

GENERAL NOTES

Some bird records from western Pennsylvania.—Four recently collected specimens, now in the collection of Carnegie Museum, constitute records of distributional interest. Three of these were mist-netted at the Museum's Powdermill Nature Reserve, in eastern Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, 3 miles south of Rector (the locality is shown as "Crisp" on many maps).

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*).—A first-year male (cranium incompletely ossified) was taken on 25 September 1966, about a month later than the normal last departure date for this species in western Pennsylvania. It was seen to be an exceptionally dull and dark bird, and was therefore preserved as a specimen. Comparison with material at the United States National Museum showed that this specimen belongs to the Alaskan subspecies *D. p. rubiginosa* (Pallas). It is a good match for USNM 106,666, unsexed immature, Koowak River, Alaska, 10 August 1885, and for USNM 115,799, unsexed immature, Middleton Island, Alaska, 26 August 1888. The A.O.U. Check-list (1957) lists this distinctive subspecies as casual on migration only as far east as Mississippi. John W. Aldrich, however, has identified (initials on label) USNM 221,472, Washington, D.C., 12 October 1910, as *rubiginosa*, undoubtedly correctly. This record is listed as the "extreme departure date" for the District of Columbia by Stewart and Robbins (1958. *North American Fauna* No. 62:282). Any exceptionally late Yellow Warbler in the northeastern states should obviously be examined carefully. Several Florida specimens in the U. S. National Museum have also been labeled "*rubiginosa*" and at least one of these birds has been correctly identified. The Pennsylvania specimen appears to be the northeasternmost known record of *rubiginosa*. Griscom and Snyder (1955. "The birds of Massachusetts," Peabody Museum, Salem) listed four Massachusetts specimens as "*rubiginosa*," but these were matched not with western Alaskan birds but with specimens from the Arctic Red River, Northwest Territories. Yellow Warblers from the latter area are not *rubiginosa*; they are currently assigned to *D. p. amnicola* Batchelder, but represent an apparently undescribed subspecies inhabiting the area from the west coast of Hudson Bay to the interior of Alaska.

Rose-breasted \times Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus* \times *P. melanocephalus*).—On 20 May 1966, a schoolboy, David Mertens, found a grosbeak, obviously ill or wounded, in Fox Chapel, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. He took it to his teacher, Miss Beulah Frey of Fox Chapel High School. Miss Frey knew it to be an unusual bird, and arranged for its donation to Carnegie Museum. Upon autopsy it was found to have a subcutaneous tumor on the right side under the wing. The tumor has been preserved, but has not yet been studied. The bird appears in all ways to be a normal adult male Rose-breasted Grosbeak (testes enlarged, 9×14 mm), except that the normal rose color of the breast, axillars, and under wing coverts is replaced by a color nearest the Capucine Yellow of Ridgway (1912. "Color standards and color nomenclature."). It is quite possible that this represents simply an abnormal pigment condition. Examination of long series of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks from the eastern United States and Canada in several museums, however, failed to reveal a similar specimen. On the other hand, Dr. Lester L. Short, Jr., then of the Bird and Mammal Laboratories, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, showed me specimens he had collected in Nebraska indicating this "yellow-breasted grosbeak" pattern to be one of the phenotypes appearing in the area of hybridization between the Rose-breasted and Black-headed grosbeaks. Two of his specimens from this hybrid zone matched the Pennsylvania specimen quite well. There are several records of the Black-headed Grosbeak from the eastern United States,

and it does not seem unlikely that birds from the overlap zone might as readily stray eastward as those from within the range of typical *melanocephalus*. The Pennsylvania bird, therefore, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, is identified as a member of the mixed Rose-breasted \times Black-headed grosbeak population of the Great Plains region. West (1962. *Auk*, 79:399-424) has described this hybridization in some detail, and argues plausibly that these two forms should be considered conspecific, a viewpoint shared by several other recent authors.

Rufous-sided Towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*).—On 12 November 1966, a towhee, obviously of one of the western subspecies, was mist-netted at Powdermill. It proved to be a first-year male, with large skull "windows." It was compared at the U. S. National Museum with young males taken on the breeding grounds of the two easternmost, migratory subspecies of the "spotted" group, *P. e. arcticus* (Swainson) and *P. e. montanus* Swarth, both of which have been known to stray east of their normal migration routes. Females of these two subspecies are easy to distinguish, but identification of males, according to Phillips, Marshall, and Monson (1964. "The birds of Arizona"), is "risky." Careful study of young males in their first prebasic molt indicates that the head feathers of *montanus*, when fresh, show little or no brown edging, whereas such edging is present and conspicuous in *arcticus*. The flank color averages richer in *montanus*, and the latter race also generally has less white on the inner web of the outer rectrices than does *arcticus*. The rumps of young males of *arcticus* average browner, less gray than *montanus*, and there are more extensive brown edgings on the upper tail coverts of *arcticus*. The white stripes of the dorsum and the white wing-bars are usually more extensively washed with brown in *arcticus*. The Pennsylvania specimen has wing-bars that are purer white than those of most *arcticus*, but matches that subspecies in all other characters that distinguish it from *montanus*. The A.O.U. Check-list (1957) gave no records of *arcticus* east of Illinois, but Buckley (1959. *Auk*, 76:517-518) listed two specimens from New York and one from New Jersey, all females, as *arcticus*. It is noteworthy that all of the specimens mentioned by Buckley were collected in December, and that collected at Powdermill was taken two to three weeks after the last of the eastern *P. e. erythrophthalmus* have normally left the area.

Brown-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*).—This English name is used in preference to "Slate-colored Junco," since the writer is one of those who believes that the *hyemalis* and *oreganus* subspecies groups belong to a single biological species. Individuals of the *oreganus* group are now seen and reliably identified almost annually in western Pennsylvania and adjacent areas during the period from late October through mid-March. One was banded at Powdermill by Robert C. Leberman on 20 March 1963. There are relatively few definite eastern records, however, for the population, intermediate in appearance between the two subspecies groups, to which Miller (1941. *Univ. California Publ. Zool.*, 44:329-345) applied the name *cismontanus* Dwight. The A.O.U. Check-list (1957) adopted Miller's concept of this subspecies, retaining it as a subspecies of *hyemalis* while calling *oreganus* (with which it admittedly interbreeds) a separate species. The first indication that *cismontanus* occurred in western Pennsylvania was a net-casualty taken at Powdermill on 28 October 1962. The true identity of the bird was not suspected until the specimen was being prepared. As is well known, first-year females of *J. h. hyemalis* are often extensively brownish, and the Powdermill bird was at first thought to be an individual of this type. Its cranium, however, was completely ossified, and its ovary compatible in appearance with that of an adult bird. Comparisons were then made with specimens in Carnegie Museum from the western Alberta portion of the breeding range of *cismontanus*, and the Powdermill bird was quickly seen to be

referable to that form. Several other individuals assignable to *cismontanus* have since been seen at Powdermill; one was banded by the writer and A. C. Lloyd on 11 December 1966. Although *hyemalis* and *cismontanus* vary greatly in color in the fall, one character serves very well to identify females of *cismontanus* such as that collected at Powdermill. In *hyemalis* the gray of the breast continues (even if mixed with brownish) onto the flanks, giving a concave or horseshoe-shaped outline to the pigmented portion. In *cismontanus* the edge of the gray breast is convex, with pinkish-buff (sometimes mixed with gray) flanks contrasting abruptly with the edge of the gray breast area. There is usually more brown on the dorsal areas of adult females of *cismontanus* than of *hyemalis*, and it tends to contrast with adjacent gray areas rather than to blend with them. An excellent color photograph by Karl Maslowski of a junco showing *cismontanus* characters was published in the magazine *National Wildlife* (vol. 5, no. 1, December-January 1966-1967, p. 14).

Preservation of the specimens described above was made possible through the alertness and assistance of Robert C. Leberman, Albert C. Lloyd, Mary A. Heimerdinger, and Beulah Frey. The warbler and the grosbeak were prepared as study skins by Otto Epping, the towhee and the junco by the writer.—KENNETH C. PARKES, *Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 16 January 1967.*

Two female Mallards incubating on one nest.—On 1 June 1956, I flushed two Mallard hens (*Anas platyrhynchos*) simultaneously from one nest site on an island in Unit 320 of the Lower Souris National Wildlife Refuge near Upham, McHenry County, North Dakota. At this time, I suspected that both hens may have been sharing a single nest. Upon investigation of the nearby nesting cover, I discovered a well formed nest containing 20 mallard eggs.

Additional confirming observations were made on 8 June and 12 June, and on the latter visit the nest contained only 17 eggs. On 17 June, I returned to the island and crawled within 6 feet of the nest enabling me to see both females sitting side by side in incubation before they flushed. The nest contained 5 hatched ducklings and 3 pipped eggs; the other 9 eggs were intact. Within 5 minutes after this visit, both hens returned to the nest.

The final fate of this nest was determined on 24 June: 9 eggs remained in the nest, five with 18-20 day embryos, three with undeveloped embryos and one with a full term embryo. Apparently when one clutch of eggs hatched, both hens departed with the brood leaving one clutch of eggs in the nest. During the next week, I observed a brood of 8 mallard ducklings near the island with two hens in attendance.

Factors leading to the expression of this unusual reproductive behavior are unknown. The dual nest occupancy may have originated from parasitic egg laying by one hen with mutual tolerance developing in incubation. Remarkable cooperation was required for these two hens to complete the many complex behavioral rhythms involved in egg laying and incubation on one nest.—HAROLD F. DUEBBERT, *U. S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, Jamestown, North Dakota 58401, 21 December 1966.*

A Swallow-tailed Kite in trans-Pecos Texas.—Due to rapid decline in numbers and decrease in range of the Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) in recent years (Austin, 1961. "Birds of the world." p. 76; and Oberholser, 1938. "The bird life of Louisiana." La. Dept. of Conserv. Bull. No. 28:156) the following record is noteworthy. On 26 August 1966, we observed a Swallow-tailed Kite slowly cruising over downtown