

"Shelley's [Shylark," the "Hoodoe," and the "Sacred Imis of Egypt." An article "written by E—— R—— shortly before his death" was headed "From One Who is Game."

Some of the choicer bits of the new nomenclature follow: I particularly long to find the "Yellow-shafted Tickler" and the "Simpkin;" the "Pie-billed Grebe" and the "Red-mug Blackbird" excite my appetite; and I am sure that I should enjoy the gay company of the "Ruby-crowned Knight," the "Caroling Chickadee," and the "Bay-crested Warbler." The "Sam White Owl" and "Harry Woodpecker" should be boon companions, but they should avoid the "Copper Hawk" and the "Spotter Sandpiper."

Other interesting new species (new to me at least), were the Pacific Kitowit, Sooted Tern, Strom Petrel, Scotter, Rosette Spoonbill, Tufted Vulture, Gashawk, Groshawk, Goss Hawk, Sprey, Yellow-billed Sap Sucker, Lost Flycatcher, Boat-tailed Crackle, Blur Grosbeak, Lark Hunting, Violet Geese Swallow, White-runged Shrike (any relation to the Ladder-backed Woodpecker?), Black-throated Coreen Warbler, Ked-start, and Summer Yellowhead.

That the Editor was neither ignorant nor unobservant might be inferred from the fact that he himself on one occasion quoted and held up for ridicule a manuscript submitted to him for approval, which mentioned eggs of the "great cursted fly catch," the "Painting Bunting" and the rare "Profanitory" Warbler. So, as it wasn't the Editor, it must have been the Printer's Devil.

Cohasset, Massachusetts.

COLOR-PHASES OF THE PURPLE FINCH

BY HELEN G. WHITTLE

IN my Peterborough, New Hampshire, records of abnormal coloration of the Purple Finch, this spring season has furnished the most examples. The color-phases noted are erythrism and xanthochroism. Whereas such phases are abnormal, they are by no means uncommon. In most cases observed it has not been possible to determine the sex. In some returning birds, however, the sex has been determined by knowing the approximate age of the birds, and in other cases by finding the bands polished, which indicates a female. For example, female Purple Finch No. 83998 (previously mentioned in this

Bulletin for 1927, Vol. III, p. 66), banded June 15, 1924, was a return-3 in 1927, at which time it was an olivaceous bird having a "dull rosy rump with a central patch of rich olive-yellow." As a return-4, May 9, 1928, the crown had a few crimson feathers, and the rump and upper tail-coverts were yellow with patches of rich reddish brown in the latter area.

A very marked and consistent case of erythrism has been observed in No. A18034, presumably a female, banded May 5, 1925, at which time the bird had a rosy cast with the rump suffused with this color. As a return-1, May 29, 1926, the plumage was similar, but when captured this spring on May 13th as a return-2 the rump was crimson, though of a duller color than in old males, and scattered crimson feathers were present on the crown, in the lesser coverts and among the interscapulars. Several birds of this type were banded this spring, although they had much less crimson on the rump; the usual examples had bright olive-yellow rumps with scattered rosy feathers.

My example of xanthochroism was a very striking bird. Previous to being banded this bird, while feeding in a tray close to a window, was spoken of as the "Golden-crowned Purple Finch." On May 14th the bird was trapped and given band No. B10775. It was an extraordinarily yellow individual, most brilliantly colored on the crown, which was a lustrous olive-yellow. The rump and upper tail-coverts were nearly as yellow. Similar feathers were numerous on the throat and sides of head and breast and extended in decreasing numbers along the sides to the flanks. The sex of this bird is not known. In handling approximately 2300 birds of this race, Mr. Whittle and I have never met with another case of this kind. The bird was not critically examined for evidence of having been caged. It can be said, however, that the claws were not abnormally long like those of caged birds.

It is interesting to note that on April 15, 1928, Dr. John B. May collected in Topsfield, Massachusetts, a male Purple Finch in the so-called "cage" plumage. This bird was discovered by Mrs. Conley at her station. It is now mounted and will be placed on view in the exhibition rooms of the Boston Society of Natural History. Dr. May mentions the bird in the current *Bird-Lore*, p. 193. In commenting on the Peterborough bird, he writes, "Your description of the Purple Finch fits very closely the one I collected in Topsfield, a male bird."

This similarity of the distribution of the yellowness on the two birds, since it accords closely with that of the rosy color in

adult male Purple Finches, makes it seem probable that cases of this kind occur in males only, the rosy pigmentation being replaced by yellow. The cause of xanthochroism in wild birds is less easily explained than in birds kept in captivity, although changes in the kinds of food eaten by this race are bound to happen, owing to their erratic wanderings and to the failure of some fruits to mature. No better example of this last has come to my notice than in 1927 in Cohasset, Massachusetts, where the white ash, arrow-wood (*Viburnum dentatum*), and cedar-berry crops failed utterly and the elderberry crop was very small. This condition must have had marked influence on bird-life in September and October.

Peterborough, New Hampshire.

SOME MANIFESTATIONS OF AGE IN MALE AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES

BY C. L. WHITTLE

In reading the description of the various plumages of the American Goldfinch (*Astragalinus t. tristis*) by Ridgway, and the succession of plumage-changes due to age or appearing at different seasons of the year as described by Dwight and Stone, it is noted that one part of the plumage of male birds has not received its proportional amount of attention at their hands, namely the median coverts. In fact, in discussing plumages, the above authors make no direct mention of changes taking place in the coloration of the median coverts, at least in the papers mentioned below.¹ Ridgway in "Birds of North and Middle America," Part I, page 109, refers to these coverts only once when writing of the nuptial plumage of the adult male, and here they are described as white.

Living male Goldfinches in first-winter plumage have yellowish-brown least coverts with a marked greenish cast. Such birds in their second-winter plumage have in life the lesser coverts of bright lemon-yellow, and the median coverts

¹"The Sequence of Plumages and Molts of the Passerine Birds of New York," by Jonathan Dwight, Jr., *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, pp. 73-360.

"The Moulting of Birds, with Special Reference to the Plumages of the Smaller Land Birds of Eastern North America," by Witmer Stone, "*Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, January, 1896, pp. 108-167.