

was a silt-laden, capricious river that was subject to tremendous flooding in early summer and a flow reduced in winter to an ofttime low that would scarcely reach the mouth of the river at the Gulf of California. During this era the muddy water was not acceptable to a large fish population and but few species were present, one a very large minnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*) which became extinct with the clearing of the water. Within the last 40 years man has constructed dams along this turbulent river course. These dams have served as settling basins and have regulated the flow, thus clearing the water of silt. Within the last two decades the introduction of several varieties of game fish have stocked the river with a vast population which live in the clear water. These are of such abundance and small size to have become very attractive to fish eating birds. As a result the population of herons and other piscivorous birds has increased abundantly, even to the point of attracting such species as the Brown Boobies from their salt water habitat on the Gulf of California.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *Natural History Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego, California, July 28, 1958.*

A New Race of Screech Owl from Oaxaca.—Specimens of *Otus asio*, recently collected in Oaxaca, México, by C. C. Lamb, R. W. Dickerman, and J. T. Marshall, Jr., resemble the type of *Otus asio vinaceus* from extreme western Chihuahua, 1000 miles to the northwest. Yet a giant form, *Otus asio seductus* of the Río Balsas, is placed between them. All these Pacific coastal forms, known as the "vinaceous group" of screech owls, are now restored to the species *Otus asio* because vinaceous owls of the race *sinaloensis* intergrade with *Otus asio cineraceus* in Sonora (Miller and Miller, Condor, 53, 1951:172, 176) and because of the identity in voice and behavior of the two forms in that state. The population in Oaxaca may be named in honor of its discoverer as

Otus asio lambi new subspecies

Type.—Male immature, partly through postjuvinal molt, no. 54407, Moore Zoological Laboratory; Río Tehuantepec, 3000 feet, 2 miles west of Nejapa, Oaxaca, México; collected September 27, 1952, by C. C. Lamb.

Subspecific characters.—Resembles *O. a. vinaceus* in size and *O. a. seductus* in pattern, but is more intensely vinaceous above and below than either, although intermediate between them in darkness of the brown back. Blackish auricular rim reduced and less evident than that of *seductus*.

Size small, only slightly larger than the small races *sinaloensis* and *vinaceus*. Coloration between *seductus*, one of the largest races in the genus, and *vinaceus*, but nearest the latter. Back darker vinaceous-brown than the pink gray-brown of *vinaceus*, yet lighter and pinker than the deep ochraceous-brown of *seductus*. Pattern above and below only a trifle coarser than the fine linear markings of *vinaceus*, but vermiculations not composing the uniform background of that race, rather they are irregularly deflected to enclose light paired "eye" spots on either side of the shaft streaks, as in *seductus*, which has broader shaft streaks, however.

Specimens examined.—*Otus asio sinaloensis*—Sonora: 15 ♂, 12 ♀; Sinaloa: 1 ♂ (type). *O. a. vinaceus*—Chihuahua: 1 ♀ (type), Sinaloa: 2 ♀. *O. a. seductus*—Michoacán: 4 ♂ (including type), 1 ♀; Guerrero: 1 ♂, 2 ♀. *O. a. lambi*—Oaxaca: 2 miles west of Nejapa, 2 ♂ (including type), 1 ♀; 13 miles east of Juchitán, 1 ♂; Puerto Angel, 1 ♂. *Otus cooperi chiapensis*—Oaxaca: Cacoprieta, 1 ♀; Chiapas: 4 ♂ (including type), 4 ♀. *O. c. cooperi*—El Salvador: 4 ♂, 1 ♀; Nicaragua: 1; Costa Rica: 3 ♂, 6 ♀ (including types), 1 unsexed.

Range.—Pacific slope of Oaxaca in thorn-woods dominated by candelabra cacti and in denser woods (including palms) surrounding coastal swamps exclusive of those at the eastern corner of Oaxaca, which are occupied instead by a geographically complementary form currently known as *Otus cooperi chiapensis* (specimen in British Museum, collected by Sumichrast at Cacoprieta = 3 leagues south of Tapanatepec; dorsal coloration almost exactly like that of the type of *chiapensis*).

Remarks.—The foregoing color comparisons involving hue are based on the following recently collected specimens which are at least partly in fresh adult plumage: *vinaceus*, Moore Zool. Lab. no. 8494 and the most vinaceous specimens of *sinaloensis*, thought to suggest what the type of *vinaceus* would have looked like before fading (presumably darker, grayer, and pinker than the reddish-brown now manifest—Sheffler Collection nos. 2748, 4556; *seductus*, Western Foundation Vert. Zool. no. 3471; *lambi*, the type. In worn, faded plumage *seductus* and *lambi* resemble each other in back color, although

the latter shows more prominently the contrastingly dark crown and the frosty areas around the face and hindneck.

Weights available for two specimens each of the following races suggest that *lambi* is of medium body size although possessing a relatively short wing: wings average about 148 mm. and weights about 97 gm. in *sinaloensis*; 170 mm. and 165 gm. in *seductus*; 152 mm. and 130 gm. in *lambi*.

We thank the authorities of the following museums for permitting Marshall's examination of their specimens of *Otus asio* and *Otus cooperi* from the Pacific slope of Middle America: Dickey Collection, University of California, Los Angeles; Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology; W. J. Sheffler Collection; Moore Zoological Laboratory; University of Kansas Museum of Natural History; Eizi Matuda Collection (México, D. F.); A. R. Phillips Collection, Instituto de Biología (México, D. F.); United States National Museum; Museum of Comparative Zoology (type of *Megascops vinaceus*); and the British Museum (specimen from Cacoprieta).—ROBERT T. MOORE, *Moore Zoological Laboratory, Occidental College, Los Angeles*, and JOE T. MARSHALL, JR., *Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Los Angeles, California, October 5, 1958*.

Rock Sandpipers in Southern California.—The Rock Sandpiper (*Erolia ptilocnemis*) previously has not been recorded from southern California. Grinnell and Miller (Pac. Coast Avif. No. 27, 1944:155) reported this species as a "winter visitant on extreme northwest seacoast." Previous records for California at Humboldt Bay included 9 birds, December 13 to March 6, 1925–26, and 5 birds,



Fig. 1. Rock Sandpiper (*Erolia ptilocnemis*) on breakwater at Playa del Rey, California.

December 19 to January 8, 1926–27 (J. M. Davis, Condor, 35, 1933:119). In addition a single bird of this species was seen by Alan Craig and others at the Cliff House, San Francisco, on November 1, 1957 (Audubon Field Notes, 12, 1958:56). On November 25, 1958, I discovered a single Rock Sandpiper on the breakwater at the entrance to Ballona Creek, Playa del Rey, Los Angeles County. The bird appeared to be in good health, was seen to feed, and remained in close association with Black Turnstones (*Arenaria melanocephala*) and Surfbirds (*Aphriza virgata*). A return visit on November 26 revealed at least two birds of this species present. Subsequent sightings of these birds were made from November 27 through April 2, 1959. The birds appeared fairly tame in that they allowed fairly close approach. Colored slides, black and white photographs (fig. 1), and colored motion pictures were taken. By late March one of the birds had assumed breeding plumage.—ARNOLD SMALL, *Los Angeles, California, April 17, 1959*.