

## THE NESTING OF THE BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD

By ARETUS A. SAUNDERS

ON JUNE 28, 1909, a friend showed me a nest of the Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*). The locality was Squaw Creek, in the West Gallatin Canyon, Gallatin County, Montana. The nest was placed on a dead branch of an alder, overhanging the stream and was composed of cottonwood down and covered with bits of lichen. It contained two eggs which my friend said had been there more than a week to his knowledge, so that incubation must have been well advanced.

We sat down under the nest to watch for the bird, and had but a short time to wait before she appeared. She did not appear to notice us at all but flew immediately to the nest, perched a moment on the rim and then settled on the eggs. I stepped around to another position to get a stronger light on her, as I was at first a little uncertain of the species. I found that she was quite brilliantly marked for a female and had quite a large patch of metallic color on her throat. She was a very restless sitter, seldom staying on the nest for more than a minute at a time, but never going far away and always returning quickly.

I had my camera with me and hoped to get a picture. The situation was not good, however, as the sunlight reached the nest only for a few moments just before sunset, and then only thru the branches of surrounding trees. The nest was too high up to use a tripod, so I set a ladder against a neighboring tree and by climbing it was able to hold the camera within a few feet of the nest. The bird was very tame and gave me several opportunities for a picture without seeming to mind my presence at all. The pictures proved partial failures because of the poor light.

On July 13, I was again in the vicinity and visited the nest. It now contained two well-grown young. The mother bird was not in sight, so I sat down to wait for her. It was fully half an hour before she appeared. She seemed much less tame than before, and flew about from one perch to another for fifteen minutes before she finally went to the nest. She then perched on the rim, hesitated a moment, then fed the young in turn, ramming her bill down their throats and regurgitating the food in the usual hummingbird fashion.

On August 13, 1909, I found another nest of this species in Bear Canyon, Gallatin County. This one was also beside a stream, placed on a projecting root under an overhanging bank, and was composed of the same materials. No bird was to be seen and the cold eggs had evidently been deserted for some time. I found the contents somewhat dried and incubation so far advanced that I was unable to save the shells.

*Anaconda, Montana.*

## AN EARLY COLORADO ORNITHOLOGIST—WILLIAM G. SMITH

By WILLIAM L. BURNETT

WITH ONE PHOTO

WE of the younger school of bird students in Colorado cannot help looking back with envy upon the early ornithological workers, those sturdy scientific pioneers who laid the foundation upon which the history of Colorado ornithology is built: a foundation not laid upon the sands of inaccurate

observations, but built on the solid rock of facts, cemented together by the scientific training of brilliant minds.

Think of the golden opportunities that lay before them! How well they took advantage of those opportunities are matters of record in various ornithological publications. Some are still with us and are as active as of yore; but many have past away, and with the exception of Denis Gale, whose biography has been so ably written by Judge Henderson, how many of us know anything of the individual life of those that have gone beyond?

A sketch of the life of any ornithologist who has become prominent either world wide or locally, and especially those who were engaged in that work in our own State, has always been a matter of great interest to me. The subject of this



WILLIAM GILBERT SMITH: BORN JUNE 20, 1841;  
DIED MAY 12, 1900

sketch, William Gilbert Smith, can justly be called the pioneer ornithologist of Larimer County. Born June 20, 1841, at Sandwich, England, he spent the first thirty years of his life at his birthplace, and coming to this country in 1871, he settled at Rochester, New York, where he followed his trade of stair-building. He also did considerable taxidermist work and bird study during his spare moments. It was while living there that he joined the Society of American Taxidermists and met many men of national fame. He counted W. T. Hornaday and the late Professor Ward among his most intimate acquaintances. The Society about the year 1880 conducted an exhibit, and Smith entered some of his work. One piece, "The Story of Cock Robin," illustrated by a group of animals grotesquely mounted, was awarded a certificate of merit.

Smith left Rochester in the fall of 1881 and came to Denver, where he opened a bird store and museum on Larimer Street between 15th and 16th streets, which he kept until the first of the year 1883 when he sold out to Mr. H. H. Tamman.

He spent the year 1883 collecting in Platt Canyon and Buffalo Park, where he secured many specimens of birds, eggs, insects, and mammals. At that time he donated some rare specimens to the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, among which was a set of three eggs of the Townsend Solitaire, at that time almost unknown to science.

In 1884 he took up a homestead about six miles northeast of Loveland, Colorado, where he lived until the fall of 1892, when on account of failing

health he returned to England. He died at Deal, May 12, 1900, of Bright's disease.

It was while living at Loveland that his work among the birds created an epoch in the history of Colorado ornithology. I find he wrote very little about his achievements, seemingly content to leave that to the pens of others. From 1886 to 1891 the following appeared from his pen:

"Winter Birds in Larimer County, Colorado."—Random Notes III, 1886, p. 13.

"Nest of Rock Wren."—Random Notes III, 1886, p. 17.

"Nest and Eggs of *Myadestes townsendii*."—Random Notes III, 1886, p. 25.

"Notes from Colorado."—Random Notes III, 1886, pp. 66 and 67.

"Hybrid Ducks."—O. & O. XII, 1887, p. 169.

"Nesting of Audubon's Warbler."—O. & O. XIII, 1888, p. 114.

"Nesting of Ruddy Duck."—O. & O. XIII, 1888, p. 132.

"Nesting of Water Ousel."—O. & O. XIII, 1888, p. 149.

"Breeding Habits of the Mountain Plover."—O. & O. XIII, 1888, p. 187.

"Nesting of Pied-billed Grebe."—O. & O. XIV, 1889, p. 138.

"Nesting of the Cinnamon Teal."—O. & O. XIV, 1889, p. 77.

"Sabine's Gull."—O. & O. XIV, 1889, p. 176.

"Nesting of Eared Grebe."—O. & O. XV, 1890, p. 140.

"Nesting of the Flammulated Screech Owl."—O. & O. XVI, 1891, p. 27.

Probably the most interesting of the above articles is the record of three sets of the Flammulated Screech Owl, all taken in the year 1890; the first, a set of three, the second, a set of two, and the third, a set of four.

He furnished the late Major Bendire with a great many notes on the nesting of Colorado birds, which appeared in his "Life History of North American birds," and his estimate of Smith's work is found in Volume I in the following words: "Well known as a good ornithologist and a reliable collector."

He was not only a student of birds, but an all-round naturalist, doing a vast amount of work with the insects and mammals of the locality around his home. Most of the specimens were sent to the National Museum, and in their publications several types of new species are credited to him.

He was also an amateur painter, and some of his back-grounds for his bird groups were really works of art. He had several of these on exhibition at the Larimer County (Colorado) fair in 1887. I remember one as especially good: a landscape scene with a pair of Bob-whites in the foreground. However, the birds were his especial study, and in that line we, who are left to follow after him in our humble way, like best to remember him.

*Loveland, Colorado.*

## THE FLAMMULATED SCREECH OWL

By F. C. WILLARD

WITH FIVE PHOTOS

ON May 17, 1909, I left Tombstone for the Huachuca Mountains with a good supply of collecting paraphernalia, a list of species whose nests I had not yet taken, and a determination to shorten this list. With this in mind, May 18 found me climbing every likely-looking tree and stub near the summit of the mountains at the head of Ramsey Canyon.