

in 'The Auk' for July, there were three accessions to the District fauna during the year 1885, viz. :—(1) English Teal (*Anas crecca*), shot on the Potomac River near Washington, in April, and presented to the National Museum (No. 106,061). (2) Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*), taken on the Pawtuxent River, Maryland, September 8, by Mr. H. W. Henshaw, who has kindly communicated these data to me. This capture was made beyond the regular District boundary, but was, however, included in what has been tacitly regarded as its faunal and floral limits. (3) Northern Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*), killed on the eastern branch of the Potomac, October 17, by Mr. F. S. Webster, in whose possession the bird now is.

A perusal of the catalogues of the bird department of the National Museum shows some interesting entries. Through the courtesy of Mr. Ridgway, the curator, I have been enabled to examine the twenty large volumes in which the collection is invoiced, with some interesting results, only one of which need be mentioned at this time. The first volume, which carries us back into the forties and represents the private collection of Professor Baird and his brother, shows the following entries :—

"*Tringa alpina*, ♂ [= ♀ ad.], Oct. 22, 1842, Washington, D. C." (No. 848.)

"*Pelidna alpina*, ♂, Oct. 20, 1842, Washington, D. C." (No. 1053.)

The Dunlin is not given in any of the lists of the birds of the District; and although the above captures were made nearly half a century ago, they are 'new' to the fauna.—HUGH M. SMITH, *National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

*[Correspondents are requested to write briefly and to the point. No attention will be paid to anonymous communications.]*

### Turner's List of the Birds of Labrador.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE AUK :—

*Sirs:* In reply to your criticism in 'The Auk' for October, 1885 (pp. 368, 369) upon my List of the Birds of Labrador, etc. (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., VIII, 1885, pp. 233-254), I would state that you have evidently misconstrued the List. It was intended only to present under that heading a list somewhat approaching the character of a catalogue of the birds of the region embraced within that heading.

Access was had to all the material bearing upon the subject, and it was compiled as concisely as possible. With that material was incorporated the briefest possible references to the species of birds obtained by me. I deemed it necessary to give only a scanty sketch of Ungava, a hitherto unknown district.

The remarks were made as brief as possible in order that it should not be considered as a preliminary report upon my own investigations. I made no reference in the List to my present work of preparing a report upon the natural history of the region included under the heading of that List; and, so far as the published List is concerned, it has no connection with the report now well under way. A plan, other than following the recognized natural order of listing the birds, was not necessary for the purpose of that List.

In regard to the omission of certain species, you mention two, but there is no record of the indubitable occurrence of *Larus canus* within the region defined. The young specimen, in first plumage, of *Larus canus*, upon which is based the statement of the occurrence of this species in Labrador, is in the U. S. National Museum. The identification, however, is regarded by competent authorities as so extremely doubtful that it was deemed judicious to exclude it altogether.

I regarded the alleged discovery of the Pacific Eider, by Stearns, in Labrador as so extremely improbable that reference to it was not considered necessary. The reference made by Dr. L. Stejneger, in the October number of 'The Auk' for 1885 (p. 385) has no connection whatsoever with Labrador, Newfoundland not being a portion of the territory embraced under the heading of my List.

I purposely stated that the extracts were given in the List without comment or responsibility for their assertions, as a discussion of them was not deemed to be properly within the scope of the List, however tempting it may have been.

In regard to the several species accredited to Labrador by Audubon, I considered it well to include them; and now express the desire that some competent ornithologist, like Professor J. A. Allen, of the American Museum of Natural History of New York, who is specially fitted for the task, investigate each presumably doubtful species and reject such as may be considered as not entitled to a place in a list of the birds of that region.

LUCIEN M. TURNER.

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October 28, 1885.

[We are very glad to learn that Mr. Turner's 'List' was not intended as a final report upon his ornithological work in Labrador, and regret that we fell into the error of so misconstruing it. As, however, it was based largely upon his own observations, and as no hint was given that any other report was contemplated, our conclusion was not only a natural one, but one we find to have been quite generally entertained.—J. A. A.)

#### Revival of the Sexual Passion in Birds in Autumn.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE AUK:—

*Sirs:* On the morning of the 12th inst. I noticed a pair of Bluebirds toying with each other affectionately, and once certainly—twice as I thought—they were in the attitude, if not in the act, of copulation. The