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BIRDS OF THE CAPE REGION OF LOWER CALIFORNIA.

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WITH ONE MAP.

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According to Mr. Ridgway, the Barn Owl was found by Mr. Xantus at San José del Cabo in December and January, and at Caduana in November. Mr. Belding does not mention it in any of his lists, nor was it actually taken by Mr. Frazar, but the latter obtained a number of its wing and tail feathers on the Sierra de la Laguna. Mr. Bryant heard the bird at Magdalena and again near San Quintin, and Mr. Anthony reports it as "common in the northwestern part of the territory, up to an altitude of 3,500 feet, inhabiting old mines" (Bryant).

On the Pacific coast the Barn Owl ranges from California to southern Mexico. It is apparently locally resident wherever found.

Asio accipitrinus (PALL.).

SHORT-EARED OWL.

Asio accipitrinus RIDGWAY, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., V. 1883, 533, footnote (Miraflores); BRYANT, Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., 2d ser., II. 1889, 284 (Miraflores).

The only record of the occurrence of this species in the Cape Region seems to be that given by Mr. Ridgway of a specimen¹ taken by Xantus at Miraflores on November 25. In the upper portion of the Peninsula Mr. Anthony has found it "along the coast region, north of San Fernando, in winter, and has frequently flushed . . . scattered companies of six to ten, from the salt grass about the bays. He has not seen them above 800 feet elevation" (Bryant).

The Short-eared Owl, at one season or another, visits nearly every part of the American continent, for it is a great wanderer, and decidedly more given to extended migrations than is any other species of its tribe. It breeds abundantly in the fur countries and sparingly or locally in the United States, just how far to the southward is not definitely known.

Megascops xantusi, sp. nov.

XANTUS'S SCREECH OWL.

Scops asio, var. *maccalli* BAIRD, BREWER, and RIDGWAY, Hist. N. Amer. Birds, III. 1874, 52, 53, part (descr. first full, but incomplete plumage from Cape St. Lucas; crit.).

Scops trichopsis? (not of WAGLER) RIDGWAY, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., V. 1883, 533, footnote (Cape St. Lucas).

(?) *Scops* — BELDING, *Ibid.*, VI. 1883, 349 (Victoria Mts.; Agua Caliente; Miraflores). RIDGWAY, *Ibid.* (crit.).

¹ Mr. Ridgway writes me that he cannot find this specimen, and that he does not "know what can have become of it."

Scops RIDGWAY, *Loc. cit.* (Cape St. Lucas; crit.).

Megascops asio trichopsis (not *Scops trichopsis* WAGLER) BRYANT, Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., 2d ser., II. 1889, 284 (Cape Region; ? Victoria Mts., etc.).

Specific Characters:—Most nearly like *M. vinaceus* Brewster,¹ but smaller, the general coloring paler and less reddish, the crown and outer surfaces of the wings lighter, the primaries with broad, well-defined light bars on *both* webs, the abdomen and flanks decidedly whiter, the under tail coverts nearly pure white and practically without mesial streaks, the feathering of the legs shorter and sparser.

♂ ad. (No. 47,301, collection of William Brewster, Santa Anita, Lower California, June 3, 1896; Loye Miller).² Upper parts drab, tinged with pinkish rusty on the back, inclining to ashy on the pileum and outer surfaces of the wings, to ashy white on the lores and sides of the crown, all the feathers except the primaries faintly vermiculated with reddish brown, those of the forehead, "ear tufts," back, rump, scapulars, and wing coverts with narrow shaft streaks of clove brown; primaries, secondaries, and tail-feathers barred with wood-brown, the bars on the tail narrow and distinct, excepting near the tips of the feathers, where they are broken and confused, those of the wings broad and distinct on both webs of all the primaries, but only faintly defined on the inner secondaries; outer scapulars, greater wing coverts, and outer primaries, with their exposed outer edges, hoary white; cheeks, throat, and breast pale ashy with the faintest possible suffusion of pinkish or rusty; abdomen, flanks, and crissum soiled white or ashy white; most of the feathers of the under parts with exceedingly fine, wavy, transverse lines of reddish brown, those of the throat, breast, and sides (but not of the under tail coverts nor of the center of the abdomen) with narrow, sharply-defined, mesial streaks of dark clove brown; tibiae tinged with fulvous and barred with reddish brown; under wing coverts pale fulvous heavily marked with dark brown; tarsi rusty white with a few reddish brown spots; toes naked nearly to their bases. Wing, 5.35; tail, 2.72; tarsus, 1.32; middle toe, .65; bill, length from nostril, .32; depth at nostril, .40; longest feathers of "ear tufts," .90.

Two young birds (No. 16,932 ♂ and No. 16,933 ♀, U. S. National Museum Collection, Cape St. Lucas; J. Xantus), fully grown but still in juvenal plumage, differ from the adult specimen just described in being much darker, browner, and more uniformly colored, in lacking all trace of mesial or shaft streaks on the feathers of the body, and in having the broad, light bars on the wing quills more rusty and nearly as pronounced and well defined on both webs of all the secondaries as on those of the primaries. The upper parts are faded reddish brown (not far from russet) with obscure, transverse lines of whitish on the pileum, back, and wing coverts; the cheeks, throat, and under parts generally are everywhere crossed by bands of reddish brown, which are much narrower than the brownish-white interspaces; the feathering of the legs is even scantier than in the mature bird.

On comparing both old and young with specimens in corresponding plumages of *bendirei*, *trichopsis*, and *cineraceus*, the only representatives of the *M. asio*

¹ Type locality: Durasno, Chihuahua, Mexico; see Auk, V. 1888, 88.

² This specimen was purchased from Mr. C. K. Worthen.

group known to occur along the southwestern border of the United States, I have become convinced that the Lower California bird is not likely to have been derived from any of these races. It is, indeed, so very unlike all of them and so similar in general appearance to the Mexican form *vinaceus* that I regard it as most nearly related to, and probably a direct offshoot from, the latter. The two birds, *xantusi* and *vinaceus*, with still another Mexican form, *M. cooperi*, appear to constitute what may be termed a subsection of the *M. asio* group, for although differing from one another in size they have the same general pattern of color and marking. This pattern is, in certain respects, unlike that common to the various races of *M. asio*, the principal differences consisting in the exceedingly fine vermiculation and more or less pronounced pinkish tone of the plumage of all three of the Mexican birds just mentioned. I will further remark in this connection that the form *trichopsis* seems to me to be perfectly distinct, specifically, from *M. asio*. Indeed, I do not see how it can be otherwise regarded, for it differs very strikingly from *cineraceus*, the only other representative of *asio* found in southern Arizona, where, moreover, both *trichopsis* and *cineraceus* appear to breed together, or at least in close proximity.

The sum as well as character of the differences which distinguish *M. xantusi* from the other members of the genus *Megascops* would not, in my estimation, warrant its recognition as a full species were it not for the obvious and practically complete isolation of its habitat from the regions inhabited by all the others, and especially from the habitat of its nearest ally, *M. vinaceus*. Were it at all closely related to the California form, *bendirei*, we might safely assume that it is likely to meet and intergrade with the latter in the central or northern parts of the Peninsula, but the two are so very unlike that the possibility of such intergradation is not worth considering.

Very little can be said at present regarding the distribution, and practically nothing concerning the habits, of this pretty little Screech Owl which I have named for the ornithologist by whom the first and hitherto only known specimens were obtained. Mr. Frazar did not meet with it, but it was, no doubt, the bird whose "tremulous notes" were heard at night by Mr. Belding at several of his camps in the Victoria Mountains as well as at Agua Caliente and Miraflores, and it may also have been the species with which Mr. Bryant had a similarly unsatisfactory experience "at the dry camp, Cardon Grande, and at El Rancho Viejo." According to the observer last named, "Mr. Anthony has seen a screech owl on several occasions between Valladares and the coast," but the bird of this region is most likely to be *M. a. bendirei*, which probably ranges southward into the northern portions of Lower California.