

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

BIRD NOTES FROM COCHRANE, ALBERTA.—There is a scarcity of Red Polls this winter (1931-32). Since the first flight in late October I have seen only two small flocks.

Large numbers of Snow Buntings everywhere between here and Calgary (35 miles).

A band of Bohemian Waxwings has been about for the past two months.

I have seen a flock of White-winged Crossbills in the spruce woods, four miles north of here. Last year I saw hundreds, nay, thousands.

In Cochrane, a week ago, I came upon a small flock of Evening Grosbeaks feeding on sunflower seeds in the station agent's garden. A passer-by remarked "What pretty birds! They are not the ordinary snow-birds, are they?" I enlightened him on the subject. All small winter birds are "snow-birds" out here.—A. GISSING.

AN OCCURRENCE OF THE CLAY-COLOURED SPARROW, *Spizella pallida*, IN RENFREW COUNTY, ONTARIO.—On July 10, 1930, I was driving by car through a rough section of country near Golden Lake, Ontario. At the bottom of a steep hill I stopped for a rest, and almost immediately a Clay-coloured Sparrow sang its well-known buzz buzz song from the top branch of a small tree almost over my head. It sang in full sight of me for a few minutes and then disappeared. At this place the sandy dirt road, bordered by thickets and rail-fences passed between a barren, partly wooded, hilly pasture on one side, and a field crop on the other. The specimen was secured on July 11th, and the locality determined as five miles southeast of Golden Lake Station, Renfrew County, Ontario, almost the exact centre of the county. This is believed to be the first record of the species in the Ottawa valley.—HOYES LLOYD.

PYGMY NUTHATCH ON VANCOUVER ISLAND.—On October 11th, 1931, while deer hunting with Ian McT. Cowan in the vicinity of Williams Beach—about twelve miles north-west of Comox—I heard the unmistakable notes of Pygmy Nuthatches in the tops of the tall Douglas firs in a rather open and parklike bit of country. The cheeping notes of this species are so different from those of its relatives that I was quite certain of the bird and my comrade backed the identification. On the 13th I returned here with my wife and we spent the day scouring the woods of the vicinity, and about sun-down were rewarded by a sudden outburst of the pygmy "cheeping" right overhead in the upper branches of tall firs. Red-breasts and Pygmies were in company and

they were very high but a second load of dust shot proved conclusively that *Sitta pygmaea pygmaea* is at least occasionally a visitor to Vancouver Island. On October 25th Pygmies were again heard and seen in the trees at my home on the beach at Comox.

In the B.C. list of Brooks and Swarth, the Pygmy Nuthatch on Vancouver Island is dismissed with: "The statement by Lord (1866, vol. 2, pp. 133, 296) of its occurrence on Vancouver Island, repeated by Brown (1868, p. 421) and by Ridgeway (1904, p. 456), is an obvious error." The above record then, which plainly was not a mere straggler but one of a small migration, at least establishes the species on Vancouver Island.

It is of interest also to recall here that to date the only record of the Slender-billed Nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis aculeata*) for the island is a bird that I secured at Comox on September 9, 1922.—HAMILTON M. LAING.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD IN B.C.—It is of interest to record another eastern or mid-western bird turning up on the coastal waters of Vancouver Island. On May 19th, 1932, at Denman Island Spit, close to Comox, I secured a specimen of a juvenile male Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*). As in the Brooks & Swarth British Columbia list the inclusion of the species by Sclater in a list of Vancouver Island birds is given doubtful recognition, it is well to record this capture.—HAMILTON M. LAING.

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus l. ludovicianus*) AT TORONTO.—While studying birds in a ravine at North Toronto, Ontario, on February 9, 1931, the writer observed a large wren-like bird on the side of a hill, where the sun had melted the snow.

When collected the bird proved to be a female Carolina Wren which makes the fourth Toronto record for this species.* The measurements of the specimen, which is now in my collection, are as follows,—length, 141 mm., wing, 59mm., wing-expanse, 185 mm.—CLIFFORD E. HOPE.

*The previous Toronto records are recorded by:
J. H. Fleming and Hoyes Lloyd, *Auk*, 37:438, 1920.
L. L. Snyder, *Can. Field-Nat.*, 37:159, 1923.
R. V. Lindsay, *Can. Field-Nat.*, 45:205, 1931.

CRESTED FLYCATCHER AND CAST SNAKE-SKINS.—In the spring of 1931 a pair of Crested Flycatchers nested in my Martin house: which by the way has been waiting six years for its proper tenants.



Lloyd, Hoyes. 1933. "An Occurrence of the Clay-coloured Sparrow, *Spizella pallida*, in Renfrew Country, Ontario." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 47(2), 36–36. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.339443>.

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