

III.—*Ornithological Notes from South Brazil.*

By H. VON IHERING.

IN the fourth volume of the 'Revista' of the 'Museu Paulista' lately published will be found some ornithological papers, concerning which I propose to offer a few additional notes.

The "Descrição de Ninhos e Ovos das Aves do Brasil," by Carlos Euler, is a revised and corrected translation of his various papers published in the 'Journal für Ornithologie' from 1862 to 1868. Mr. Euler's observations are certainly amongst the best that have ever been made in Brazil on the life-habits of birds. As the original papers are without any index, and as the nomenclature used is in some cases not easy to understand, and in other cases inexact, this new and revised edition will be useful not only to Brazilian naturalists, but, I hope, to ornithologists elsewhere.

As an "Appendix" to this paper of Herr Euler I have published in the same Journal a list of all the species of birds hitherto observed in the mountainous interior of the State of Rio de Janeiro, especially at Cantagallo and Nova Friburgo.

Since I published this list I have received the second part of Dr. E. Goeldi's 'As Aves do Brasil' (Rio de Janeiro, 1900). I have therefore studied this book with the intention of completing my list by adding to it the names of the species observed by Dr. Goeldi in the Colonia Alpina, Theresiopolis, and not included in my List. These are:—

Orthogonys viridis (Spix).
Spermophila gutturalis (Licht.).
Chrysomitris icterica (Licht.).
Cassidix oryzivora (Gmel.).
Cnipolegus comatus (Licht.).
Pseudotriccus diops (Temm.).
Phyllomyias burmeisteri (Cab.).
Ornithion obsoletum (Temm.).
Empidonomus varius (Vieill.).

Furnarius rufus (Gm.).
Lathria plumbea (Licht.).
Caprimulgus ocellatus (Tsch.).
Nyctibius jamaicensis (Gm.).
Colaptes campestris (Gm.).
Picumnus temmincki (Lafr.).
Ara nobilis (Linn.).
Rostrhamus sociabilis (Vieill.).

I have not accepted *Arremon silens*, because the bird thus termed by Goeldi seems to be *A. semitorquatus* (observed

also by Euler), as is evident from the note on the yellowish colour of its lower mandible.

The number of species of birds of the interior of Rio de Janeiro is raised by this addition to 385. It would be useful if European ornithologists would co-operate with me in completing these lists of the local faunas of Rio de Janeiro, S. Paulo, and Rio Grande do Sul, which I have thus attempted to set in order.

My 'Catalogo critico-comparativo dos Ninhos e Ovos das Aves do Brasil,' published in the same volume of the 'Revista' (pp. 191-300), is a synopsis of all that is yet known of the nidification and eggs of Brazilian birds. This is, in truth, a very difficult subject to deal with satisfactorily. All those who have taken up collecting-work in this country have been misled by the native assistants' practice of attributing eggs to birds to which they have no relation whatever. Thus the literature of this subject is full of wrong descriptions and mistakes. For example, such an egg as that of *Ammodromus manimbe* (Sharpe, Cat. B. xii. p. 691) has been described several times, but always wrongly. It is evident that much further work and study, based upon special knowledge, is required to separate the good observations from the doubtful.

The above-mentioned paper is, however, not altogether a compilation, for many new observations are added to what was previously known. Among these may be especially noticed the very singular suspended nest of *Thripophaga sclateri* with two chambers (*op. cit.* p. 246, figs. 20, 21).

Since I published the paper, I have obtained some new eggs from S. Lourenço, Rio Grande do Sul. These may be described as follows:—

CEOPHLÆUS ERYTHROPS (Val.).

The eggs are thin and transparent, of a uniform bluish-white colour, polished, and lustrous. The measurements are 30-31 × 24-25 mm.

CHRYSTIS VINACEA (Vieill.).

This is an egg of 38 × 30 mm. in dimensions and of oval form. The poles are subequal, the surface is smooth, little

polished, and with some scattered deep pores. The nest from which it was taken was a hole situated very high in a colossal Murta-tree. The level of the nest was at 2 m. below the entrance, and to obtain the eggs it was necessary to make a second opening with an axe.

PIONOPSITTACUS PILEATUS (Scop.).

This nest was also in the hollow of a tree with the aperture far above. The eggs are of rounded form, not polished, measuring $26 \times 22-22.5$ mm.

It may be remarked that in the case of many of the most common and familiar Brazilian birds nothing whatever has been recorded of the nests and eggs. Therefore it may be useful to say a few words respecting the principal authorities on this little-known subject. It is quite natural that the observations and collections that I had made myself should have formed the principal basis of my work. Of other authorities, who have themselves worked in Brazil and published numerous and exact observations, there are two in particular of the highest value—those of Euler, referring to birds of Rio de Janeiro, and those of Herbert Smith on the birds of Matto Grosso, as published by Allen. Of other recent works the most important seems to me to be the egg-catalogue of Nehrkorn. This author has, however, received many incorrect indications, and when the descriptions of material supplied to him are at variance with those of Herbert Smith I always accept the latter's information, as he himself collected the nest, eggs, and birds, and gives their exact dates and localities. Thus Nehrkorn says that the egg of *Cæreba cyanea* is black, and Allen (quoting Smith) says that it is white, with fine reddish spots. The description of Allen is in harmony with my specimens of the eggs of *Dacnis cayana* and with Euler's account of those of *Certhiola chloropyga*. There can be little doubt that Nehrkorn was deceived in this case, as in many others also. Another series of valuable observations which I have utilized are in the publications of Dalglish and Aplin on Argentine and Uruguayan birds, the greater number of which occur in Brazil also.

To these contributions on Brazilian ornithology I may add, lastly, a reference to one which I published in 1899 ("As Aves do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul") in the 'Anuario do Estado do Rio do Sul' para anno de 1900 (Porto Alegre, 1899). There are here admitted 363 species as occurring in this State. In vol. iv. of the 'Revista do Museu Paulista' I have already been able to add six more species, and amongst them some of special interest, such as *Dacnis cayana* from Novo Hamburgo. It seems really quite doubtful whether many species exist in the State of St. Catharina which are not also represented in the northern part of the State of Rio Grande do Sul. The other additions are *Macropsalis creagra*, *Asio accipitrinus*, *Falco fusco-cærulescens* from Novo Hamburgo, and *Porphyriola martinica* and *Gisella iheringi* from S. Lourenço.

I have also lately received from Porto Alegre examples of *Gallinago gigantea*.

S. Paulo, 4th June, 1900.

IV.—Birds'-nesting Notes from the Transvaal.

By ALWIN C. HAAGNER.

On the 3rd September, 1899, while strolling along the shore of a dam in this district, I found the nest of a "Quicky" (*Motacilla capensis* L.). It was constructed of coarse grass and lined with feathers; it contained one abnormally coloured egg. This was of a salmon-grey colour, without spots or markings. Proceeding from the dam to a clump of mimosa-trees (*Acacia horrida*), I found an unusual number of nests of the Pied Shrike (*Lanius collaris*). They all contained three eggs, and were, without exception, constructed of a plant with white silvery flowers, which was just then in bloom, and were lined with twine and feathers. I also found several nests of the common Sparrow of this district (*Passer arcuatus*). The eggs of these birds are subject to an enormous amount of variation. I have taken eggs almost black in colour, owing to the profusion and darkness of the blotches,



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