers" could be plainly seen.

Grinnell and Miller (The Distribution of the Birds of California, Pac. Coast Avif. No. 27, 1944) list a number of records of this species for California. Most of these are from the southern part of the state, the northernmost being from Marin County, immediately north of San Francisco Bay. Gabrielson and Jewett (Birds of Oregon, 1940) give two records of this species in Oregon, both from the northwestern part of the state. One was from Portland and the second was from Tillamook County.—LEROY W. GILES, *United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Tulelake, California, August 29, 1957.*

A Nesting Record of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Nuevo León, México.—On July 19, 1954, I discovered a nest of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora forficata*) between Km. 1121 and Km. 1122 on the Monterrey-Nuevo Laredo highway in the state of Nuevo León, México. This locality is 32 kilometers by road north of the town of Sabinas Hidalgo and 25.5 kilometers south of the town of La Gloria.

Although Wolfe (Check-list of the Birds of Texas, 1956:46) indicated that the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher is a "summer resident" in all of Texas but the extreme western part, thus including many counties on the Mexican border, there is no breeding record cited in the Distributional Check-list of the Birds of Mexico, Part II (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 33, 1957), nor have I been able to locate any breeding records for México in other literature.

On the same date and along the same highway, one Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was seen at Km. 1172 in Nuevo León, two at Km. 1179, and one at Km. 1186, the last two localities being in Tamaulipas. On June 19, 1954, these birds were common locally along the highway from central Texas to the border at Laredo, and one was seen just south of Nuevo Laredo, México. Other summer records for México have been reported by Davis (Condor, 52, 1950:138) for several localities south to Tres Palos along

the highway between Matamoros and Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, on July 18, 1949, and by Zimmerman (Wilson Bull., 69, 1957:275) at more northern localities on the same road on three dates in 1955. The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, therefore, seems to be a relatively common and conspicuous species in this border region, which has been traversed by many ornithologists on their way to and from the tropics. Consequently, I failed to appreciate the significance of the nest at the time and collected neither the nest, young, nor adult. There seemed no doubt that the nest belonged to a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher which was perched a few feet away when first discovered and which remained nearby during the several minutes that I took to inspect the nest. The time was about 8:00 p.m. and after sunset. The nest contained five young with white down on their pterygiae and with broad, carinate bills of the flycatcher type. No other adult flycatchers were seen. The nest was six feet from the ground in a tree eight feet high. Low bushes, mostly less than four feet high, predominated on the flat, rather barren, surrounding countryside, where yucca and prickly pear were common.—JERRAM L. BROWN, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, January 8, 1958.*

The Sequence of the Songbird Families.—All families and orders of birds are anatomically very similar to each other, much more so than those of reptiles or mammals, but nowhere is this similarity as great as among the families of songbirds (Oscines, Passeres). Except for the larks (absence of a pessulus) and the swallows (closed bronchial rings) there is apparently no family that can be defined unequivocally by anatomical characters. Many attempts have been made to establish reasonable systems by using characters that show variation among the songbirds. Some authors have used the shape of the bill, others the reduction of the outermost primary, the conformation of the tongue, the development of the central nervous system, the scutellation of the tarsus, the musculature of the jaw, the processes of the bones on the palate, and so forth. None of these characters has found universal favor. The objections are always the same: there is always a hint that the real significance of the character is functional rather than phyletic, and that it arises polyphyletically whenever adaptive needs demand it. The simplest condition is by no means necessarily the primitive one, because specializations and elaborations can be lost again with shifts into different ecological niches (contrary to the so-called irreversibility rule!). Consequently, a morphological series is not necessarily an evolutionary series. Finally, each character or character complex may show evolutionary trends that are different from those of other characters.

To resolve this baffling stalemate there is a continued search for new and more reliable characters. In a recent note, Dr. Wetmore (Condor, 59, 1957:207–209) attributed considerable importance to the form of the head of the humerus, a character also described by Ashley (Condor, 43, 1941:184–195) and earlier authors. In view of the scarcity of other available characters this newly utilized feature is highly important. Unfortunately this character is confronted by the same difficulties as the ones mentioned previously. It may be assumed, with Wetmore (*op. cit.*), that the divided fossa is the derived condition and that it is preceded by a condition similar to that shown in *Corvus*. Yet, a divided fossa occurs also among the gulls and perhaps in other non-passerine groups which surely acquired this feature independently. How many times was this character acquired independently among the songbirds? Even closely-knit groups like the "American Insect Eaters" (*sensu* Zimmer) are heterogeneous for this character; according to Berger (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., 113, 1957:231–272), the fossa is undivided in the Cyclarhidae and Vireonidae, and divided in the other families (with an occasional exception). Among four specimens of *Vireo flavifrons*, Berger found a graded series from the undivided to the distinctly divided condition. In the Old World Insect Eaters, Berger found an undivided fossa among the Pycnonotidae, Lanidae, Sylviidae, and Timaliidae, while the specimens of Turdidae and Muscicapidae which he examined had a divided fossa. How often the undivided fossa is a secondary return from a divided condition cannot be determined until the functional significance of these various configurations of the head of the humerus are better understood. It seems that the humeral fossa is no more reliable as a basis of classification than any other single character.

More disturbing is the thought that the entire approach of classifying families of songbirds into "primitive" or "advanced" ones may never lead to an unequivocal answer. It is becoming more apparent from day to day that phyletic lines do not develop as harmonious "types," but rather that most evolution is of the "mosaic type," as DeBeer and others have pointed out. This means that different organs evolve at different rates, some remaining primitive, while others evolve rapidly.