

General Notes.

THE WILLOW THRUSH AND HOLBÖLL'S LINNET IN ILLINOIS.—Mr. Ridgway identifies my No. 1568 as *Hylocichla fuscescens salicicola* (lately described by him in Vol. IV, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus.). It was shot in a willow tree in my yard, Sept. 16, 1877. It sat silent and motionless. The sexual organs were not distinguishable, having apparently been destroyed by a small white worm found in their place. (This is not the first instance I have noted of birds, *far from their usual habitat*, having this white worm gnawing at their vitals. May this not account for their straggling off?) Mr. Ridgway also identifies No. 4188, ♀, as *Aegiothus linaria holboelli*, which was shot in this city by Mr. Geo. F. Clingman, Nov. 2, 1878.—H. K. COALE, *Chicago, Ills.*

NEST AND EGGS OF MYIADESTES TOWNSENDI.—These being not yet well-known, an account of a recent find may be interesting. The specimens, accompanied by a skin, were presented to me by Mr. Wm. G. Smith, of Buffalo Creek, Jefferson County, Colorado, where they were taken. Mr. Smith writes: "The nest I found on June 18, 1883, in the end of a large hollow fallen log; it was about three feet off the ground and about one foot from the end of the log. The loose material sent with it was placed on the outer side to keep it level. The female was sitting, and I approached within a few feet before she flew off. As there was a Steller's Jay close by, I thought it prudent to take the eggs at once. I put two Brewer's Blackbird's eggs in the nest, and the parent bird took to them as soon as I moved off a few yards. Two days afterward the egg-shells lay upon the ground, most likely the work of the Jay, as I have often known this bird to do. The locality was the side of a rather high hill."

The foundation of this nest is a great quantity of trash, including some bits of stick as thick as one's little finger. Upon this rests the nest proper, constructed chiefly of pine needles, grasses and disintegrated weed-stalks—the whole loose and slovenly, hardly to be handled without coming to pieces, without any well-defined brim or very regular circular disposition of the material. The nest is about six inches across outside; its depth cannot be given, as it merges into the trash of the foundation; the cavity is quite shallow. As sent to me, the whole structure fits pretty closely in a box 10 x 7 x 4 inches.

The two eggs differ from each other in color as much as those of the Song Sparrow might, and not distantly resemble Song Sparrow's eggs. The ground is dull white; in one case wreathed about the butt, and elsewhere sparsely sprinkled with dull reddish-brown surface-markings and shell-spots duller still; in the other sample so heavily marked all over with a brighter and more chocolate brown that the ground-color scarcely appears. Neither is noticeable in shape; the size is about 0.95 x 0.70.—ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*

THE MOCKING BIRD IN WESTERN KANSAS AND THE NORTHERN PHALAROPE IN SOUTHERN WYOMING.—During two seasons' active collecting in the region of Fort Wallace in Western Kansas, I have found the Mocking Bird (*Mimus polyglottus*) not rare, as Mr. Goss (this Bulletin, VIII, p. 188) thought they must be for such an altitude and latitude, but common during the season, and many of them undoubtedly breed there. Frequently when camped under some solitary cottonwood, I have known from one to four of these birds to be overhead among the branches, and that too only a few yards above us. Numerous specimens were obtained and many more might have been. I do not recollect meeting them except along the valley of the Smoky Hill and its principal tributaries.

Although I never took a specimen of the Northern Phalarope in Western Kansas (and I have shot not a few water birds in the very ponds where Mr. Goss had such good success), yet I have seen them in June in flocks of several hundred at Lake Caud in Southern Wyoming. As Mr. Goss observed, they chose the turbulent waves far beyond gunshot range, flying about apparently in sport. The telegraph wire runs close to the shore of Lake Caud, and I at one time picked up a number of specimens killed by the wire from the flock passing by it; one of which had a wing severed from its body without a drop of blood having marred its beautiful plumage! Wilson's Phalarope, though breeding there in numbers, always chooses the meadow lands, are very rarely seen upon the lake, and then only close to the shore. As in the Northern Phalarope, Wilson's Phalarope also has the female far more richly marked than the male.—S. W. WILLISTON, *New Haven, Conn.*

NEST AND EGGS OF PARUS MONTANUS.—Mr. Wm. G. Smith sends me from Colorado the nest and two eggs of the White-browed Chickadee, of whose breeding very little is known. The nest consists of a handful of matted fur, apparently of a rabbit, mixed with some small feathers. It was placed in a hollow of a pine tree, about fifteen feet from the ground, and contained six eggs nearly ready to hatch. The eggs are white, unmarked, contrary to the rule in the genus and family, but as in the neighboring genus *Psaltriparus*.—ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*

THE GRAY-CROWNED FINCH IN CONFINEMENT.—I have the good fortune to have in my possession a fine, live specimen of *Leucosticte*, which I believe to be a male and a last year's "young of the year."

During February of this year (1883), which in this section of the country (Sioux City, Iowa) was an extremely cold month, many northern birds were driven south to feed and take shelter among us. During this time, when my collection of Snowy Owls and Rough-legged Hawks (*Archibuteo lagopus*) was rapidly increasing, the Gray-crowned Finches also came to pay us a visit. Although I did not see any at the time, it is evident they were here, for the bird I now have, with several others, was captured at that time by some boys in the western part of this city. It is the first time they have been known to visit this section. The wings of

the birds were cut in such a way that they could not fly, and they were left to roam about the premises. The friend from whom I received my bird, secured by an accident this one the same month it was caught.

This gentleman informed me that when he purchased the bird, the tail feathers were out, and the wing feathers cut very close to the body; but what attracted him more particularly was its bright rose color. Upon my examination, about the middle of May, I found the bird in a very forlorn looking condition. The wing feathers were fully grown, but the tail feathers had again been pulled out, and though the rose color was very bright, almost as bright as in a Cassin's Purple Finch at its best, the general appearance of the bird was a sorry one. Carefully examining the coloration of the bird, I found that the rose color was very bright on the rump and crissum, and that it continued along the abdomen and on to the breast, well up to the fore neck. The gray, which was strongly silvered, extended well down on the nape, and up to the crown, thence passed towards the bill as far as the lores, encircling the eyes and covering the auriculars, but leaving a dark chocolate patch at the temples, which formed the dividing line at that point between the gray above and below, and connected with the like color of the neck. The patches on the crown, chin, and throat were very nearly of the same color,—dark brown; the crown patch might be called a black. Bill and feet black, the base of the bill encircled by an indistinct line of yellowish-white feathers. My friend informed me that but little change had taken place in the color of the bird from February to this date, except that the rose tint had become brighter.

The bird was represented as being a fine singer and perfectly contented, having for a companion a Canary. Shortly after this I started on my western tour, and, on returning a few days ago, this rare bird was presented to me. He is now (August 22) as fine a looking little fellow—plump, healthy and contented—as any bird lover would wish to have for a pet or study.

The summer has been, and is now, quite a sultry one, but this high-altitude bird having been kept in a cool place seems to fully enjoy his confinement. For one month he has not uttered a note, but has been engaged in putting on a new dress, which thus far presents the following: General color, dark chocolate, the feathers of the wings and tail almost black, with edgings of yellowish-white; the feathers on the neck, breast, and abdomen edged also, but with a more ashen tinge. Points of upper tail-coverts very prominent with yellowish-ash. *No rose color anywhere.* Crissum and tibia very light ash; lower tail-coverts light ash, with a few black central spots. Bill *yellow*, with black tip, and immediately back of this black tip the yellow has a peach-blossom tinge. The gray on the head is much duller than when I saw the bird last May, and now falls lower upon the neck, but, instead of covering the auriculars, only encircles the eyes with a very narrow line above and below, which disappears at the lores. The coloring of the auriculars is such that I think before long this part too will be of a like gray color, and will finally take on the former silvery effect. The crown patch of dark brown continues from its

connection with the gray until it is separated from the bill by a very light line of pure white feathers encircling the base of the bill. The chin and throat patch are uniform umber brown. Feet and tarsi black.—D. H. TALBOT, *Sioux City, Iowa.*

DESCRIPTION OF THE NEST AND YOUNG OF THE PYGMY OWL (*Glaucidium gnoma*).—During my absence from Fort Klamath, between June 9 and 24, 1883, one of my men accidentally found the nest of this Owl on June 10. It was in an old Woodpecker's hole in a live aspen, about twenty feet from the ground. The cavity was six or seven inches deep, and filled for about half the distance with feathers of various species of birds. When opened by me it contained four young, which I took to be about ten days old. They were feeding on a Chipmunk (*Tamias asiaticus townsendi*) which was still warm. One of the parents—the female—was also secured at the same time. The tree in which the nest was found stood in an open, exposed position, within ten yards of one of the butts of our target range which is in daily use. Although I searched carefully for pieces of the egg-shells I failed to find any.

The plumage of the young is as follows: Top and sides of head and neck dark ash, *unspotted*; rest of upper parts dark reddish-brown or brownish-chestnut; wings spotted with ochraceous; beneath white with reddish-brown along the sides and numerous longitudinal streaks of dull black on the breast and belly; an ill-defined band of dusky across the throat; sides of the throat pure white.—CHARLES E. BENDIRE, U. S. A., *Fort Klamath, Oregon.*

THE BALD EAGLE FISHING.—A few days ago, while driving by a creek that makes in from the Penobscot River, I noticed a Bald Eagle circling around high in air, above the creek. Presently he began to descend in slow spirals, and I could plainly see that he spied some object in the water, for he bent his neck downward and partly extended his legs; then taking a wide circle he suddenly darted down obliquely and stretching forth both legs to their full length trailed them for several feet along the surface, finally making a quick thrust with the right foot and seizing a small fish near the head, bore it away. It was plain that he saw the fish from the first and circled only for the purpose of getting behind it and approaching unseen. Altogether it was the best peice of still-hunting I ever saw, and it is the first time I have seen an Eagle catch a fish.—MANLY HARDY, *Brewer, Maine.*

A FLOCK OF WHITE HERONS (*Herodias egretta*) IN EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS.—Eight of these birds paid a visit to the salt marshes in the town of Quincy in August last, and on the 23d of that month Mr. Geo. H. Bryant succeeded in shooting one. I saw the mounted bird in the shop of P. W. Aldrich, Washington St., Boston, and it was a handsome specimen. The flock was much harassed by gunners, and another Heron is reported to

have been killed since. As stated in "New England Bird Life," where may be found the record of the species for this section, it appears to be a more frequent visitor than either the Snowy or Little Blue Heron.

I know of no record of the occurrence in New England of the Louisiana Heron or Reddish Egret.—H. A. PURDIE, *Boston, Mass.*

HERODIAS EGRETTE AT AMHERST.—I record with pleasure that while I was away from home, recently, three of these beautiful and rare birds were seen in the swamp about what we here call "Hadley Pond." One of these, a fine specimen, was shot and purchased for the Amherst College collection. It is now being stuffed at Mr. O. B. Deane's at Springfield. I do not recall that the bird has been authentically noted from this State since 1875, at Plymouth, Mass. The Amherst specimen was taken within a day or two of Aug. 27.—W. A. STEARNS, *Amherst, Mass.*

WILSON'S SNIPE (*Gallinago wilsoni*) NESTING IN MASSACHUSETTS.—As I was hunting for Least Bitterns' nests in one of our swamps in Brookline, where they breed in considerable numbers,—that is, I found three nests this year there, one with three eggs, the other two with five young ones apiece,—I thought I would leave the sedges where they build and look among the high grass, which grows at the side of the marsh for a Carolina Rail's nest. Just on the border of the grass I started up a Snipe, that seemed to me to sit closer than usual and in a very curious manner. She came very near to me, chiding me as if in great trouble. I looked in the grass very carefully and finally found her nest, with four half-grown young birds, which, when I approached, scampered off among the high grass which surrounded the nest. They seemed to be able to run about and take care of themselves perfectly well. The date was the 18th or 19th of June, I cannot be sure which, as I have mislaid my book in which it was entered. I think the eggs must have been laid about the second or third week in May, which seems to me quite early.—NATHANIEL A. FRANCIS, *Boston, Mass.*

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER AT SCARBOROUGH, MAINE.—Two immature examples of Baird's Sandpiper (*Actodromas bairdi*) were shot at Little River, Scarborough, on September 11, 1883, by my friends Messrs. Winthrop Root and Fred. Mead, who gave me an opportunity of examining their specimens in the flesh. The birds were killed together, but were unaccompanied by others of any species.

It will be remembered that, up to the present time, but one instance has been recorded* of the occurrence of Baird's Sandpiper on the Maine coast.—NATHAN CLIFFORD BROWN, *Portland, Maine.*

* See this Bulletin, Vol. II, p. 28; also Proc. Portland Soc. Nat. Hist., April, 1883.

CORY'S SHEARWATER (*Puffinus borealis*) OFF THE COAST OF MASSACHUSETTS.—On the 2d of last August I was out in a yacht collecting sea-birds, about thirty miles eastward from the southeast end of Cape Cod. Wilson's Petrels, Pomarine Skuas, Greater and Sooty Shearwaters were abundant. Both these Shearwaters were often seen sitting on the water in flocks, associating freely with one another, and were easily approached.

On one occasion I sailed up to quite a large flock, and shot a *P. fuliginosus*. As the rest rose, I suddenly perceived amongst them a Shearwater entirely new to me, and my other barrel soon brought it down. The yacht was put about, and I was on the point of laying hands on the prize, when it suddenly started up, and was gone,—much to my chagrin. Soon, however, I saw a similar one flying about in company with several of the common Shearwaters. It presently came near, and was shot, proving to be a Cory's Shearwater. This was enough to keep me on the lookout for more, and when about half way in to land, another came scaling along over the water, and was also secured. These were all that I saw. One of the fishermen, to whom I showed the birds, reported having seen a few others the next day. This, however, may be open to some doubt.

In habits they perfectly resemble the other species, but are readily distinguished from *P. major* by their lighter colors, and conspicuously large, yellow bill. They are very tame, and when engaged in feeding may almost be run down by a boat. Considerable effort is shown in rising from the water, but when once a-wing, they fly with great swiftness.

Nothing is known of them by the fishermen, who perhaps overlook them among the thousands of the other commoner varieties. Specimens were first taken by Mr. Charles B. Cory in nearly the same locality where mine were captured, and were described by him in the Bulletin of April, 1881.—HERBERT K. JOB, *Boston, Mass.*

ADDENDUM TO LIST OF BIRDS ASCERTAINED TO OCCUR WITHIN TEN MILES FROM POINT DE MONTS, PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, CANADA; BASED CHIEFLY UPON THE NOTES OF NAPOLEON A. COMEAU.—Mr. Comeau has recently sent me skins of the following species that were not in the original list (see this Bulletin, Vol. VII, No. 4, pp. 233-242, Oct. 1882). They were all killed at Godbout in May and June, 1883.

148. *Dendroica caerulescens*.—June 7. ♂.

149. *Vireo flaviviridis*.—May 13. For further remarks upon this species, which has not previously been recorded from Northern North America, see page 213.

150. *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*.—♂.

151. *Scolecophagus ferrugineus*.

152. *Empidonax minimus*.

153. *Empidonax trailli*.—June 7. ♀.

154. *Contopus borealis*.—June 6. ♂.

During the fall migration Mr. Comeau secured specimens of two additional species new to the locality. They are:

155. *Tryngites rufescens*.—August 28.

156. *Tringa alpina americana*.—August 28.

In September, 1882, Mr. Comeau shot another specimen of the Carolina Dove (*Zenaidura carolinensis*).—C. HART MERRIAM, M. D., *Locust Grove, N. Y.*

THE MOVEMENTS OF CERTAIN WINTER BIRDS.—From a letter lately written me by Mr. Manly Hardy, I make the following interesting extracts: "I see in the 'Canadian Sportsman' an article on the migration of Owls which agrees nearly with my own observations, and I would like to have the question presented to the readers of the Bulletin . . . 'why do Owls, Grosbeaks, Crossbills and some other northern birds come south in winter?'"

"The article referred to states that Snowy and other migratory Owls are most numerous there [Canada?] in December and January. By reference to a list of dates of capture of a large number of Snowy Owls, I find that most of them have been taken from November 15 to December 10, and very few later than that date. With Hawk Owls it is the same. Grosbeaks, in winter when they are plenty, come late in November, and are nearly all gone by December 15, though a few remain all winter. Now why do these birds come here at all? I can say almost positively that the two reasons usually given, viz., lack of food and extreme cold—are not the real reasons. The Owls are invariably fat when they arrive and cannot have lacked for food farther north. The Grosbeaks and Crossbills, also, are very fat, and do not need the berries which some persons think they depend upon, for both can live independently on the seeds of the pine and spruce. If there were not a berry in ten years they would not suffer. Moreover, the idea that any of these birds feel the cold is not entitled to a moment's consideration. The Snowy Owl, for instance, can bear as much cold as a Polar Bear. Furthermore, if either of these reasons were the true one, all these species would be likely to come the same winter, an event which does not usually happen."

The question thus raised by Mr. Hardy is an interesting one. As he maintains, the explanations which have been given to account for the movements of these birds do not seem to be entirely satisfactory. Nevertheless I cannot think that they are erroneous. Birds, like many other beings, are fond of variety. The fact that a Grosbeak or Crossbill can sustain life on the seeds of a certain tree does not necessarily prove that it may not undertake long journeys in search of *tid-bits*. Granting, also, that it can endure an Arctic winter, it does not follow that it may not enjoy a few months' relaxation in a warmer clime. The truth of the matter probably is, that when their breeding season is over these birds habitually wander over vast extents of country. If the winter happens to be severe in the north they find a gradual improvement in conditions southward, and naturally, taking this direction, push on until a land of plenty

is reached. Even here they do not always pause, their habitual restlessness of disposition leading them to continued search for fresh feeding-grounds. Thus they come and go, sometimes without apparent regard to conditions which govern the movements of our more regular migratory visitors.

At least this seems to me a satisfactory explanation of the problem at large; but will not other observers contribute their opinions and experience?—WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

THE RIDGWAY ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB OF CHICAGO.—We are pleased to learn that the ornithologists of Chicago have organized an ornithological society under the name of "The Ridgway Ornithological Club of Chicago." The meeting for organization was held on September 6, 1883, when a constitution and by-laws were adopted, and officers elected, as follows: President, Dr. J. W. Velie; Vice-President and Treasurer, George F. Morcom; Secretary, H. K. Coale; Curator, Joseph L. Hancock; Librarian, F. L. Rice. The name adopted, it is needless to say, is in honor of Mr Robert Ridgway, the eminent ornithologist and Curator of Ornithology at the National Museum at Washington. The society contemplates the formation of an ornithological library and museum of general ornithology. Meetings are to be held the first Thursday of each month. The Club already numbers fifteen members, and we heartily wish them success.—EDD.