

FIRST DESCRIPTION OF THE EGGS AND NEST OF THE GOLDEN-WINGED SPARROW *ARREMON SCHLEGELI*

Hilary Tye & Alan Tye

Edward Grey Institute, Dept of Zoology, South Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3PS, U.K.

Key words: Golden-winged Sparrow, *Arremon schlegeli*, nest, eggs, Colombia.

The Golden-winged Sparrow *Arremon schlegeli* inhabits dry to moist deciduous woodland and scrub in northern Venezuela and Colombia, occurring up to 1300 m (Hilty & Brown 1986). Birds in "breeding condition" have been found between April and September (Carriker, in Hilty & Brown 1986), but the nest and eggs appear to be undescribed.

On 2 May 1988 at about 300 m in the Tayrona National Park, Colombia (11°21'N, 74°0'W) an adult Golden-winged Sparrow was flushed from a rock crevice. It perched nearby on a low branch for several seconds before disappearing. The crevice, a crack between two boulders about 0.5 m above the ground, was found to contain a nest with two eggs, well concealed among dead leaves. The nest itself was a roofed cup made of dead leaves and small twigs with a lining of fine grass strands and an internal cavity of 8–10 cm diameter. The eggs were white with a pinkish translucence and a sparse scattering of small black spots at the large end. They measured 24 × 15 mm and 22 × 14 mm and were returned to the nest after being photographed.

Arremon is one of the few Colombian genera in the Fringillidae that does not build an open cup nest (Hilty & Brown 1986); *A. aurantiirostris* and *A. taciturnus* both build globular nests with a side entrance made of leaves and grasses, situated on or near the ground (Skutch 1954, Haverschmidt 1968). The abundance of boulders in this part of Tayrona National Park may have provided a more secure nest site of similar, low elevation.

The eggs of *A. schlegeli* appear to be very similar to those of other *Arremon* species. Two eggs of *A. aurantiirostris* from Ecuador both measure 24 × 16 mm and one from Costa Rica 24 × 17 mm. Two eggs of *A. flavirostris* from Argentina measure 24 × 17 mm and 24 × 16 mm.

The above measurements are from eggs in the British Museum (Natural History) (BMNH). The mean dimensions (with range in parentheses) of 20 *A. aurantiirostris* eggs from Costa Rica were 25.4 (24.2–26.2) mm by 17.3 (16.7–18.3) mm (Skutch 1954). The colouration of the *A. schlegeli* eggs is most similar to the *A. aurantiirostris* eggs from Ecuador, which are white with small, very dark brown spots scattered around the large end of a white egg. The *A. aurantiirostris* egg from Costa Rica and those of *A. flavirostris* from Argentina have chocolate brown or light brown speckles and scrawls and a light buff or bluish grey ground colour. Skutch (1954) describes *A. aurantiirostris* eggs as white marked with dark brown, light brown and black in amounts varying from specks sprinkled over the whole egg to a few fine dots at the large end; a few had fine scrawls at the large end. *A. taciturnus* eggs from Surinam are described as whitish with fine brown and purple spots (Haverschmidt 1968).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the Colombian Instituto de los Recursos Naturales Renovables y del Ambiente for permission to visit Tayrona National Park and particularly the Park Director for facilitating our visit. Also Mr M.P. Walters of the BMNH for allowing HT to look at the egg collections.

REFERENCES

- Haverschmidt, F. 1968. Birds of Surinam. Edinburgh & London.
Hilty, S.L., & W.L. Brown. 1986. A guide to the birds of Colombia. Princeton.
Skutch, A.F. 1954. Life histories of Central American birds, Volume 1. Pacific Coast Avifauna no. 31.

Accepted 22 December 1991