GENERAL NOTES

Dermestids killed when feeding on skeletons of birds killed by organic insecticides.—During the summer of 1959, the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Massachusetts conducted studies on the toxicity of certain organic insecticides using the American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) as an experimental animal. The insecticides were carefully weighed doses enclosed in gelatin capsules and force-fed individually to birds of known sex, age, and weight. Some of the birds which died were presented to me for the purpose of preparing skeletal specimens to add to our collections. Two birds were roughed out, dried, and placed in separate boxes on clean cotton in the bottom of a five-gallon aquarium which had been used previously for this same purpose, become dirty, and been cleaned with plain hot tap water. A number of adult and older larval stages of the dermestid, *Dermestes maculatus* Deg. (= *D. vulpinus* Fab.), were removed from an active colony and placed on the specimens. The next day most of the beetles were dead. Some were kicking feebly and a few were still able to move about. Every one was dead by the third day. One of the woodcock skeletons was then soaked for two days in several changes of hot water, dried, and beetles placed on it with the same results. Infestation by mites as a cause of the death of the dermestids was clearly ruled out. The insecticide and dosages resulting in the death of these two woodcock were: woodcock No. 12, five doses of Dieldrin (each dose 1.25 mg/kg at daily intervals), and No. 24, a single dose of Dieldrin at 25 mg/kg (killed the bird within three hours after administration).

During the early fall I was called to the home of a friend to receive a sick second-year Herring Gull. As I was holding the gull while talking to Mr. Chisholm, the bird extended its neck slowly and died without a tremor. The symptoms were not at all similar to those of DDT poisoning and, since Mr. Chisholm had mentioned that the bird had some slight respiratory difficulty, I was guessing it had died of aspergillosis. About a month later, I removed the bird from the freezer, roughed it out, and placed it in a box on clean cotton in a five-gallon aquarium with some dermestids. On the following day the majority of the beetles were dead or dying and subsequently every beetle was killed. I do not know whether the aquarium was the same one used for the woodcock. Even if it were, the chances of contamination would appear to be slight, since the cotton was clean, the aquarium used for the woodcock had been thoroughly washed with soap and water and rinsed a number of times, and most of the beetles appeared to remain in the cardboard box containing the skeleton. A quick check in our collection reveals one Robin skeleton which had been brought in with convulsive tremors characteristic of DDT poisoning. This apparently had had no appreciable effect on the dermestids.

The results of these experiences suggest that birds which are found dead or dying should not be placed in vigorous, active colonies of dermestids. They also suggest that, with proper experimental data for background, the dermestid might prove useful in determining whether a bird had died from ingesting lethal quantities of certain organic insecticides. I would like to thank the Wildlife Unit and Mr. Wendell Dodge for providing the specimens and data on the woodcock, and Dr. Marion E. Smith for identification of the dermestids.—L. M. Bartlett, *Department of Zoology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, 24 March 1960.*

Some shorebird records from Mexico.—Among our more interesting observations while in Mexico were those of shorebirds, a group with which Mrs. Coffey and I have spent quite some time. Most species we observed, chiefly of interest as transients, are

being reported elsewhere while data on five are given here. Except where noted, all localities are in Veracruz. A favored strip of pits was along the Tampico-Valles highway, starting at Kilometer Post 9, almost to the village of Cacalilao at Km. 33, on the first rise, all in the state of Veracruz. At Km. 17.7 a side road runs south along Laguna Chila (almost dry on recent spring visits).

The Mexican Check-list (Pt. I, Friedmann, Griscom, Moore, 1950. *Pac. Coast Avif.*, 29:91) does not indicate records of the Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) for the state of Veracruz. However, Frederick W. Loetscher, Jr. (1955. *Auk*, 72:26) gives a number of records for the state while Dean Amadon and Don R. Eckelberry (1955. *Condor*, 57:67) found the species, 3 May 1952, at the Bay of Alvarado. Our reports are: Tecolutla, two on 7 December 1949; east of Cacalilao, one on 21 November 1956; the beach, Coatzacoalcos, 50 on 3 December 1956, and on 4 December, eleven there and five near Nanchital. Apparent first reports for Guerrero are ours from near Acapulco; 17 at Pie de la Cuesta, 26 November 1956, and three at Colonia Copacabana, south of Puerto Marqués, the next day.

We know of no previous nesting record of the Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) from the east coast and, except for Yucatán, but one previous report of the species on this coast. This latter was the four listed for the Tampico Count by L. Irby Davis, et al., 1–2 January 1953 (Edgar Kincaid, Texas Orni. Soc. Newsletter I (11), 9 December 1953). These may have been in Veracruz rather than Tamaulipas. On 4 December 1956, two singles were seen at Coatzacoalcos. Our other records are east of Cacalilao: the pit at Km. 9, and Laguna Chila. On 28 May 1955, two at Km. 9 gave indications of nesting but no nest could be found then or the next day when four were present. Along Laguna Chila on the 29th we saw one, two, and four and found a nest with four eggs which we photographed, along with that of a Black-necked Stilt. The Km. 9 pit was flooded by rain, overnight, and no shorebirds were left there, 30 May. On 31 May 1957, we found two pairs at Km. 9 and four, possibly nesting, at Laguna Chila (one-third dried up).

For the Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*), the Check-list gives only Veracruz (two records) and Yucatán on the east coast. Site of one listed Veracruz specimen is east of Cacalilao where we saw three singles on 11 May 1954, ten on 28 and 29 May 1955, and 20 to 23 (three spots) on 31 May 1957, and 20 April 1958. The 1955 birds acted as if nesting, but the birds were gone 30 May after the water level rose from rain. Amadon and Eckelberry (1955. op. cit.) found this species at the Bay of Alvarado, and Loetscher (1955. op. cit.) found it common at the city of Veracruz.

Sanderling (*Crocethia alba*). Guerrero is omitted under this species in the Check-list. However, Wm. B. Davis (1944. *Condor*, 46:10) reports two collected 14 August 1942, at Laguna Coyuca (near Acapulco) and that the species were "numerous" there. We saw only seven, all at the Colonia Copacabana beach, 27 November 1956.

The Willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*) was seen but a few times: 7 December 1949, one, south of Tecolutla, and 2 December 1956, ten near Veracruz. East of Cacalilao, we saw one, 29 and 30 May 1955, two singles and a pair on 21 November 1956, and 32 on 20 April 1958.

Another shorebird not credited to Guerrero by the Mexican Check-list is the Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*). On 25 November 1956, I found two at a small lake north of Chilpancingo and five just southeast of Acapulco. The next day we saw a total of 72 widely scattered between Pie de la Cuesta and the Río Atoyac; then, on the 27th we counted 21 between Puerto Marqués and the new airport for Acapulco.—Ben B. Coffey, Jr., *672 N. Belvedere, Memphis 7, Tennessee, 21 March 1960.*