

GENERAL NOTES

A possible case of polymorphism in the Lead-colored Bush-tit.—An adult male specimen of *Psaltriparus minimus* (Yale Peabody Mus. no. 7882) was collected by David H. Parsons 12 miles west of Cortez, Montezuma County, Colorado, on July 31, 1953, well within the range of *P. m. plumbeus* but with a typical plumage for that subspecies. Instead of having the usual brown cheeks and nuchal collar, it possessed black cheeks and collar. Otherwise the plumage was typical of an adult *plumbeus*. It probably was not a hybrid nor a stray from the range of the Black-cheeked Bush-tit (*P. melanotis lloydi*), as bush-tits are rather sedentary and the specimen in question was found over 300 miles from the range of *lloydi* or any other subspecies of *P. minimus*. At the time of collection, the specimen was established by Parsons to be an adult male. Subsequent examination of the skull confirmed this age determination, thus eliminating the possibility that the unusual black plumage was a manifestation of immaturity. The specimen's wing, tail and culmen were measured (50.0, 55.0 and 7.0 mm. respectively) and found not to be significantly smaller than the average of 38 other male *plumbeus* skins. Also, no other adult individuals of the Lead-colored Bush-tit with similar aberrant melanism have been reported; therefore it would seem that this specimen does not represent a discrete population.

Swarth (1914. *Auk*, 31:499-526) has advanced the theory that melanism in *Psaltriparus* is an old trait. Black coloration is to be found in the more southern bush-tits which are presumed to be older than the northern, brown-headed subspecies, due to the effects of glaciation upon the regions that the latter bush-tits now inhabit. *P. m. plumbeus* is thought to be the link between the northern and southern species because of the geographical position of its range and the occurrence of black head feathers in its juveniles. Therefore, the specimen under consideration would appear to demonstrate polymorphism in *plumbeus* by exhibiting an ancient color trait that has been suppressed through evolution but that has cropped up again in this adult bird.—MARY ANNE HEIMERDINGER, *Conservation Program, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, April 15, 1954.*

Black-billed Cuckoo feeds on Monarch Butterfly.—During the fall migration of 1954 I saw more cuckoos, both Black-billed (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) and Yellow-billed (*C. americanus*) than I have ever seen before. These birds were seen on frequent trips to parts of New Jersey and Long Island, New York, areas in which I go birding regularly. In the latter part of September and the first two weeks of October, the cuckoos were quite numerous at Cape May Point, New Jersey. They were seen on the roads, in the hedges and on the porches around the Point and were not at all as secretive as they are at other times of the year. Monarch butterflies also were migrating and were quite plentiful at this time.

On October 9, 1954, while walking with my wife on one of the roads at Cape May Point, we watched as a Black-billed Cuckoo flew overhead and landed in a nearby cedar. As we were looking at it the cuckoo suddenly sallied forth and, with quite an audible snap of its mandibles, captured a passing monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). It flew back into the cedar with its prey. In the tree, the cuckoo held the monarch by its thorax and shifted it about in its bill, apparently applying pressure to this area. At that time, positive identification of the monarch was made with the aid of 10-power glasses. Then, very deftly, almost faster than the action could be seen, the cuckoo began to swallow the monarch, body first. The cuckoo held its bill straight upward while half of the monarch's wings protruded from its cavernous mouth. The bird was not successful in its first at-

tempt to swallow the butterfly and it regurgitated the swallowed half to repeat this process over again. On the third try, the monarch disappeared very slowly into the seemingly bottomless throat of the cuckoo. For a minute or so after this action, the bird stood very still, looking stupified. This pose was not held for long as the cuckoo soon tried for another passing monarch, making much noise with its bill. This attempt was unsuccessful.

In searching through the literature, I find one other report of monarch butterflies being eaten by birds. Brooks (1952. *Auk*, 69:89.) records Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) catching and eating monarchs. Apparently, the Starlings ate the body portion of the butterflies only, as Brooks says he found the remains of the wings.—WALTER DAWN, *Bull's Island, Awendaw, South Carolina, November 1, 1954.*

A May record of the White-winged Crossbill in Michigan.—On May 9, 1954, we observed a flock of about ten White-winged Crossbills (*Loxia leucoptera*) at Hartwick Pines State Park, Crawford County, Michigan. The birds were on the ground in a foot path and apparently were feeding. Dominant vegetation in the area was a mature stand of white pine (*Pinus strobus*).

The pronounced white wing-bars and the crossed bills were readily apparent as the crossbills were observed through binoculars at a distance of about 35 feet. Several Pine Siskins (*Spinus pinus*) were feeding with the crossbills.

Wood (1951. *Misc. Publ. Mus. Zool. Univ. Mich.*, no. 75:475) lists four records of the White-winged Crossbill from Charlevoix County, at the extreme northern tip of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, during June and July, and two records from the Beaver Islands, at the northern end of Lake Michigan, in July. These areas are at least 50 miles north of the Hartwick Pines. Records from more southerly localities in Michigan extend from late October to early April. No May record for this species is mentioned for any part of Michigan.—T. WAYNE PORTER AND AELRED D. GEIS, *Department of Zoology; Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan, September 27, 1954.*

Notes on a heron rookery in northeastern Oklahoma.—On July 25, 1954, I discovered a heron rookery one mile east of Owasso, in Tulsa County, Oklahoma. This colony is worthy of notice, as it was inhabited principally by the Little Blue Heron (*Florida caerulea*), a bird that has rarely been recorded nesting in Oklahoma.

The site of the rookery was a grove of catalpa trees averaging 20 feet high and covering an area 250 feet square. They had been completely stripped of leaves by insects. The surrounding terrain is pasture land. A small lake lies in the open pasture west of the grove. A larger lake, situated 300 feet north of the colony, is surrounded by willow and elm trees.

The discovery was made so late in the nesting season that it was not possible to determine the exact number of nesting Little Blue Herons, and what other species may have nested there. However, the Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) and the American Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) were identified feeding in ponds near the rookery with large groups of Little Blue Herons. On July 25 all three species were seen returning to the nesting area to roost; I estimated 500 in the flock. One immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) also was seen.

On July 27, I watched with Mr. O. W. Letson for a period of two hours before darkness.