

MEASUREMENTS OF ADULT EXAMPLES OF *LAGOPUS LEUCURUS RAINIERENSIS*,  
ALL FROM MOUNT RAINIER, WASHINGTON

## Males

Number	Collector	Locality	Date	Wing	Tail	Culmen	Depth of upper mandible
101	J. W. Hungate	Indian Henrys, 5300 ft.	July 11, 1919	187	100	16	6.5
269376	W. P. Taylor	McClure Rock, 7300 ft.	Sept. 26, 1919	176	96	14.5	6
853	S. G. Jewett	Indian Henrys, 7000 ft.	July 10, 1919	177	96	15.5	6.2
854	S. G. Jewett	Indian Henrys, 7500 ft.	July 10, 1919	186	106	16	6.6
Average				181.5	99.5	15.5	6.3

## Females

269375	W. P. Taylor	Pinnacle Pk., 6200 ft.	July 19, 1919	182	90	15	6.3
156505	V. Bailey	Indian Henrys, above timberline	Aug. 10, 1897	172	83	13.5	6.1
156498	A. K. Fisher	near Nisqually Glacier	Aug. 2, 1897	178	92	16.5	6.4
103	J. W. Hungate	Pyramid Pk., 6000 ft.	July 11, 1919	171	82	16	6.1
Average				175.7	86.7	15.2	6.2

Washington, D. C., April 8, 1920.

## THE CALIFORNIAN RACE OF THE BREWER BLACKBIRD

By J. GRINNELL

(Contribution from the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California)

TO SEE that the Brewer Blackbirds of west-central California are appreciably smaller than those of the Great Basin and Rocky Mountain regions requires but a few moments examination of an appropriate series of specimens. Furthermore this difference has already been commented upon, at least once, nearly twenty years ago. Under *Scolecophagus cyanocephalus* (Wagler), Ridgway (Bds. N. and Mid. Amer., II, 1902, p. 249, footnote) makes this statement: "California specimens average decidedly smaller than those from east of the Sierra Nevada, as the following measurements show" [giving a table based on two males and five females from California and five males and four females from the "Rocky Mountain plateau"].

In view of the ease of securing specimens of so common a bird, and in view of the continual activity in describing subspecies, it is curious that the California Brewer Blackbird should have been left so long without a subspecific name. The race seems to me to possess quantity of difference to quite as great measure as many subspecies of birds which have already stood for years on our lists. None of the scientific names given by Ridgway (*loc. cit.*) in the synonymy of the

Brewer Blackbird appears to be safely applicable to the California form. Without more ado, therefore, let it be called

***Euphagus cyanocephalus minusculus*, new subspecies**

California Brewer Blackbird

*Type*.—Male adult; no. 34136, Mus. Vert. Zool.; Palo Alto, Santa Clara County, California; January 26, 1901; collected by J. Grinnell; orig. no. 4577.

*Diagnosis*.—Similar to *Euphagus cyanocephalus cyanocephalus* but averaging smaller throughout; metallic sheen of back, rump, and posterior lower surface in male steely blue rather than brassy in tone.

*Measurements*.—Ten males of *E. c. minusculus* from west-central California (Berkeley, Palo Alto, Monterey, etc.) give average and extreme measurements, in millimeters, as follows: Wing, 124.9 (121.2-130.9); tail [from base of uropygium], 105.9 (101.1-111.5); tarsus, 32.2 (30.8-33.5); exposed culmen, 18.8 (17.8-20.0); depth of bill at nostril, 7.3 (6.7-7.8). Eight females from same region: Wing, 115.0 (111.8-118.5); tail, 97.8 (92.2-102.0); tarsus, 30.1 (26.8-31.8); exposed culmen, 17.1 (16.1-18.6); depth of bill at nostril, 6.7 (6.1-7.1). Weights, in grams, of four males: 69.2 (67.1-74.0); of five females, 53.7 (52.2-66.7).

Ten males of *E. c. cyanocephalus* from southeastern California (Death Valley and points in the valley of the Colorado River), where migrant or wintering, give average and extreme measurements as follows: Wing, 130.9 (129.1-134.3); tail [from base of uropygium], 110.8 (102.5-116.5); tarsus, 33.2 (31.2-34.7); exposed culmen, 19.4 (18.6-20.4); depth of bill at nostril, 7.7 (7.3-8.3). Eight females from same localities: Wing, 118.7 (115.6-121.8); tail, 99.1 (95.6-101.8); tarsus, 31.6 (30.2-33.0); exposed culmen, 17.7 (16.8-18.7); depth of bill at nostril, 7.2 (6.7-7.7). Weights, in grams, of six males: 77.4 (71.0-85.7); of three females, 61.2 (54.4-65.2).

A series of *E. c. cyanocephalus* was loaned the writer, through the kind agency of Mr. Wm. C. Bradbury, of Denver, from the Colorado Museum of Natural History. Eight properly selected males out of this series, from localities in Colorado and Texas, show average measurements as follows: Wing, 131.0; tail, 114.5; tarsus, 33.1; exposed culmen, 19.6; depth of bill at nostril, 8.1.

*Distribution*.—*E. c. minusculus* occupies the Pacific slope of California (probably also of northern Lower California and of Oregon). It is permanently resident, save at high altitudes in the mountains where heavy snows bury its food supply in winter. It is this form which breeds in the mountains and coast district of southern California south to the Mexican line, as also throughout the valleys and foothills of California west of the Sierran crest, north at least to Shasta Valley, Siskiyou County.

*E. c. cyanocephalus* occurs as a transient and winter visitant in suitable parts of the Colorado and Mohave deserts; also this subspecies, though not so typically, breeds on the east side of the Sierras, around Mono Lake and at the head of Owens Valley, and in the Modoc region. The birds which winter on the Colorado and Mohave deserts probably breed in northern Nevada and to the northward and eastward.

*Remarks*.—Variation is marked, in all respects, in the Brewer Blackbird. The means of the divergent geographic races are admittedly close at best, and the individual variation brings wide overlapping, as will be seen upon consulting the measurements here given. Though the difference in stoutness of bill would seem to be the easiest thing for a person to use in discriminating series of specimens, care must be exercised to take into account the other size features as well. The remark made by Baird in 1858 (vol. ix, Pac. R. R. Reports, p. 552) concerning this species still holds, even though some of the variation is now found to be subspecific: "The culmen is sometimes much curved from the very base, sometimes quite straight; the size of the bill varies considerably". With birds from the coast district of California, the relative slenderness of the bill is a salient feature. But when birds from the Sierras and from northeastern California are examined trouble is found in allocating individuals. Series must then be available, to permit naming the form represented on the basis of *average* of charac-

ters. The same remarks apply with reference to the feature of coloration set forth in the diagnosis. The steely blue rather than brassy tone of the metallic sheen is easy enough to see in the coast-district birds; but it begins to fail in the birds from the Sierran foothills. To express the situation in another way, *Euphagus cyanocephalus cyanocephalus* intergrades with *E. c. minusculus* over a rather wide belt of country adjacent to and including the Sierra Nevada.

Berkeley, California, May 31, 1920.

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**A Feeding Habit of the Cedar Waxwing.**—The following observations, disclosing a habit of the Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) which was unfamiliar to the writer, may perhaps be of interest to others. The note-book entry was made in the Flathead Forest, near Belton, Montana.

August 17, 1915, at Ouzel Creek, on the Middle Fork trail: I watched a Cedar Waxwing feeding berries to her full-grown young. After descending to a service-berry bush and remaining there a few seconds, the bird flew up to a dead tree, followed by the young birds, which sat in expectant attitudes near her. The parent had a red (unripe) berry in her bill and she fed this at once to one of her family. She then poked her head toward the young again, gave a little gulp, and behold! another berry was in her bill. This she gave to a youngster near her and at once produced another berry in like manner; then another and still another, until she had fed them five whole berries in succession. Although each berry was brought forth with a distinctly visible gulp it apparently did not involve much effort.—ALEXANDER D. DU BOIS, *Chicago, February 8, 1920.*

**A Plague of Rufous-crowned Sparrows.**—From about the middle of November, 1919, to the middle of March, 1920, there was a flock of Rufous-crowned Sparrows (*Aimophila ruficeps*) around my home in Eagle Rock. The birds were exceedingly troublesome because of the damage they did to plants. A small area of lawn close to some shrubbery was picked almost bare around the edges, the clover being eaten first and then the grass. It was necessary to cover young seedlings with wire netting to prevent complete loss; older plants were badly injured. Buds on bamboos were eaten during the colder part of the year, and for a few days later in the season, the birds were to be seen eating the buds of fruit trees, but they left before much harm had been done. The flock of *ruficeps* numbered about twenty. The sparrows kept together much as quails do and would fly or run from one place to another at the same time.

It may be of interest that "white-crowns" were really uncommon about the place this year until the rufous-crowns had disappeared, when both the Intermediate and Golden-crowned Sparrows became fairly abundant. This is the first year that sparrows have been troublesome in any way, though I have often wondered why we escaped the depredations so commonly committed. I have never seen a *ruficeps* about the grounds until this winter, but have heard them singing on the brush-covered hillsides. Perhaps the visitation of rufous-crowns should be looked upon as an honor, but from one point of view it was certainly a nuisance.—C. O. ESTERLY, *Eagle Rock, California, March 29, 1920.*

**Winter Nesting of the Ground Dove.**—The Mexican Ground Dove (*Chaemepelia passerina pallescens*) has been noted as a rare spring visitor in this vicinity (Brawley, Imperial County, California) since 1912, in which year it was first seen on February 1. A pair was seen on March 30 of that year, and one of the birds shot for identification. It has been seen on several occasions since, but no nests have been found until this year.

Out here in Southern California, the Brewer's Blackbird is one of those species even non-birders will notice, simply because of its ubiquitous distribution. Along with parking lots, these birds are frequently seen on schoolyards and basically anywhere humans congregate en masse, including the food court at Costco or the patio of the local Starbucks. In contrast to its peaceful Icterid cousin the Brewer's Blackbird, the Great Tailed Grackle, common in desert communities of the American Southwest, gives off an angry vibe. | Source. A Few Stale Facts. The Brewer's Blackbird is a New World Blackbird, a member of the Icteridae family consisting of 26 species. Brewer's Blackbird is perching on the ground. Brewer's Blackbird, Euphagus cyanocephalus, up close and personal. Brewer's blackbird perches on a branch in a flooded pond in the morning light of winter Brewer's Blackbird Euphagus cyanocephalus The Brewer's blackbird Euphagus cyanocephalus is a medium-sized New World blackbird Perched brewer's blackbird in good form. The Male Brewer's Blackbird at Malibu Lagoon in September Couple of Brewer's Blackbird in the bushes in California Brewer's Blackbird. Related categories. Animals Birds.