

Dacnis, I

(1)

November 29, 1957
Barro Colorado

~~XXXXXX~~ = Blue Dacnis = cayana

This species has not been conspicuous around the clearing on the island but there is at least one ♂ in the neighborhood.

It came once, with a bunch of ♂ Cyanerpes, to "visit" the captive birds. Didn't do much. Just sat, gave an occasional Call-Note "Trit", and made a few weak WF and TF movements of the usual tanager type.

This bird seemed to be definitely, but loosely, associated with the flock of ♂ Cyanerpes; it usually flew around with them, but not by any means always.

Aside from this incident, I have only seen the ♂ Dacnis feeding by itself high in the tree-tops.

Dacnis, I

December 22, 1957,
Barro Colorado

~~XXXXXX~~ = Scarlet-thighed Dacnis = newesta

A ♂ of this species, in full plumage, came and "visited" the birds in the aviary this morning.

Just sat, with lots of TF, some WF, and uttered lots of "Trit" Notes (quite loud, perhaps less so than those of the Green Honeycreepers). Then flew off silently. I.E. the circumstances of these "Trit" Notes were quite reminiscent of those of the

Dacnis, Dec. 22, 1957, I. (2)

Green Honeycreeper - rather like alarm notes.

Dacnis, I

December 25, 1957
Rio Chagres

I watched some of these birds in the tree-tops along the river, near the trans-isthmian highway, and noted that they seemed to move as a flock (probably including 4 or 5 birds). Also probably loosely associated with a flock of Plain Tanagers!

Dacnis, I

January 15, 1958
Barro Colorado

I have seen quite a few of both species around here. Single males, or (in the case of the Blue Dacnis) pairs. Very restless, never staying in one tree for very long, and never showing any display of any sort. Often in trees with Plain Tanagers and associated species, but never really integrated in flock - or, at least, often leave before the Tanagers do.

Dacnis, I

January 31, 1959
Barro Colorado

I saw 3 Blue Dacnis (1 adult ♂, another ♂, probably immature, and 1 ♀) associating with one another today. The largest "flock" I have seen so far. When first watched, they were resting and preening.

Dacnis, Jan. 31, 1958, I

(3)

in the same tree as a flock of Blue Honeycreepers (who were doing the same thing). But the birds eventually moved on and began to feed, and the 2 species seemed to segregate completely.

Dacnis, I

February 4, 1958
Barro Colorado

I have seen several more Scarlet-tufted from time to time (including this morning), always in pairs apparently, generally very reminiscent of Blue Honeycreepers in feeding & flying movements (and their TF's and WF's seem to be identical), but they absolutely do not associate with any of the Honeycreepers (or the Blue Dacnis as far as I have seen) at all.

Also watching an apparently single ♀ Blue Dacnis this evening. Uttering single CN's repeatedly, at a few second intervals. The posture from which she gave these CN's was approximately as follows:



Tail slightly but definitely lowered with each note, and then raised back to previous position.

(I wouldn't pay too much attention to the fluff-tempic rain storm

ing of this posture. After the last night, all the birds seem to be more fluffed than usual). The CN's themselves could certainly be transcribed as "Trit", as I have done before; and they are certainly reminiscent of the CN's of the Green Honeycreeper (if definitely weaker), but they also have a very faint trace of the "lumpy" quality of the Blue Honeycreeper's HCN's (although I do not think that

Dacnis, Feb 4, 1958, II

(4)

they are strictly homologous with the Blue Honeycreepers HCN's — more likely its "ordinary" CN's).

The circumstances in which these notes were given were not awfully clear. When I first saw the bird, a nearby group of Blue Honeycreepers were uttering a lot of HCN's, and the Dacnis almost seemed to be duetting with the Honeycreepers; but it continued its notes after the Honeycreepers had shut up. This bird did not seem to be alarmed or hostile to any appreciable extent, so these notes did not seem to function exactly like the "Jit" Notes of the Green Honeycreepers. I rather wondered, in fact, if this ♀ were not trying to "call in" her ♂?

Dacnis, I

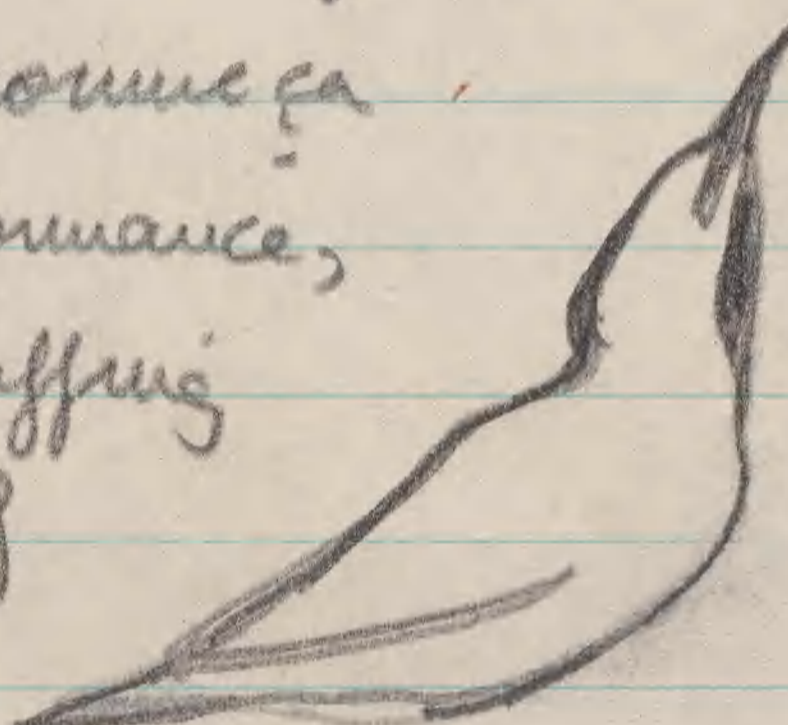
February 24, 1958
Barro Colorado

A single ♂ Scarlet-tough came to the dead tree by Chapman House this afternoon and gave a lot of notes, apparently some sort of CN's. Without any ritualized postures or movements. The notes themselves were longer than any I remember hearing from Dacnis before, almost syllabic. Usually more or less like "Tee-ee", perhaps sometimes like "Tee-ye" — — Rather plaintive. These were perhaps most reminiscent of some of the plaintive CN's of the Thraupis tanagers — the ones that I think are used to "call in" the mate. Anyway they produced no response in the case of this Scarlet-tough and he eventually flew off and disappeared.

Dacnis, I

March 7, 1958,
Barro Colorado

Looked up into a tree-top to find what seemed to be a dispute in progress between 2 ♂ Blue Dacnis. The 2 birds were flitting around from twig to twig, posturing briefly between flits. It was very noticeable that they didn't do any fluffing of any kind during this performance!!! The postures between flits were a form of St. More or less comme ça. I only caught a brief glimpse of this performance, but I couldn't detect any sound or any fluffing (there was certainly no fluff of any sort). It was noticeable that a bird was going into the st always tended to face its opponent, i.e. showing of the black throat, as in the ♂ Shining Honeycreeper.



It was my impression that the bird tended to go into the st with a comparatively rapid & vigorous movement so that the whole thing almost looked like a form of Head-tossing. Could this possibly be related to the "Courtship" of the Swallow-tanager described by Schaefer ????

Dacnis, I

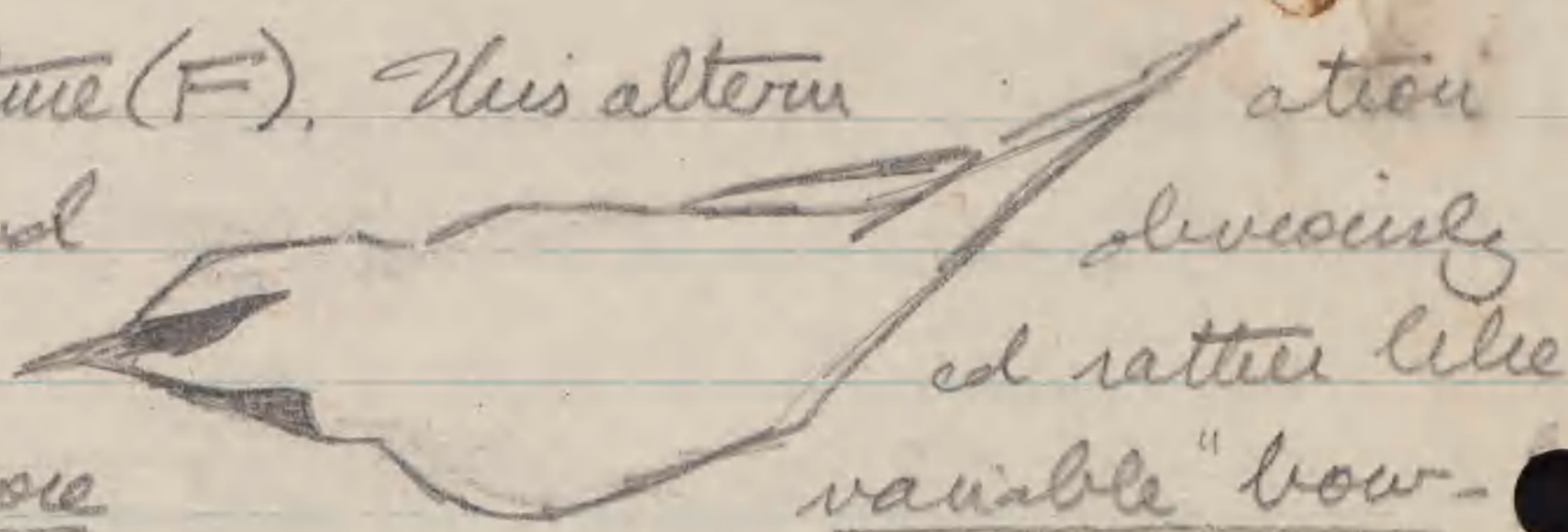
June 28, 1958,
Barro Colorado

Watching a dispute, apparently between a ♂ Blue Dacnis (with his ♀ sitting peacefully nearby) and a ♂ Green Honeycreeper. The ♂ Dacnis repeatedly alternated a St Posture, like the one

Dacnis, June 22, 1958, I

(6)

with a low "forward" posture (F). This alternation was very rapid, rigid, and ritualized as much. Looks like a ritualized form of the "mouwing" of ♂ Blue Honeycreepers during some disputes. The whole thing apparently quite silent.



Then the birds all flew away quite suddenly.

Dacnis, I

April 26, 1960
Barro Colorado

I bought a pair of Blue Dacnises (1 ♂ & 1 ♀) in the market yesterday. I now have them in a 3-foot cage, by themselves, in the animal house. They appear to be in quite good health (the ♂ has lost his tail but is very vigorous. The ♀ is in nearly perfect plumage but somewhat less vigorous). Quite tame.

One or both birds (possibly only the ♂) utter single "Trit" CN's from time to time. Quite soft and weak-sounding. Not at all harsh or hoarse or metallic. Not accompanied by any special ritualized postures or movements.

At dawn this morning the ♂ uttered 3 separate, single, phrases of "warbling" song. Very quibbled and difficult to hear clearly - although not really very soft. The last part of each phrase seemed to be a doublet. Perhaps something like "Tee-wee"? It is possible that the rest of the phrases were also doublets, although less distinct. Probably something like 6 or 7 notes in each phrase. As far as I could tell, none of these songs were accompanied by ritualized postures or movements.

Dacnis, Apr. 26, 1960, II.

(17)

This ♂ seems to be in completely adult plumage. His utterance of a warbling song is, therefore, rather surprising. Is this species more "primitive" than Cyanerpes - Alorophanes??

I shouldn't be surprised if this turned out to be another comparatively strongly hostile species. I notice that this ♂ and ♀ always or almost always feed separately. The ♂ usually goes down to the food dish & eats, while the ♀ remains up on a perch. Then, when the ♂ has finished and leaves the food dish, the ♀ goes down and eats.

The ♂ has spent a lot of time hopping or "creeping" up and down the wire-netting sides of his cage, apparently looking for insects. This species may be more of a "creeper" than the other tanager-honeycreepers.

Dacnis, I.

April 27, 1960.

Barro Colorado

I watched my captive pair of Blue Dacnises (which I shall call pair "A") this morning, in their small separate cage. Nothing at all interesting. So then I put them down in a large outside cage, 30 ft long, with 3 ♂ and 3 ♀ Red-legged Blue Honeycreepers.

When these A Dacnises were put in the new cage, they provoked a little hostility from the Honeycreepers (see today's notes on Cyanerpes). Both the ♂ and the ♀ Dacnis were supplanted, several times, by one or more of the ♀ Honeycreepers. Neither Dacnis offered the slightest resistance or displayed in any way when supplanted. This might suggest that the Honeycreeper is the dominant species - a point of some interest in connection with the integration of mixed flocks.

Both Dacnises began to creep up & down the trunks and branches of bushes almost as soon as they were put in their new cage. And then

Damms, Apr 27, 1960, II

(8)

started to creep along the sides & roof of the cage (there are a lot of dead leaves on top of the cage). Obviously looking for insects. It is now fairly obvious why the Damms are not as often associated with mixed flocks around BCT as one might expect. Their feeding habits are quite distinctive. They must compete very little with the other local honey creepers.

The most interesting reactions of the A birds today in their new cage were several "greeting" warbling songs by the ♂. At least 3 times, the ♂ uttered a "greeting" song when he rejoined the ♀ after being separated from her (at least several yards away). All these songs were obviously variants of the warbling song I heard yesterday. The song I heard most clearly today was uttered by the ♂ when he landed beside the ♀ after being supplanted by a ♀ Honeycreeper. This song consisted of 3 identical or nearly identical phrases, rapidly repeated one right after the other. Might be transcribed as: "Tsub-tsit-tseewew, Tsub-tsit-tseewew, Tsub-tsit-tseewew." (The "wew" of the "tseewew" notes was moderately long. Might be better transcribed as "wooooo", except that it had a definite ew sound.) The other songs were uttered when the ♂ joined the ♀ without having been involved in hostilities beforehand. All similar but probably not identical to the song transcribed immediately above. All the songs were moderately loud, definitely not "whisper" songs (see also today's notes on Cyanerpes).

As far as I could tell, these songs were not accompanied by any special ritualized postures or movements. And the ♀ made no apparent response of any sort.

Damnis, I

March 12, 1961
Barro Colorado

(9)

The pair A birds died a long time ago. About a month ago, I get a pair of adult birds, ♂ & ♀, and an apparently juvenile male, in process of moulting from juvenal to adult plumage (I think his moult may be delayed, because he has been in captivity for some time, but he must be at least fairly young). The adult ♂ escaped somehow. So I was left with the adult ♀ and the young ♂. I shall call these birds "B ♀" and "B ♂". I have kept them separate, one in each side of a long cage (inside the animal house). Separated from one another by a partition. This morning I removed the partition, and let the 2 birds together for about an hour. Then separated them again.

When I first let the 2 birds together, they were very excited. Flying back and forth very rapidly. Uttering lots of single CN's. Lots of flailing movements. Lots of "Song". Lots of BW. Lots of "Bowwing". Lots of St Postures without Bowwing. Some fighting.

Both birds uttered lots of CN's as they flew around the cage. Sometimes repeated very rapidly, but never accelerated into a trill or rattle, or organized into any more complex vocalization. All these CN's seemed to be essentially "Tset"s. Quite loud & hard. Possibly sometimes a little like "Treet". As far as I could tell, the individual CN's uttered during this encounter were essentially the same as those uttered by both birds earlier when they moved about their cages when they were still separated. But neither bird ever uttered as many CN's as rapidly when alone. As far as I can tell, the CN's of ♀ and ♂ (both juvenile & adult) Blue Damnis are all the same in sound.

Some of the CN's were uttered during St Postures and/or Bowwing.

Dennis, Mar. 12, 1961, II.

(10)

Otters accompanied by flicking but no other ritualized movements or postures. Still others not accompanied by any ritualized postures or movements.

He ♂ uttered long phrases very frequently whenever he came near to the ♀ or the ♀ came near to him. Extremely variable. Probably usually something like "Trit trit tseewoooo tseewoooo" or "Trit trit tseewoooo woooo". The first couple of notes of each phrase probably probably only little-modified CN's. (Perhaps not modified at all in some cases.) Sometimes a preliminary "Trit" replaced by something more like "Tsee". Sometimes, I think, one or both of the longer notes at the end of a phrase was "tsooweee" instead of "tseewooo". Some of the "wooo" sounds (including the "wooo"s in "tseewooo"s) were quite harsh and hoarse-sounding. Sometimes the song phrases were uttered singly. Sometimes repeated rapidly once or (?) twice. Partial repetitions and incomplete phrases were also very common. Most song phrases and partial song phrases "embedded" in a mass of CN's.

The ♂ appeared to utter these songs when he was Bowing, when he was in an St Posture without Bowing, and when he was not in any ritualized posture. Usually accompanied by flicking movements, but the ♂ performed flicking movements almost continuously when he was not singing as well as when he was singing.

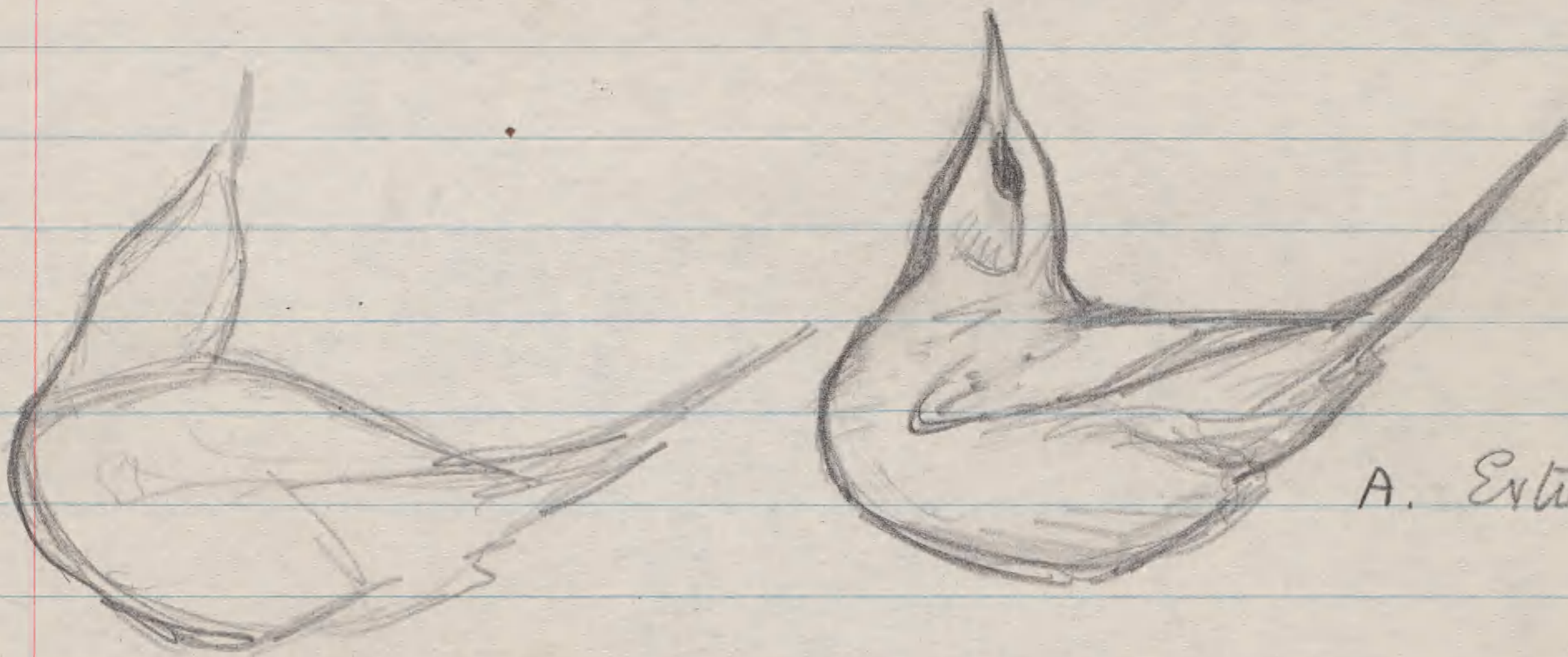
As far as I could tell, the ♀ uttered the same variety of long phrases, accompanied by the same variety of postures and movements, as the ♂ during this encounter this morning, but she certainly uttered song patterns much less frequently than the ♂.

(The B ♂ used to utter song phrases quite frequently while he was by himself alone. But he has not done so for a couple of weeks. I think that the songs he uttered by himself alone were more or less similar to the ones he uttered during the encounter today, but they may not have

Dacnis, Mar. 12, 1961, III

(11)

St. Peteres I.



A. Extreme low

B. Extreme low



C. Weak



D. Extreme low forward

Daemus, Mar. 12, 1961, IV.

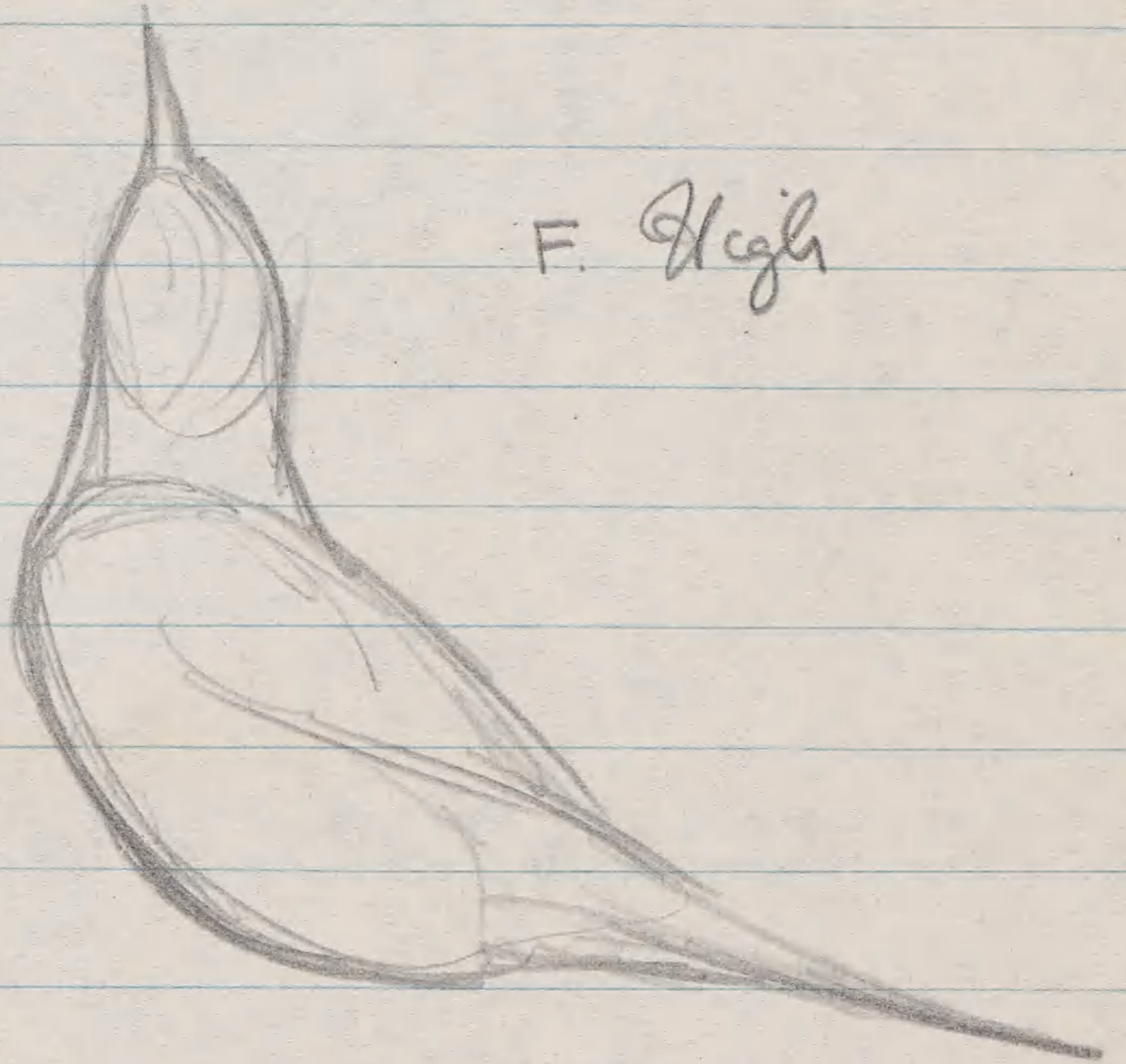
(12)

St. Postures II.

E. High +
wing-droop



F. High



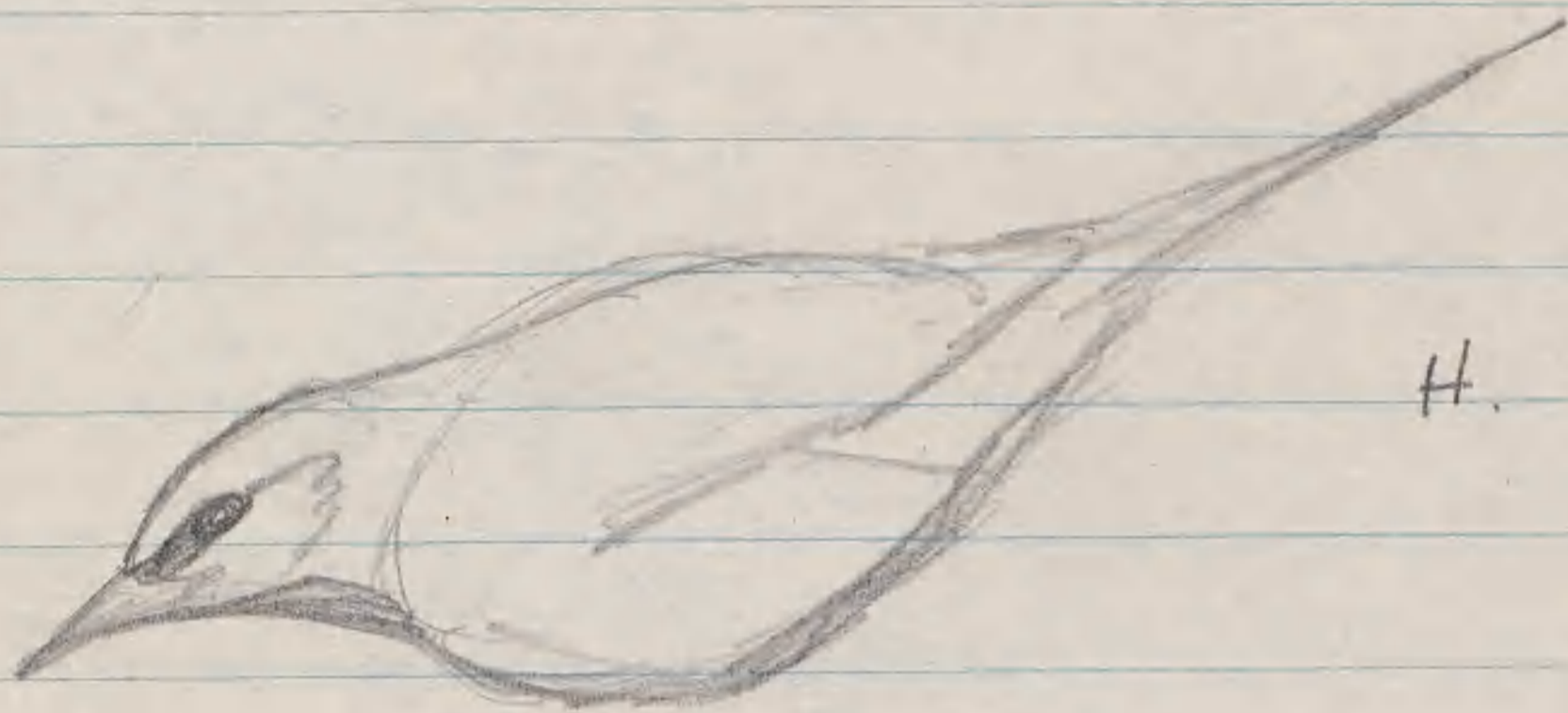
G. Diagonal



Dacnis, Mar. 12, 1961, V

(13)

Low Bow Postures



H. Typical (?)



G. Less typical

been absolutely identical. The songs uttered by the ♂ when alone were uttered from apparently unritualized ordinary sitting postures.)

The songs uttered by the ♂ & ♀ during this encounter today were obviously closely related to the "greeting" songs uttered by ♂ A described on April 27, 1960, p 8, above.

Both the ♂ B and the ♀ B did a lot of obviously highly ritualized Bowing this morning as soon as they came together. Reminiscent of the Bowing of the ♂ Red-legged Blue Honeycreeper. Sometimes straight up and down. Alternation of St. Posture with "Low Bow" Posture.

At first, the ♂ B tended to alternate an extreme low St Posture (more or less like postures A and B drawn above on page 11) with the Low Bow Postures during his Bowing. This occurred most frequently just after

Dacnis, Mar. 12, 1961, VI.

(74)

the ♂ and ♀ first came together, when they were most active. Such Low St Postures may be an indication of high intensity.

Later on, when the birds were less active, and the intensity of the encounter appeared to be declining, the ♂ assumed extreme Low St Posture was relatively less frequently during his Bowing. Assumed "Weak St" Postures (more or less like C. on p. 11) relatively more frequently during his Bowing.

The ♀ B did rather less extreme Bowing, and less Bowing in general, throughout this encounter. I don't know if she ever assumed a very extreme Low St Posture during her Bowing at any time. She did, however, frequently assume Weak St Postures during Bowing.

I think that the Bowing of both ♂ and ♀ B was usually accompanied by Song phrases, but I am not quite sure about this. Certainly some times silent and/or accompanied by CN's instead of Song.

A lot of the Bowing of both ♂ and ♀ B was also combined with Pivoting. Quite extreme. Quite like the Pivoting of mannikins. It was my impression that the ♂ tended to do a lot of straight up and down Bowing, with little or no Pivoting, during the very first few seconds after encountering the ♀ for the first time. But he began doing a lot of extreme Pivoting very soon afterwards, while the birds were still showing a lot of apparently high intensity behavior.

I think that most of the sideways movement during Pivoting during Bowing was on the downbeat. Or, at least, this is the impression I got. Is it possible?

I think that the ♀ tended to do rather less, and less extreme, Pivoting than the ♂ on the average.

Both birds did a lot of BW this morning, especially at first when they seemed to be most excited. It is possible that the down movement

Ducks, Mar. 12, 1961, VII.

(15)

ements during Bowing (especially Bowing + Pivoting) are intention movements of BW, or have been derived from intention movements of BW. Tail-flicking was particularly conspicuous during some Pivoting. Sometimes, at least D-V, with an extreme horizontal component.



Essentially a continuation of the body movements.

Both ♂ and ♀ B sometimes assumed St. Postures without any downward Bowing movements. Especially toward the end of the encounter this morning. Most of these St's probably low intensity. Usually more or less Weak St Postures (like C on p. 11). Usually silent, I think.

Several times, when the ♀ came particularly close to the ♂, he assumed a very High St (like E or F on p. 12). Also silent. The ♀ was much more aggressive than the ♂ this morning, and it was my impression that these very high St's may have contained a relatively very strong escape component.

I think that the Diagonal St's (G on p. 12), which were occasionally assumed by both ♂ and ♀, may be nothing more than variants of the ordinary Weak St (C on p. 11). But it was also my impression that the ♀ tended to assume such Diagonal St's relatively much more frequently than the ♂.

The ♀ actually attacked the ♂ at least 3 times this morning. But she did not continue to pursue the ♂, silently after attacking, in the way that I have seen some ♀ Green Honeycreepers do. I think that all or most of her attacks upon the ♂ were immediately preceded by long phrases by one or both birds.

It is obvious that all or almost all the display patterns of both ♂ and ♀ B this morning were largely or completely hostile.

Ruffling and fluffing patterns were not conspicuous during the

Darius, Mar. 12, 1961, VIII,

16

encounter between the B's this morning. Both birds tended to have the breast and belly feathers slightly to moderately fluffed much of the time, but I was unable to determine if this fluffing was ritualized or not.

Every once in a while, one of the birds would ruffle or fluff the black back feathers a little. But again I was unable to determine if this was significant.

I was quite absent this morning. Only twice did the ♂ drop his wings appreciably. Both times in high st. posture. The absence of ♂ in such situations is a remarkable difference from the behavior of Cyanerpes.

Darius, I

March 13, 1961

Barro Colorado

I kept the B birds apart today, but watched them from time to time during the morning.

♂ B uttered one song this morning shortly after dawn, just after he woke up. In a perfectly unritualized sitting posture. His song was more or less like the songs I heard yesterday; except that it began with a long series of at least 8 rather CN-like notes. These CN-like notes appeared to be more or less definitely organized into doublets. More or less comme ça: "zee-zee zee-zee zee-zee..."

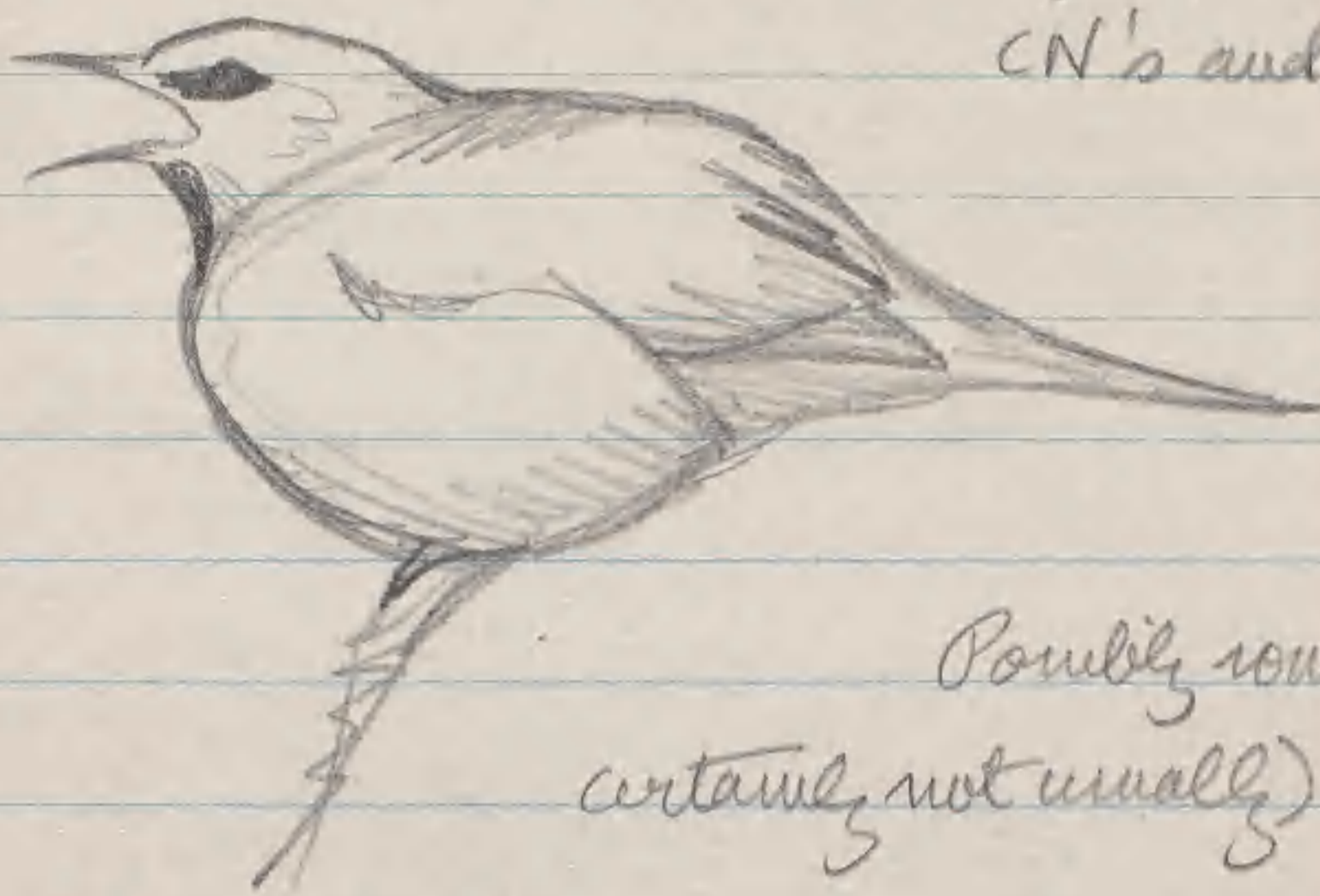
Then he sat in a very fluffed posture (see drawing on next page) and uttered lots of single ordinary-sounding CN's. "Trit... Trit... Trit..." Quite loud (probably slightly louder than all or most songs) and rapid. I noticed that the bill opened, widely, and closed with each note.

Then the ♂ uttered another song phrase, while he continued to sit in the same very fluffed posture. This phrase might possibly be transcri

Davis, Mar. 13, 1961, II.

(17)

bed by something like "Tut ta-sa ta-sa whoooh whooo"



Fluffed posture accompanying
CN's and song phrases.

Possibly sometimes (but almost
certainly not usually) more diagonal.

Then he uttered several more song phrases. Again included lots of
"zee zee" notes

I have now come to the conclusion that the basic form of all or most complete songs of this species is a series of CN-like doublets followed by one or two hoarser & harsher "Wooooo" notes.

It is easy to imagine how the CN & HCN patterns of the Red-begged Blue Honeycreepers could have been derived from a song of this type.

Later this morning, around 10:00 a.m., I was surprised to hear the ♀ B uttering lots of song phrases all by herself (the ♂ was quiet throughout the period the ♀ sang). She uttered these songs as she sat, and also when she moved about her cage in a perfectly ordinary way. There was never any trace of any ritualized postures or movements (except occasional, not very extreme, fluffing) at any time during the period she sang. As far as I could tell her bill was kept completely closed throughout all her songs.

Her songs were extremely variable. Most of them varied between something like "zee zee zee zee ta-whoee-yoo ta-whoee-yoo" and something like "zee zee zee Wooooo". All her singing was really quite

Dawns, Mar. 13, 1961, II

(18)

||| its remarkably reminiscent of Palm and Blue Jays!

Dawns, I.

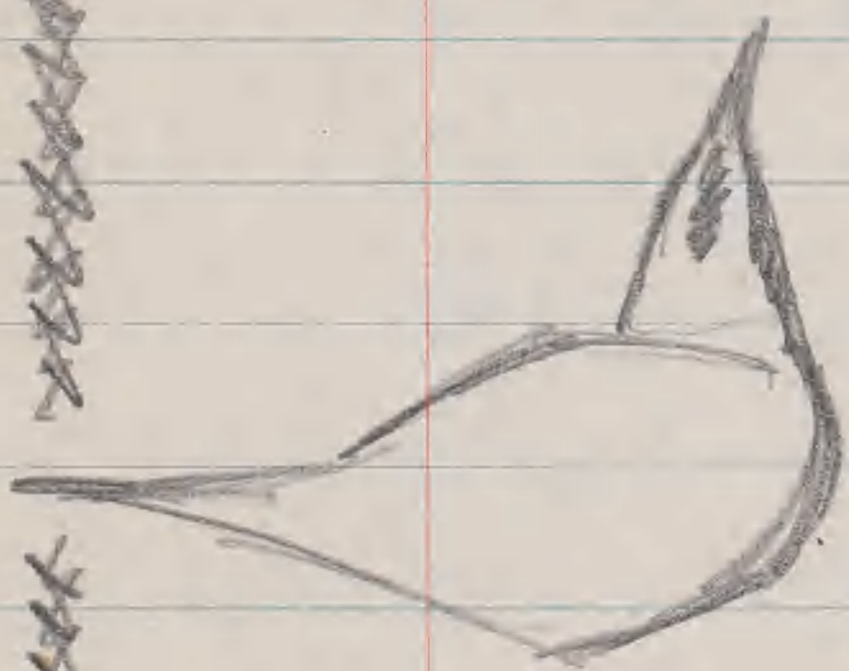
March 22, 1961
Barro Colorado

I let the B birds together again this evening, shortly before sunset. They reacted in much the same way as on March 12, but much less vigorously.

Both birds began Bowing, and uttering CN's and songs, immediately. But then they quieted down fairly rapidly.

Some of the songs were nothing more than "Tut toowee". Presumably a low intensity but complete version of song. I don't know if there is any motivational or functional difference between songs ending in "Tut toowee" and songs ending in "Tee woo". Possibly the latter are more strongly hostile. "Woo" sounds sometimes have an HAC-like quality.

Most of the Bowing consisted of alternate postures *comme ça*. Presumably moderately low intensity.



Some of the Bowing and songs were certainly completely synchronized.

There was one brief but vigorous contact fight, in the air, between the 2 birds shortly after they came together. Almost completely silent. No HAC. Only a few single, quite ordinary sounding CN's. This would indicate that some or all of the CN's are at least partly host-