

## CURVED-BILLED AND PALMER'S THRASHERS.

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THE following is a comparison of the measurements of the eggs of the Curved-billed Thrasher (*Harporhynchus curvirostris*) from Ramos, State of San Luis Potosi, Mexico, where the elevation is about 8,000 feet, with those of Palmer's Thrasher (*Harporhynchus curvirostris palmeri*) from El Plomo, Sonora, Mexico, where the elevation is about 1,200 feet.

Having been located as a mining engineer in the above mentioned localities, I had the opportunity of making a study of these birds. I am aware that the same variety of birds under different conditions of altitude or latitude will vary both as to the time of nesting and the number of eggs to a set. So that two men may describe the nesting habits of a bird, and though they may agree as to the composition and position of the nest, they will give a different average for the number of eggs to the set, the date of nesting, and their measurements.

For example, Mr. G. B. Sennett says the Curved-billed Thrasher along the Rio Grande in Texas commences to breed in March and lays four eggs. Mr. Charles J. Maynard says that it lays four or five.

I examined over one hundred nests of this bird during the years 1899 and 1900 and in all only three times were there more than three eggs, and these were, one nest with four young, and two nests with four eggs each. For Ramos I would say that the average was less than three, also their earliest nesting in May. The reason that the birds do not nest earlier is because April and May are the hottest months of the year in this locality, and there is not so much for the birds to eat; the rains begin in June. An example of late nesting at Ramos is the Scaled Partridge. The natives tell me it never nests before the middle of July. I found nests of fresh eggs August 1 and August 25. From this it shows how important it is not to rely too much on facts from any one locality, but as these two localities are especially favored by these birds, and as they outnumber all other birds almost two to one, I could not help comparing them, and I would like very much for





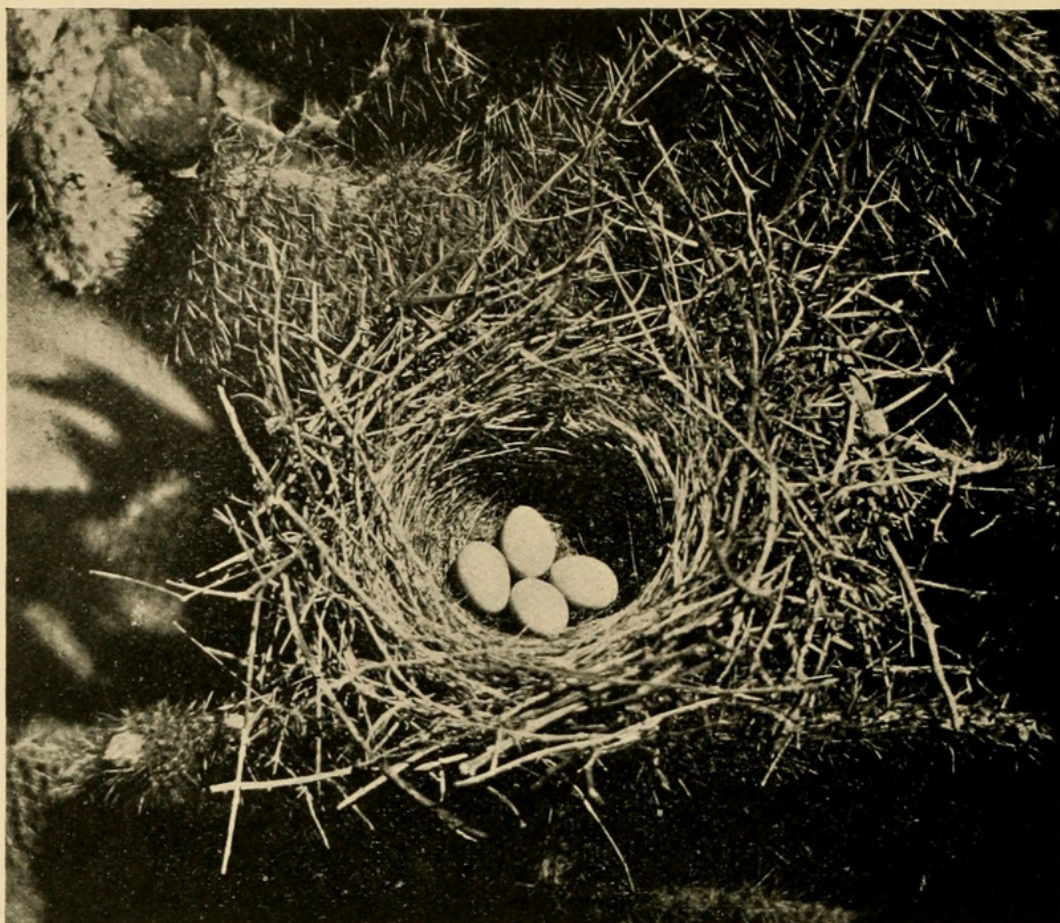


FIG. 1. NEST AND EGGS OF CURVED-BILLED THRASHER. Typical nest in a Nopalo Cactus.



FIG. 2. NEST OF CURVED-BILLED THRASHER. Typical next in Cholla Cactus,



any one who may have notes on these birds further north to compare them with the following.

Although these localities are separated by over eight hundred miles, the climate is the same and the country looks the same; in both cases we have a few mountains between which lie immense mesas and valleys which are mostly timberless and waterless, but covered with a curious growth of cacti in which the birds nest. The cacti of each place are different with the exception of the cholla, which is common in both places, and singularly enough it is the most common nesting site.

The new nest of both birds is generally near the old one, usually in the same cactus, and sometimes the old nest made over.

Sometimes the nest is completed two or three weeks before the eggs are laid. Then again, if the nest and eggs are taken the birds will have another nest and eggs in from twelve to fifteen days, and the new nest is usually about fifty feet from the one taken, but if the first nest is not disturbed the new nest will usually be about five feet from the old one.

The nests of both birds are the same, made of thorny twigs; in fact, nothing grows there without thorns on it, so they can get nothing else. These sticks are six to ten inches long, and form the outside of the nest, which is lined with wire grasses; sometimes horse hair is used in place of the grass, or with it. The nests are externally about ten inches in diameter and eight inches deep; internally about three and one-half inches, both in diameter and depth.

These birds are common permanent residents of these respective places and may be seen in pairs throughout the year, using their old nest for a roost.

The following sets do not represent average sets, but I have selected them to show the range in measurements.

Following are the measurements in millimeters of ten sets of the Curved-billed Thrasher.

Set No. 6	30.95 × 19.05	30.83 × 19.05	29.45 × 19.20
" 9	29.81 × 19.00	29.05 × 19.52	28.03 × 19.75
" 27	29.80 × 19.45	29.30 × 19.65	28.40 × 19.33
" 57	28.29 × 19.45	27.95 × 19.46	27.48 × 19.71
" 4	33.50 × 21.08	32.12 × 21.54	



1904. "Curved-Billed and Palmer's Thrashers." *The Auk* 21, 214–217.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/4070043>.

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