

A Tree Sparrow in Western Oregon.—On November 18, 1962, I was mistnetting birds in a brushy area about 3.5 miles north of Corvallis, Benton County, Oregon. From a small flock consisting mainly of Golden-crowned Sparrows (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) I captured a single Tree Sparrow (*Spizella arborea*). After the bird was compared with three non-local skins in the collection of Oregon State University, it was photographed, banded with Fish and Wildlife Service band number 67-84338, and released. The sex of the bird was not determined. This appears to be the first Tree Sparrow recorded in Oregon west of the Cascade Mountains since 1949 (Gullion, Condor, 53, 1951:146).—JOSEPH G. STRAUCH, JR., *Corvallis, Oregon, December 8, 1962.*

Barrow Golden-eye Using Crow Nests.—Edwards (Wilson Bull., 65, 1953:197) describes two Barrow Golden-eye (*Bucephala islandica*) nests in Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) nests in western British Columbia. On June 13, 1962, I found another such nest near Riske Creek, British Columbia (lat. 52° 00' N, long. 122° 30' W). The area is situated in that part of the Cariboo Parklands characterized by intermittent stands of Douglas fir (Munro and Cowan, The Bird Fauna of British Columbia, 1947). The nest was 20 feet up in a living lodgepole pine, 4 inches in basal diameter, at the edge of a small pothole. A female golden-eye was incubating five eggs.

Of 13 nests of the Barrow Golden-eye which I have examined in the Cariboo Parklands, all but this one were in holes of Douglas firs or aspens. The nests mentioned by Edwards (*op. cit.*) were in areas above the elevation of Douglas fir forests. Aspens tend to grow smaller at such elevations and would generally constitute inferior nesting trees. Consequently, it is probable that utilization of crow nests by golden-eyes is more important at higher elevations than in the lowland forest areas.—LAWSON G. SUGDEN, *Canadian Wildlife Service, Edmonton, Alberta, October 25, 1962.*

A Critique of "Birds from Coahuila, México."—The appearance of an annotated listing of the birds of any geographic area is of interest to systematists and biogeographers. When the area is as large and ecologically diverse, as close to the area of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list, and as little known as the Mexican state of Coahuila, the first such compilation becomes an immediate and constant reference for workers in American ornithology. "Birds from Coahuila, México" by Emil K. Urban (Univ. Kansas Publ. Mus. Nat. Hist. 11, 1959:443–516) is a report on some 500 specimens in the Kansas University collections and the first compilation of the information available in the literature for this state. Although the title may have been chosen to warn the reader that the work is not necessarily exhaustive, few will heed this warning. Having collected over a fifth of the specimens reported on, and having spent a considerable amount of time in the state, I looked forward with great interest to this publication as in part a justification of the effort spent in gathering this material. The work contains much new information and partly fills a void in ornithological literature; however, readers not familiar with the region involved may well not be able to evaluate the shortcomings of the publication.

Unfortunately, no indication is given of Urban's lack of experience in Coahuila, and all discussions of ecology, distribution and abundance, and the systematics appear to be taken from the literature. This has led to the repetition of ecological concepts which are in need of reconsideration. It has also led to erroneous conclusions as to the status of various species within the state.

A general summary of the topography, climate and biotic communities is presented as well as the standard "eco-taxonomic" analysis of the avifauna. The "island-like" appearance of the boreal forest zones of the mountains surrounded by rolling plains is reiterated without apparent knowledge of the regions involved. Today many of the boreal areas capping these ranges do indeed appear to be islands in the desert, but the occurrence of pines and oaks at low elevations scattered through eastern and central Coahuila indicates that the present observable discontinuity may be of but historical age or at most a few thousand years old. On the [Hacienda or Rancho] Las Margaritas, mature, but dying, pines exist in moderately extensive stands at elevations of 3000 to 4000 feet; and 16 miles east, 18 miles north of Ocampo they were present in 1954 at 4500 to 5000 feet, far below the 6000 to 7000 foot elevation at which the boreal "islands" occur (*cf.* diagram in Baker, Univ. Kans. Publ. Mus. Nat. Hist. 9, 1956:125–335). Baker considered that "such small, isolated areas influence the distribution

of mammals only slightly" (p. 139). He did not mention the relict pine-juniper forests that formerly occurred on Sierra Mojada (Muller, Madroño 9, 1947:33-57). I believe the biogeographic importance of these relict mesic forests has been underestimated.

An unfortunate omission by Urban and Baker was a discussion of the lack of major collections from important areas of Coahuila. For example, only very minor collections of birds were made in extreme southeastern Coahuila (more recently well collected and studied by Ely, Condor, 1962, 64: 34-39), or in the major Sierra de la Madera range; no collections of birds were made in the montane areas of the Sierra de Parras, Sierra de la Gloria, or Sierra Mojada, all of vital importance in accurately evaluating the biogeographic importance of the smaller relicts of montane forest dismissed by authors to date. Further, although not mentioned, to date no species of polymorphic resident bird in Coahuila is represented in sufficient fresh-plumaged series to permit full evaluation of the avenues of gene flow between the various populations and, from the avian standpoint, the effectiveness of the various filter barriers (see Baker, *op. cit.*: 149).

The main body of the work is a systematic listing by subspecies of the birds of Coahuila. Literature references "without mention of date, catalogue number or precise locality" (p. 445) of the specimens are enclosed in brackets, except for *Zenaidura macroura carolinensis*, *Platypsaris aglaiae albiventris*, *Progne subis*, *Dendroica petechia*, *Geothlypis trichas brachidactylus*, and *Setophaga ruticilla* where the brackets were omitted. Sight records, such as that for *Anhinga* appear without brackets or indication of special hypothetical status. Birds are confusingly reported as "Miller . . . took a Pintail on September 10," and "Amadon and Phillips . . . took a Curve-billed Thrasher . . . on August 27"; actually neither Miller nor Phillips was in Coahuila when these birds were collected. A listing of collecting localities is given, but without dates on which collections were made to give an indication of the value for systematic uses of the material obtained.

One asterisk preceding the species' name indicates that the "kind" breeds in Coahuila, two asterisks indicate probable breeding; however, no criteria were given to indicate what constitutes a breeding record. The Eared Grebe has two asterisks based on a March 31 specimen, the first record for the state. The Cinnamon Teal has two, based on pairs seen on May 9 and 18, but the Blue-winged Teal has none for sight records at the same dates and places. *Accipiter striatus velox* has one, based on a young bird just out of the nest and of disputed racial affinities; the race *suttoni* has two. *Progne subis* has one asterisk based on questionable punctuation in the Mexican Check-list (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 33, 1957:107). *Vireo olivaceus* has one, based on a male taken June 19 with moderately enlarged testes, surely a good reason for assigning the species two asterisks but not a valid breeding record. Mere occurrence in the breeding season does not prove breeding. Specimens of such nonmigratory species as the various quail or Brown Towhee are cited that "indicate breeding."

All specimens Urban examined are presumably listed, although I found at least 26 specimens of 18 species (mostly skeletons) in my field catalogue alone that were not cited; some of these are mentioned as sight records. The former included a second flat skin of the rare *Rhynchopsitta pachyrrhyncha terrisi* purchased from the local people at Mesa de las Tablas, and a *Vireo gilvus* taken at San Marcos on May 4, 1954, with partly enlarged gonads, a Coahuilan species not otherwise represented in the Kansas collection and the only spring record for the state. Taxonomy used is that of the literature cited, with a bias shown (contrary to the statement of p. 445) in favor of the Mexican Check-list (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 29, 1950, and Pac. Coast Avif. No. 33, 1957) over the A.O.U. Check-list (5th ed. 1957); see the migrants *Empidonax "wrightii" oberholseri* and *E. "griseus" wrightii*, and even breeding "*Eremophila alpestris enthyimia*."

The time spent in preparing a Master's thesis undoubtedly did not permit the author to evaluate the trinomials employed, either by the check-list authorities or the other authors cited. In some cases, measurements are given, and these do not always fit the race to which the specimen is assigned (for example a female *Molothrus ater obscurus* with wing 97 mm. is too large, particularly if the measurement is of the chord; also see *Numenius americanus* beyond). The method of taking measurements is nowhere stated.

Original sources of information available in the field notes of the museum collectors were utilized but were occasionally incompletely or incorrectly cited. Under *Vireo solitarius cassini* Urban wrote, "Dickerman suggested that the female . . . showed some resemblance to *V. s. plumbeus*" without reference to where this was suggested. The flat skin of K.U. 35408, the skeleton specimen under discus-

sion, was discarded by the University of Kansas and is now at the University of Minnesota Museum of Natural History. It is *V. s. plumbeus* as originally identified in the field and is the first record of the subspecies for Coahuila.

The wing chords of a female *Numenius americanus* (skeleton K.U. No. 35400), included under the race *parvus*, measured in the field (but not reported by Urban) were 279 and 282 mm., respectively, and thus the specimen actually is the only record for the nominate race for that state. Wing measurements for another skeleton of the same species also taken in the field were reported.

The status of many species is given in terms of abundance or periods of occurrence, although the basis of these terms is seldom clear. *Passerculus sandwichensis nevadensis* is listed as uncommon based on one literature citation, yet is probably an abundant migrant, as is true of the Lark Bunting; yet the conspicuous American Redstart only "seems to be uncommon," although this evaluation is based on one record. The Hermit Warbler "seems to be [an] uncommon spring and probably fall migrant" based on one spring specimen. The Yellow-breasted Chat is judged uncommon based on the "paucity of records in the literature."

Finally the manuscript suffered from a bad case of over-editing, a matter probably beyond the author's control. The use of the titles "Prof." versus "Dr.," and perhaps the title's use of "from" instead of the normally used "of" typifies this. One has no idea what "[Eds.]" means on page 454. Yet, better editing might well have eliminated many of the unfortunate references listed above. In line with other publications of the same series, the paper is excellently printed, essentially free of typographical errors, and easily available to workers in the field.—ROBERT W. DICKERMAN, *Department of Microbiology, Cornell University Medical College, New York, N.Y., November 7, 1962.*

Red-headed Woodpecker in Southern California.—On May 20, 1962, a Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) was found dead on the road at Maplegrove and Pass and Covina Road in Los Angeles County, near the city of La Puente. The bird had been dead for a considerable length of time, but was made into a skin, now number 2955, in the Long Beach State College Collections.

According to the Check-list of North American Birds (1957:318) only casual records have been reported in the Far West, notably in Alberta, Utah, and Arizona. No California records have been mentioned.

The possibility that the bird here recorded could have been imported and subsequently escaped or was released cannot be overlooked. However, a check with local bird importers and ornithologists in the Los Angeles area shows that no imports of this species have been made in recent years.

The bird was so deteriorated that it was impossible to determine its sex; however, it is in adult plumage and all distinguishing marks can be made out from the preserved specimen.—DAVID G. MARQUA, *Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, Los Angeles, California, October 15, 1962.*

American Redstart in the Monterey Area of California.—An immature male American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) was seen in Pacific Grove, Monterey County, California, on September 12, 1962. The bird was observed briefly at a bird bath and feeding on insects in the garden of the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History. Reports of competent observers indicate that other redstarts were on the Monterey Peninsula in mid-September; two observations of this species were made at separate localities on the same day. The species has not been recorded previously in this area. These records support the suggestion made by Root (*Condor*, 64, 1962:76) that redstarts recorded in the San Francisco Bay region were vagrants following the coast instead of using the desert flight line.—VERN YADON, *Museum of Natural History, Pacific Grove, California, November 6, 1962.*

Aberrant Glaucous-winged Gulls.—The Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*) is a common nester in the vicinity of Vancouver, British Columbia, and large numbers winter in the city. The first sighting of aberrant individuals with orange-yellow legs was made by one of us, Oldeker, in the late fall of 1959. On June 1, 1960, an adult in full nuptial plumage was spotted, constituting the only summer record. A few individuals were seen again in the fall months of 1960 and 1961,